



## **USAF Dental Evaluation & Consultation Service**

### **WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO**



The USAF Dental Evaluation & Consultation Service (DECS) was established as the Dental Investigation Service (DIS) on 1 October 1976 by Air Force Regulation 162-7 and was charged to provide investigative guidance and assistance for all USAF dental personnel. DECS today provides clinical, laboratory, and consultative services for dental equipment, dental materials, dental facilities, infection control, occupational health and safety for dental personnel and patient safety. DECS and its \$6 million laboratory are located within the Battlefield Health and Trauma Institute of Surgical Research at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, TX. DECS moved to Fort Sam Houston as part of the Base Realignment and Closure initiative of 2005 and is co-located with the Naval Medical Research Unit San Antonio and the US Army Dental and Trauma Research Detachment. In October 2014, DECS went from being a detachment of the USAF School of Aerospace Medicine under the 711th Human Performance Wing and realigned under the 59th Medical Wing as a part of the 59th Dental Group.

DECS' responsibilities are outlined in the USAF Dental Management Guide. DECS is charged with seven priorities:

1. Provide a responsive consultative service to Air Force Dentists
2. Test, evaluate and provide consultation on equipment and materials of interest
3. Maintain CE for military members and a responsive website with information on new products, literature reviews, announcements /alerts, and infection control updates
4. Review Dental Facility remodel and construction projects and equipment requests
5. Support Master's Degree level research for Tri-service residency programs
6. Collaborate with ADA and ISO on international dental standards
7. Provide education support to federal dental residencies in material science

DECS is staffed with materials scientists, fellowship graduates, as well as laboratory technicians, dental assistants and a biomedical equipment repair technician. The work of DECS is shared between the personnel assigned to the Fort Sam Houston facility and clinical users throughout the Air Force. Many of the product evaluation that you read on the DECS website had significant input from dentists, technicians, and assistants in your clinics and residencies. We can't do it alone. DECS collects information by surveys and questionnaires sent to the field as a basis for what to study next. Feedback is always welcome and we are looking at ways to be more responsive to dentists in military clinics, civilian dentists, other product evaluation centers and manufacturers so that the end user gains the best possible benefit.

A quick scan of the website will show that DECS has a busy schedule. In addition to our in-depth product evaluations which can take up to several months to complete, DECS is also involved with reviewing all the medical equipment and material alerts from US Army-Ft. Detrick-MEDCOM; we also review equipment requests and TIGERS forms as a consultation resource; we review current literature and try to keep dentists aware of the latest science based evidence for materials and clinical practice. We coordinate the Military Dental Continuing Education program and have teamed up with SWANK and the USAF Post Graduate Dental School to provide world-class education presentations for CE credit that is accredited by the American Dental Association (ADA CERP) and is accepted by the Academy of General Dentistry for Fellow and Master qualification.

DECS personnel are dedicated to serve dentistry. They are:

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DECS is forging a path to the future with technology. There are two DECS websites, one for the military and one public site. Their content is similar involving product evaluations, materials information, infection control and patient safety items. Our staff is starting to Blog and those items will be found on our website very soon. We are working on a Facebook page and will be joining Twitter as well. DECS knows there is a plethora of information available to the clinician and the clinic staff. We hope to take that information and provide a road map to safe and effective clinical practice for the federal dental services. We would welcome feedback on products to evaluate or issues that need our attention. Please feel free to contact anyone of the staff and we will get back to you as soon as possible. Thank you for checking out our website.

Very respectfully,

Col Doug Risk