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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 21, 2020

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**WDA APPLAUDS ASSEMBLY PASSAGE OF RURAL DENTAL ACCESS BILL
AB 258 Creates Guaranteed Pipeline of Dentists to Rural, Underserved Areas**

Dr. Thomas Raimann, President of the Wisconsin Dental Association, today released the following statement after the State Assembly passed AB 258, which would create the Rural Scholarship Program at the Marquette University School of Dentistry (MUSOD).

“WDA is grateful to the members of the State Assembly for passing AB 258 by a wide, bipartisan margin of 95-2. Every Wisconsin resident deserves access to quality dental care, regardless of ZIP code. Creating this scholarship program, requiring any dental student who receives it to practice in designated rural areas after graduation, ensures that more of our residents will be able to access care close to home.

“As a faculty member at MUSoD, I see firsthand the dedication and care that dental students bring to their future profession, and I am excited for them to be able to take advantage of this new opportunity.

“We are especially thankful for the hard work of Representative Tony Kurtz, the bill’s author, in moving it toward passage. We look forward to the State Senate taking up this proposal and sending it to Governor Evers.”

AB 258, as amended, creates the Rural Scholarship Program at the Marquette University School of Dentistry. A maximum of five students per class are eligible to receive the \$40,000 annual scholarship. For every year a student receives the scholarship, they are obligated to practice one year in a designated Dental Health Provider Shortage Area. The program will be administered by the Higher Educational Aids Board (HEAB), in consultation with the Department of Health Services and Marquette University.