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OKLAHOMA DENTAL FOUNDATION UNVEILS STATE-OF-THE-ART MOBILESMILES OKLAHOMA DENTAL CLINICS

Oklahoma City, Okla. (July 11, 2024) – The Oklahoma Dental Foundation (ODF) unveiled today the first of five new MobileSmiles Oklahoma (MSO) dental clinics, which were purchased with the \$5.1M in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds awarded to the ODF in 2023. These state-of-the-art dental facilities will be deployed longterm in geographical locations around the state to serve Oklahomans with the greatest need and the least ability to acquire oral health care.

The MSO is a collaborative program of the ODF and site partners including non-profits, schools, churches and organizations already working to address health issues in the community. Each site partner is asked to provide a Community Investment Payment which assists in covering the average daily operational cost of \$5,000. The State of Oklahoma also provides underwriting support through a direct appropriation by the Legislature and through SoonerCare.

In 2023, the MSO visited 146 sites across Oklahoma, serving nearly 1,300 patients, 80 percent of which lived in households with annual incomes of less than \$20,000, and totaled almost \$600,000 in industry value of dental care provided to those in need.

“The need is there for longterm dental support in many areas of the state,” said John Wilguess, Oklahoma Dental Foundation executive director. “The new MobileSmiles Oklahoma clinics will, in effect, allow the ODF to serve five times the number of patients we have seen in past years. As MobileSmiles programming continues to develop, the dental facility may become a dental home for some communities.”

During each site visit, the MSO is equipped with a dental team consisting of a licensed dentist, two dental assistants and many days, two dental students. Each patient is evaluated by a licensed dental professional who will treat the patient’s most pressing dental need, including access to services including exams, x-rays, cleanings, oral hygiene instruction, fillings, extractions, fluoride varnish and sealants.

“These new clinics signify a more robust community outreach for dentistry in Oklahoma than we have ever seen,” said Dr. Justin Beasley, Oklahoma Dental Foundation board chair. “This expansion of MobileSmiles and the impact of the Oklahoma Mission of Mercy will help ensure thousands of Oklahomans can access professional oral health care in ways never before seen. We are all proud to help lead the way in improving the overall health of our state.”

To learn more about the MobileSmiles Oklahoma program or submit a site partner application, visit <https://okdf.org/about/mobilesmiles-oklahoma/>.

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About the Oklahoma Dental Foundation

The Oklahoma Dental Foundation was founded in 1959 as an outgrowth of the Oklahoma Dental Association. The ODF began as a “vehicle to carry the proper dental health story to the people of Oklahoma.” It’s quite fitting that Bert L. Castleberry, founding board member of the ODF, used the term ‘vehicle’ in his speech announcing the Foundation’s incorporation, because the ODF has become, literally, a vehicle for dentistry today as it provides dental education and care throughout the state with mobile dental services.

Now, more than 60 years later, the ODF continues its mission on behalf of the dental health of Oklahomans. There are three significant issues behind the problem of poor oral health in the state that the ODF addresses: Access To Care, Affordability and Lack Of Understanding As To The Importance Of Oral Health To Overall Health.