

Spotlight On: Denver Health's Dental Clinic

Denver Health's dental clinic at its health center is one of the busiest outpatient clinics at the facility because dental care is one of the most needed medical services for populations with no or inadequate health insurance. In addition, Denver Health operates a dental educational program for physicians at its primary care facilities. Denver Health operates three dental clinics, the Denver Health Medical center, Gipson Eastside Family Health Center and Sam Sandos Westside Family Health center, which provide care for more than 3,000 patients annually. Three full-time dentists, one dental hygienist, and ten dental assistants staff the two community-based sites.

One full-time dentist and dental residents staff the clinic at the University Medical Center. These residents are part of the General Practice Residency Program, operated by the Denver Health Dental Department. In addition, Denver Health employs 21 part-time staff members in patient care and resident training. Each year, this clinic admits approximately 160 patients to the hospital.

Denver Health also operates the Dental and Oral Maxillofacial services which provide the following: prosthetics, pediatric dentistry, restorative dentistry, endodontic, periodontics, hygiene, and oral maxillofacial surgery.

Community Health Services offers general dentistry services at Eastside Family Health Center and Westside Family Health Center. General dentistry services are offered at Denver Health Medical Center's main campus clinic, located at the Wellington E. Webb Center for Primary Care.

The family health centers offer emergency dental care, routine restorative dentistry, preventive treatment (hygiene and sealant), endodontic treatment (root canals), and prosthodontic treatment (dentures and partials).

More complex cases are typically referred to the Denver Health Medical Center Dental Clinic. The clinic is staffed by dental general practice residents, oral surgery residents, oral surgeons, general practitioners and dental hygienists.

In partnership with the city, Denver Health also conducted a program to train internists and family practitioners to assess oral health problems, which allows persons without access to regular dentists to receive at least an oral health exam. In a follow-up survey, many of the physicians claimed the program "was a good reminder to check for oral health problems."

Denver Health, in partnership with the Denver Public School systems, operates twelve school-based health centers in area elementary schools that provide some oral health services. The program provides sealants to all second-graders, and all children participating in the Head Start program receive at least one oral health examination.

In 2006, the Denver Health Foundation was awarded a \$104,745 oral health grant from the Caring for Colorado Foundation to support the Denver Public Schools Dental Sealant Program at 70 elementary schools.