

**BC Dental Association Awards
Minister of Health, George Abbott
March 11, 2006**

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It is a pleasure to be here this evening at the BC Dental Association's Charity Winemaster's Dinner. On behalf of the government of British Columbia, I am proud to accept the B.C. Dental Association's President Award. Thank you for this affirmation in what the B.C. government is doing towards the expansion of dental programs in our province.

Nearly a year ago, this government announced we would be investing \$47 million over three years to improving oral health care in B.C. through several linked initiatives. Since that time, we've moved forward by leaps and bounds.

In partnership with the faculty of Dentistry at UBC, we've increased dental services in under-served communities and populations through the funding of 5 community dental resident positions. This is the first arrangement like this in Canada and proving to be very successful.

The province-wide T.V. campaign we launched with the B.C. Dental Association has also been an enormous success. I must say the advertising has run at very opportunistic moments – including during the Super Bowl on Global!

And over at the BC Children's Hospital, the dental program for children requiring specialized treatment is moving ahead. The health authorities have hired more dental public health staff to provide information to parents on the condition of their children's teeth and on the best preventive methods to ensure dental decay doesn't occur.

I think all of us here recognize that preventive care can have a tremendous impact on a child's development. And dentistry is an excellent example of a health profession that figured out prevention is better than treatment a long time ago!

The B.C. Dental Association is to be commended for their proactive approach to prevention initiatives, particularly with children and seniors. Government remains committed to advancing and realizing the tremendous importance of good oral health. The coming months and years hold promise for a bright future for children and the more vulnerable members of our society. Working together we know we can reduce dental disease for British Columbians.

Thank you.