

## **Stephen Beetstra, DDS, MHSA (he/him/his)**

Program Director, Nisonger Dental Services  
Assistant Professor of Clinical Dentistry  
Division of Restorative and Prosthetic Dentistry



Dr. Stephen Beetstra received his dental degree from Baylor College of Dentistry in 1990. He then served as a Commissioned Officer in the United States Public Health Service until 1999. While in service, he created needs based programs for pediatric, Native American, migrant, and medically complex patients in Oregon, Florida, and North Carolina. For his efforts, Dr. Beetstra received an Outstanding Service Medal, the highest award granted by the Service and was recognized by the National Health Service Corps as a Healthcare Hero.

After service in the Public Health, he joined the faculty of the University of New Mexico, School of Medicine, Department of Surgery. As the first dentist ever hired by the medical school, he was the Chief, Division of Dental Services and soon expanded the dental footprint on the campus. During his seven years of service, he created a network of seven university affiliated dental clinics and recruited a faculty of eight to help address the unmet needs of rural, medically complex, and special needs patients. Practicing in an academic institution in a state without a dental school or graduate dental programs, he led the creation of the first graduate dental program in the state and the creation of the pre-dental curriculum. He was the principal investigator to several federal and state grants to begin the programs which led to the successful accreditation of the New Mexico's first dental training program.

Dr. Beetstra was recruited to Arkansas Children's Hospital due to his experience in care for patients with complex medical and developmental disabilities in 2005. In 2011, he received a Master's in Health Services Administration from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, School of Public Health. In 2011, he became the Chief of Dental Services and helped expand the program from five faculty to fifteen. The program expanded both hospital and outreach activities focusing on children and individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He was instrumental in creating Arkansas's first graduate dental training program. In 2017, the Arkansas Children's Dental Faculty were incorporated into the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. With that transition, Dr. Beetstra assumed the Chair of the Department of Pediatric and Special Needs Dentistry. During his tenure the program expanded from 5000 patient visits per year to 20,000.

In August 2020, Dr. Beetstra began working at the OSU Nisonger Center as its dental program director. In that role, he manages two clinics and is developing training programs to teach dental residents, students, and dental hygiene students to care for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. He is the immediate past president of the Special Care Dentistry Association and serves on numerous national committees that focus on pre- and post-doctoral curriculum development, patient and student education, and dental health policy to tackle the access issues to dental care with persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.