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FEATURED

Health: Program will provide services to those in need

Madison Dental Initiative to open clinic in Boys and Girls Club near Allied Drive

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Dentist Benjamin Farrow brushes fluoride on the teeth of 4-year-old Isaiah Randle at the Madison Dental Initiative in 2011. The clinic, for people who are homeless or have low incomes, opened inside the Salvation Army of Dane County on East Washington Avenue in 2009. The dental initiative plans to open a second clinic inside the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County's Allied Family Center late this year.

The Madison Dental Initiative, which offers dental care to the underserved inside the Salvation Army of Dane County, plans to open a second clinic inside the Boys and Girls Club of Dane County.

"Tooth decay and poor oral care is one of the reasons why kids miss school," said Michael Johnson, president and CEO of the Boys and Girls Club. "It's time for us to move on it."

With a \$160,000 grant from Delta Dental, the dental initiative plans to open a two-chair dental clinic by December inside the club's Allied Family Center, near Allied Drive on Madison's Southwest Side.

The Boys and Girls Club is contributing \$66,000, and the dental initiative plans to raise about \$35,000.

Like the dental initiative's clinic in the Salvation Army on East Washington Avenue, the new clinic will see low-income patients from Dane County who have Medicaid or no dental insurance.

The clinic likely will draw many children, but adults will also be welcome, said Curtis Henderson, executive director of the dental initiative. Patients can receive teeth cleanings, fillings, extractions and other care, including preventive services for children: fluoride varnish on any teeth and sealants on cavity-prone molars.

More than half of Boys and Girls Club members haven't seen a dentist in more than a year, and 28 percent report having dental pain, according to a needs assessment conducted by the dental initiative, Henderson said.

Only 31 percent of preschoolers on Medicaid in Dane County received fluoride varnish in 2014, and only 37 percent of dentists in the county are enrolled as Medicaid providers, according to a report last year from Public Health Madison and Dane County.

“There’s a lot of people in the community who are going without dental care,” Henderson said.

Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile, which brings dental hygienists into elementary schools to place sealants on molars, has helped reduce untreated decay among third-graders from 31 percent in 2002 to 17 percent in 2013. The program is funded by the state and Delta Dental.

But many preschoolers and middle school students don’t get proper dental care, said Ann Boson, director of Delta Dental’s charitable fund.

“We’re looking to reach kids that we don’t in the school-based program,” Boson said.

Delta Dental helped fund a dental clinic that opened last year inside the Boys and Girls Club of Portage County in Stevens Point. It has served more than 100 children, Boson said.

Johnson, of the Boys and Girls Club in Madison, said he visited dental clinics inside Boys and Girls Clubs in Chicago and St. Louis.

“I was convinced we need to do the same thing here,” he said.

More information



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