Dental services in Brunei fall short

The Ministry of Health in Brunei has admitted that the country’s Dental Service is facing a serious shortage of staff, training, and dental clinics. According to Minister of Health Pehin Dato Haj Suyoi, who spoke at a dental forum in capital Bandar Seri Begawan in January, only 28 dental officers currently serve the total population of 410,000 people under the Primary Oral Health Care Scheme. There is also a low number of local graduates as well as foreign dentists with suitable qualifications for the post of Dental Officer, he added.

The Dental Service Department under the Ministry of Health spent a total of B$10 million under the Ministry of Health. During the past ten years, there has been a serious shortage of staff, according to Pehin Haj Suyoi. “My wife, Shirley, and I agree that the best way to honour his contributions is to support the teaching and research activities of a distinguished faculty member at the School of Dentistry, will be held by the chair of the School’s division of Oral Biology and Medicine,” he said.

The Park Chair is the latest gift to UCLA from Ralph and Shirley Shapiro, UCLA alumni with a long history of generous service and philanthropy to the campus, as well as to charitable organisations throughout Los Angeles and the United States.

“Dr No-Hee Park has made significant advances in our understanding of cancer biology, and for ten years, he has provided exemplary service as Dean of the UCLA School of Dentistry,” said Ralph Shapiro. “My wife, Shirley, and I agree that the best way to honour his contributions is to support, in a lasting manner, the scholarship of another outstanding faculty member leading the field of dental medicine research.”

Korean-born Dr Park received his DDS Degree from Seoul National University in 1968 and joined the faculty of the UCLA School of Dentistry in 1984. There, he served as the Director of the Dental Research Institute and Associate Dean for Research. Named Dean of the School in 1998, he was appointed for a third term in 2006 and is the longest-serving dean in the School’s history.

Under Dr Park’s leadership, the School has emerged as a research-intensive institution, which currently ranks fifth among US dental schools in funding by the National Institutes of Health. During the past ten years, fundraising efforts have yielded more than 150 publications in distinguished scientific journals. He has trained more than 100 research students, post-doctoral fellows, and visiting faculty members during the past 25 years, many of whom are now faculty members of dental schools, medical schools, and colleges of life-sciences in the US, Europe, and Asia.

The Dr No-Hee Park Endowed Chair in Dentistry, the seventh endowed professorship for the School, is part of a ten-year campaign to increase the School’s endowment by US$50 million, to ensure its continued financial stability and success.

(Edited by Claudia Salwiczek)