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## Volunteer dental laboratory opportunities

Many DDS patients have extensive dental problems requiring dentures, crowns, or bridges; appliances usually made by dental laboratories. Patients or family members that can afford all or part of a laboratory bill, may be asked to pay it. Sometimes, churches, social services agencies, and other benefactors make financial contributions to defray these costs. Most DDS patients, however, cannot afford even a small portion of a laboratory bill. The National Association of Dental Laboratories (NADL) has endorsed the DDS program and many dental laboratories in the DDS program donate these appliances. Dentsply International, a major manufacturer, replaces the artificial teeth that volunteer laboratories use to make dentures for DDS patients; Argen, Ivoclar, and Jelenko provide precious metals used and implant materials are provided from 3I, Bicon, Nobel Biocare, Straumann, and Zimmer. Every attempt is made to find a donating laboratory, but the need for dental fabrications-particularly dentures-exceeds what these laboratories can contribute. A DDS Referral Coordinator is responsible for arranging laboratory services. If the Coordinator cannot get a volunteer laboratory, DDS pays for the laboratory costs for DDS patients who have no other resources. Monies to pay these expenses are raised in each community. The Foundation gives all participating laboratories engraved plaques to thank them for their community service. The generous support of the Colgate-Palmolive Company started this tradition and other funders now support this important recognition effort. Most dental associations recognize the contributions of these laboratories in their journals and newsletters.

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