Dear Geriatric Nursing Program Director,

 I write to you, as you are the Program Director for a US News & World Report ranked Geriatric Nursing program. I am seeking distinguished panel members to participate in a Delphi Technique Survey of nursing 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 nursing professionals 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 on this latter issue, i.e., the acceptable timeframe from ‘diagnosis to offer of care’. You, as the Director of a U.S. Geriatric Nursing 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

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