

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Star Community Health Dental Van Program

What services are offered on the van?

We offer a full range of dental health services that promote oral disease prevention, including:

- Comprehensive exams
- Cleanings
- Fillings
- Extractions
- Sealants
- Fluoride treatments
- Emergency Care

Who provides this care?

Dentists, dental residents and dental hygienists affiliated/employed by St. Luke's provide the services on the vans.

Who is eligible to receive these dental services?

The vans primarily serve children in grades K-12, though all children are eligible.

How are children enrolled in the Dental Van Program?

Parents can enroll their children in the Star Community Health Dental Van Program by contacting a dental van coordinator listed below, who will assist with this process:

Allentown Dental Van: 610-628-8463

Bethlehem Dental Van: 484-526-6482

Lehighon Dental Van: 610-377-7354

How many counties does the Star Community Health Dental Van Program serve?

Our program serves 11 school districts across 6 counties in Pennsylvania. They include: Lehigh, Northampton, Carbon, Schuylkill, Bucks and Monroe.

How long is the current wait for dental services in our clinics?

Each of our clinics currently has a four to five-month backlog for new patients.

How often are the children seen on the van?

Children who are enrolled in the Star Community Health Dental Van Program are seen twice a year for their dental cleanings and checkups. Appointments for any necessary restorative care are booked on an as-needed basis directly on the van, or at one of Star Community Health's brick and mortar clinical sites.

Why are sealants included in dental care?

Dental sealants are a simple way to safeguard teeth against decay. Our dental vans provide many dental sealants for students each year. Sadly, In Pennsylvania, only 13.37% of children enrolled in Medicaid, ages 6-14, received sealants in 2018.

If a child needs additional work that cannot be provided on the van, where do they go?

Children who need additional care are referred to one of our three physical clinical sites in Allentown, Bethlehem and Easton.

What insurance plans are accepted for dental care?

Most major insurances are accepted. We also have a sliding fee discount program that is available to all patients, regardless of their insurance status and ability to pay. Thanks to the sliding fee discount program, dental care has become affordable to everyone.

Do private dentists see kids on Medicaid?

Most private dentists do not accept Medicaid insurance due to low reimbursement.





Why are the dental vans and clinics so vital in the St. Luke's service area?

According to PA Oral Health Plan 2020, "Pennsylvania has 149 individual Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas (DHPSAs), meeting only 47.86% of the oral health care needs in the state. These designations document the maldistribution of the dental workforce and serious disparities in access care for low-income populations. It is well-documented that individuals living in poverty have more oral health problems, and one in five Pennsylvanians are enrolled in Medical Assistance. Transportation, language, geographic and cultural barriers all compound the difficulty these individuals have in accessing care."

How much does it cost to keep a van on the road? Who pays for that?

A new dental van costs approximately \$500,000 to purchase. Due to the age and wear and tear of our current fleet of vans, they require repairs that range from \$10,000-\$30,000 each year to keep them on the road. Operating a van costs \$1,750.00 per day, which includes staffing, supplies, gas and repairs.

How many miles are the vans driven per year?

Collectively, our three vans travel more than 10,000 miles per year to provide care to students.

Additional facts about dental health delivery services among disadvantaged children in Pennsylvania (From the article "Oral Health Status of Low-Income Children in Pennsylvania"):

- Fifty percent of dentists contributed less than 7 percent of a full-time equivalency (FTE) to treating MA-insured children.
- Relatively large contiguous rural areas had no MA dental service in 2017. These occur in the Northern Tier and throughout the rural central region of Pennsylvania.
- In 2017, no MA dental service was provided in 48 percent of rural school districts, and 24 percent of urban districts.

