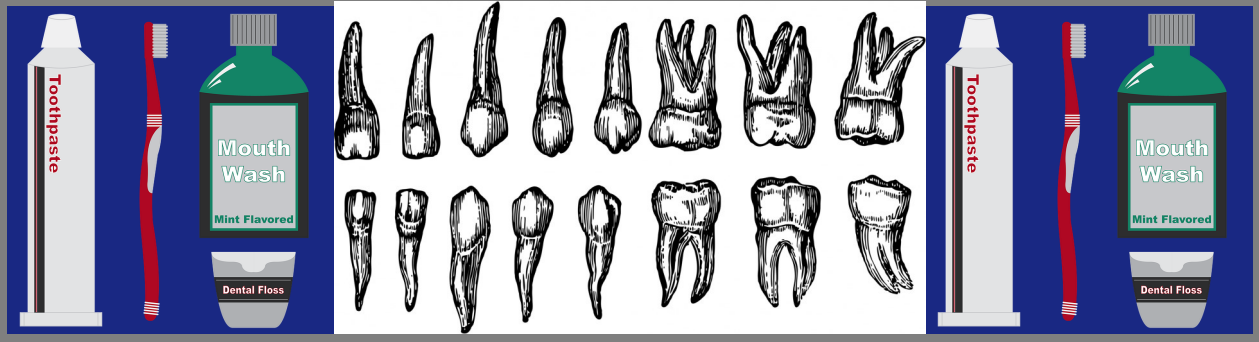


2015-2016 DENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

SUMMARY

As one of the Lehigh Valley's oral health providers, we are passionate about the relationship between oral health and overall health. As you may know, poor dental care can lead to cavities and gum disease but did you know that it can also lead to more serious health problems? For example, gum disease is linked to heart disease, diabetes, dementia, rheumatoid arthritis, and premature births.

During the past year, 2,804 children and 2,180 adults received dental care through the St. Luke's Community Health Dental Program. St. Luke's has a total of four dental clinics: a clinic in both Bethlehem and Easton and two mobile dental clinics. The mobile dental clinics provide dental care to the Bethlehem, Allentown, Bangor and Quakertown School Districts, and area agencies and clinics. All dental clinics provide dental care to those with Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), traditional insurance plans, and the uninsured community members. It is our goal to establish a "dental home" for our patients where they can receive ongoing dental care and build a trusting relationship with the dental providers.

Our General Practice Dental Residency Program contributes to the success of the Dental Health Initiative by training dentists in public dental health, community and school based dental health initiatives, special needs dental care, and treatment of patients with complex medical concerns. Since 2003, 30 dental residents have assisted St. Luke's in providing dental care across the Lehigh Valley.

Through collaboration with Northampton Community College's School of Dental Hygiene, our Sealant Program places preventive dental sealants on children enrolled in the Bethlehem Area School District. The placement of dental sealants is scientifically proven to reduce dental decay. This joint effort provides dental hygiene students with hands-on experience, oral hygiene education, and engages the hygiene student in the community.

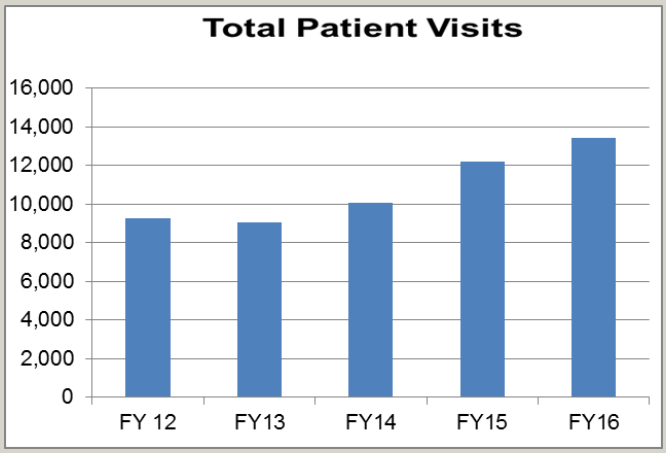
St. Luke's Community Health Dental Initiative and our network of community partners remain committed to improving the oral health and overall health of residents in the Lehigh Valley and beyond, one big, healthy smile at a time.

