Tennessee Department of Health and Meharry Medical College to provide Dental Care in Clarksville

Nashville, TN - Tennessee Health Commissioner John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, joined officials from Meharry Medical College and other state and local officials Tuesday, October 22nd, for an open house at the Maury County Health Department Dental Clinic in Columbia. TDH is partnering with the Meharry School of Dentistry to enhance provision of comprehensive dental care for children and targeted populations of uninsured adults at the facility and at the Montgomery County Health Department Dental Clinic in Clarksville.

“Oral diseases and their consequences are among the most preventable health problems in Tennessee and affect many people in every county,” said Health Commissioner John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH. “We are delighted to expand this innovative partnership with Meharry School of Dentistry to help protect and improve health and offer more great training experiences for dental students, and we hope it can serve as a model for service, training and even job creation in other parts of Tennessee.”

The Maury County Health Department Dental Clinic is a state-of-the-art facility staffed by a full-time dentist and two dental assistants. Fourth-year students at the Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry in Nashville provide services in two-week rotations at the clinic, as part of a new partnership with the college. Clinic rotations are part of the curriculum for all fourth-year students at the school. Meharry students are also serving rotations at the Montgomery County Health Department Dental Clinic in Clarksville.

“Our partnership with the state is fully aligned with Meharry’s vision of ensuring access to health care services for all. Fourth year students have been well trained to deliver optimal oral health care regardless of a patient's income or insurance status,” said Cherae Farmer-Dixon, DDS, dean of the Meharry School of Dentistry. “This partnership expands training opportunities for students and, more importantly, it provides an opportunity for us to work together in addressing oral health disease in communities in Tennessee.”

The Maury County Health Department Dental Clinic provides services on a sliding fee scale based on income. Meharry dental students began serving their rotations September 3rd, with eight students completing rotations to date. In the past year, providers have treated more than 624 patients at the facility. In the past fiscal year, more than 2,900 procedures have been provided at the clinic, with a total value of more than $207,000.
“This partnership will help us better provide needed dental services in communities where those without insurance have limited options for access to oral health care,” said TDH Oral Health Services Director Suzanne Hayes, DDS. “We look at clinics as a regional resource, as we don’t have dental clinics in all counties.”

The Maury County Health Department Dental Clinic is located at 1909 Hampshire Pike in Columbia. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am until 4:30pm. For more information or to make an appointment, call 931-388-5757.

The Montgomery County Health Department Dental Clinic is also a state-of-the-art facility staffed by a full-time dentist and dental assistant providing services on a sliding fee scale based on income. Dental students began serving their rotations September 16th. In the past year, providers have treated more than 782 patients at the facility. A total of 4,110 procedures have been provided to patients at the clinic during the past fiscal year, with a total value of more than $263,000. The clinic is located at 330 Pageant Lane in Clarksville. Hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00am until 4:30pm. For more information or to make an appointment, call 931-648-5747.

Learn more about TDH Oral Health Services at http://health.state.tn.us/oralhealth/index.html. For information about the Meharry Medical College School of Dentistry, visit www.mmc.edu/education/sod/.

The mission of the Tennessee Department of Health is to protect, promote and improve the health and prosperity of people in Tennessee. For more information about TDH services and programs, visit http://health.state.tn.us/.