Dear ‘TOP 20” Geriatric Residency Program Director,

 I write to you as you are the Program Director for a US News & World Report TOP 20 ranked Geriatric Medicine residency program. I am seeking distinguished panel members to participate in a Delphi Technique Survey of geriatric medicine academic leaders to weigh-in on our on-going project assessing the adequacy of current oral health services for institutionalized elders living in nursing homes throughout the U.S.

 We previously surveyed a distinguished panel of academic geriatric dentists for our baseline study on this topic (see our article from the Journal of the American Dental Association for more details…a link to pdf file of that article is at the end of Round 1 Delphi Questionnaire…. for your convenience). We now seek the opinion of academic geriatric physicians on one key aspect of our prior findings.

 In our prior survey, geriatric dentists (1) identified 29 oral diseases/conditions in elderly living in nursing homes that were of the highest concern to them, and (2) estimated the timeframe in which a patient with an observed oral disease/condition should be offered care after diagnosis to avoid qualifying as oral neglect.

 REMEMBER: We seek to develop a definition of oral neglect that can be used as a national standard, one that can be enforceable within our health care system. So we do not seek an ‘ideal’ timeline ‘to offer of care’, rather a ‘minimal, enforceable standard’ for the U.S.

 We now seek the consensus opinion of a distinguished panel of academic geriatric physicians on this latter issue, i.e., the acceptable timeframe from ‘diagnosis to offer of care’. You, as the Director of a U.S. top Geriatric Medicine residency program, are invited to weigh-in on this critical issue in oral health care for nursing home residents.

 Completing one of our survey forms will take 5-10 minutes of your time. Your input will be invaluable to improving oral health care for nursing home residents.

 If you do participate, we will publish the names of each participant in our final article to establish the ‘expert nature’ of our panel for readers and to give you full and appropriate credit for your contribution (see Table 1 in attached JADA article).

 We hope that you will take 5-10 minutes of your time to join us in this important geriatric oral health project. I thank you for your interest and time…. and hope that you will help us improve the national situation on this critical oral health issue for nursing home residents.

 Best,

 Ralph V. Katz, DMD, MPH, PhD, FACE

 Professor and Founding Chair

 Department of Epidemiology & Health Promotion

 NYU College of Dentistry