For Immediate Release

Monongalia Co. Health Dept.’s mobile Smile Express debuts in Braxton County

MORGANTOWN, WV (Aug. 1, 2018) — Monongalia County Health Department will launch Smile Express, a mobile office that will take dental care out into communities, in Braxton County in September. MCHD Smile Express will visit all schools in the system to provide dental care to students who meet certain criteria.

Funded through a $150,000 grant from Delta Dental with additional support from Monongalia County Commission and Rotary Club of Cheat Lake, the mobile unit will allow Monongalia County Health Department staff to hit the road and help schoolchildren and citizens with limited access to dental services not only in Monongalia County but also in Harrison, Lewis and Braxton counties.

Coordinated by Monongalia County Health Department’s full-service dental practice, MCHD Smile Express will perform exams and cleanings on students who do not already have a dental home.

“This program is intended for children who have not seen a dentist in the last 12 months,” said Tiffany Summerlin, a registered dental hygienist who will serve as Smile Express coordinator.

Services provided by MCHD Smile Express’ staff will include an exam by the dentist, an assessment by a public health dental hygienist, cleanings, X-rays, sealants, fluoride treatment, oral health education and minor restorative services.

Summerlin also noted that MCHD Smile Express staff will coordinate with local dentists as a referral network for these children. “Our goal is to provide a bridge to comprehensive dental care,” she said. “Many children may go without dental care not because their parents don’t value their oral health, but their lives are busy and taking time off of work can be a hardship.”
MCHD Smile Express will primarily see patients in Monongalia County, but an opportunity to serve students in Harrison, Lewis and Braxton counties arose with the departure of a dental hygienist from Community Care of West Virginia in those areas. Grant funding from the Center for Rural Health Development’s Oral Health Development Program will support the visits.

Forms to allow students to be seen will be distributed in all Braxton County schools. The forms have to be completed and signed by a parent or legal guardian in order for the child to be seen by MCHD Smile Express.

“I think it’s wonderful that we’re able to provide services for our children in Braxton County,” said David Dilly, superintendent of Braxton County Schools.

There are 2,002 students in the Braxton County school system, Dilly said. He did not know the percentage of students without dental insurance, but he did say that there have been students who have benefited from similar programs. “There is a need. We’re just grateful that we’re able to work together to meet the needs of our students.”

Dr. Mike Wiener, who has experience in dental outreach, will serve as the on-board dentist; and MCHD’s Velvet Urgo will continue her duties as dental assistant.

A Preston County native, Dr. Wiener will retire on Aug. 31 as a dentist with the Federal Bureau of Prisons. In addition to that, Dr. Wiener has performed outreach dentistry for community medical centers and on Native American reservations.

“It’s going to be a great way to make a change in a child’s life,” Dr. Wiener said. “Dental caries (cavities) in children can have horrible consequences. They affect every aspect of their lives. If we can make a change there, that’s fantastic.”

MCHD Smile Express is a converted 2005 Winnebago Voyage motorhome with three slide-outs. It will be driven to the area in August and “wrapped” by The Stick Co. of Morgantown featuring a new logo and branding. It will be retrofitted with equipment to provide two dental operatories with a sterilization center, a reception area and a bathroom.

To make an appointment or for more information, call MCHD Dentistry at 304-598-5108 or go online to mchddentistry.com. For more information on MCHD, check out monchd.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD for up-to-date information on health topics.