HIGHLIGHTS

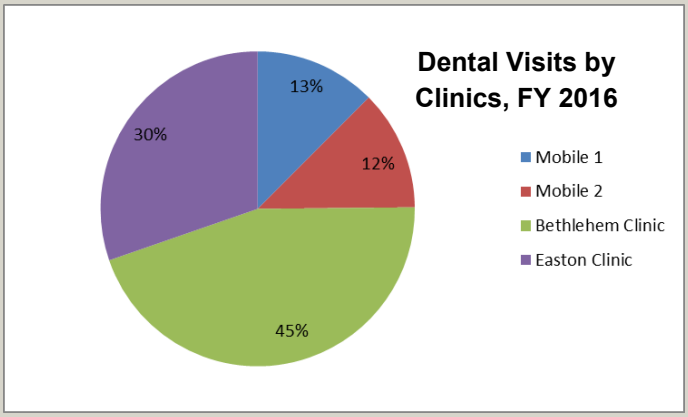
The Bethlehem and Easton Dental Clinics provide comprehensive dental treatment to the adults and children of the Lehigh Valley and surrounding counties. Easton Dental Clinic provides adult dental services as well as focus on pediatric dentistry. The Mobile Dental Program provided dental services to Bethlehem, Allentown, Bangor, and Quakertown School Districts. Dental care was also provided in partnership with Neighborhood Health Centers of the Lehigh Valley, Allentown Kids Care and Bethlehem Kids Care.

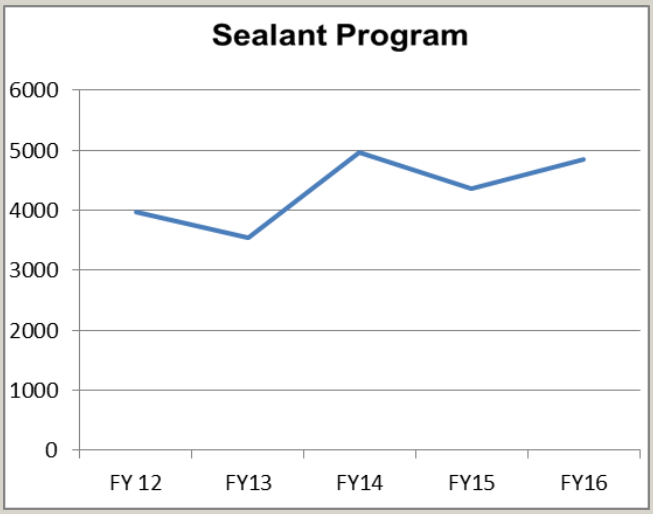
SUCCESSES

- The Mobile Dental Vans continue to treat students during school hours, decreasing the problems of access to dental care due to working parents' schedule and transportation issues.
    - 3,340 dental visits were provided on the Mobile Dental Vans FY2016.
    - $ 310,654 in free dental care was provided to uninsured students in FY2016
    - 3,409 tooth sealants were placed on the Mobile Dental Vans.
    - $25,000 grant obtained from United Concordia Dental for Mobile Dental Van operations.
    - A portable dental x-ray unit was purchased through grant money.
    - Installation of a new floor on one of the Mobile Dental Vans.
    - Refresh the appearance of the Mobile Dental Vans.
    - Other equipment and instrument upgrades for the Mobile Dental Vans.



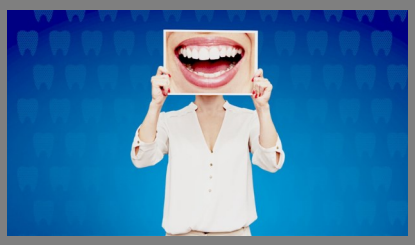
- Installation of a Panoramic Dental X-ray unit in the Bethlehem clinic.





CHALLENGES & NEXT STEPS

- The Mobile Dental Vans are in need of new and updated equipment and repairs annually. Fund raising efforts for the Mobile Dental Vans remains a challenge.
- Purchase of a third Mobile Dental Van to service the needs.
- Methods to improve connecting with parents about their child's dental needs, clinic and specialist referrals, and enrolling in insurance.
- Working towards a prevention model for dental health in children.
- All clinics to utilize Epic for reviewing patient's medical changes and updates.



Report Submitted in 2016