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New beginning for Stanton Dental Care Center

Stanton office moves to Montcalm Area Career Center in Sidney

Stanton, MI~ They say all good things must come to an end. But in the case of the Mid-Michigan District Health Department's (MMDHD) Stanton Dental Care Center, the facility's closing isn't so much an ending as it is a new beginning.

The Dental Center, which opened its doors in September 2000, has been dedicated to providing quality dental care to low-income residents of Montcalm County, particularly those individuals enrolled in Medicaid who historically have found it difficult to access the services of a local dentist.

Over the years, the Dental Center had been very successful in terms of the number of services provided, high client satisfaction, low client no-show rates and strong community support. By 2008, its eighth year of operation, the Dental Center served nearly 2,000 clients and provided over 5,500 appointments.

Since the Dental Center's opening, State Medicaid fee reimbursement rates have remained flat while operating costs have continued to rise. At the same time, the number of children eligible for Medicaid in Montcalm County expanded by nearly 80% during the period 2000 to 2008. In order to address the projected operating expense increases in future years and the growing Medicaid enrollment, MMDHD decided the time was right to expand community partnerships and evaluate the feasibility of a larger facility.

With no possibility for expansion at the Stanton Dental Center's current location, Dr. Scott Koenigsnecht, Montcalm Area Intermediate School District (MAISD) Superintendent, identified approximately 2,100 square feet of available space in the MAISD's Montcalm Area Career Center in Sidney; large enough to expand the clinic from four to six operatories.

As MMDHD administrators delved into the project, they realized quite quickly it would be beneficial to partner with Michigan Community Dental Clinics, Inc. (MCDC), a non-profit company that operates 17 public dental clinics in Michigan. Michigan Community Dental Clinics will employ the staff and run the day to day operation of the new clinic.

MMDHD secured financing for the renovation of the Sidney location and new equipment was paid for through local support from the Stanley and Blanche Ash Foundation, the Greenville Area and Central Montcalm Community Foundations that leveraged Federal Medicaid matching funds..

The Montcalm Area Community Dental Clinic (formerly Stanton Dental Care Center) saw its first patient on Wednesday, July 8, 2009 after six months of renovations. "We are very pleased that dentists Dr. Ammar Houssein and Dr. Lance Bartz will continue to serve patients in the new clinic." Said Kimberly Singh, Health Officer for the MMDHD. It is estimated that the expanded clinic will be able to serve 40% more clients than the former Stanton Dental Care Center (projected 2,600 clients). "This is very exciting, especially during these difficult times," Singh continued. "This clinic will be a great asset to the children of Montcalm County and we wish to thank our local partners for helping to make this possible."

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The clinic serves Medicaid eligible children and adults residing in Montcalm County. Additionally, the clinic will be offering a limited dental plan for uninsured residents based on a sliding-fee scale determined by household income. Residents who would like to make an appointment should call 989-328-2200 or toll-free 877-328-0777.

Mid-Michigan District Health Department serves the residents of Clinton, Gratiot and Montcalm Counties.

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Pictured: Joni Rodgers and William Nava, 9 from Stanton.