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Community Health Center of Franklin County Receives Massachusetts Dental Society Foundation Grant

Grant will help expand access to dental care in Franklin County

SOUTHBOROUGH, Mass.—Jan. 13, 2020—The [Massachusetts Dental Society \(MDS\) Foundation](#) recently awarded a total of nearly \$100,000 in “Expanding Access to Dental Care” grants to six organizations in Massachusetts. The goal of the grants is to improve the oral health of residents of the Commonwealth by supporting sustainable programs that improve access to dental care.

[Community Health Center \(CHC\) of Franklin County](#) has been awarded **\$15,000** to help expand an existing oral health urgent care access site, located within Baystate Franklin Medical Center and adjacent to the Emergency Department. The facility opened in 2016 in response to the rising use of hospital emergency departments for ambulatory care dental conditions that occurred after cuts in Medicaid dental coverage. In 2018, the site saw a total of 958 patients, with 1,748 visits.

CHC of Franklin County Dental Director Dr. Allison van der Velden said, “We have established a healthy collaboration with the hospital emergency room staff and a reputation in the community as being a place to receive definitive emergency dental care as well as a pathway to comprehensive, routine, and preventive long-term oral health care.

“This funding will help make the site a permanent establishment and improve our overall safety and operations,” Dr. van der Velden added. “By allowing us to stay open longer hours and increase the number of patients seen annually, this grant will help us continue to have an impact on the cost of care and long-term oral health outcomes of our area population.”

MDS Foundation Chair Dr. Robert Lewando said, “Because of the generosity of MDS Foundation donors, we are able to assist organizations like the CHC of Franklin County in its efforts to improve the overall health of many Massachusetts residents who ordinarily might not receive care. It is our hope that the Foundation will continue to grow so we can help sponsor additional services that will most benefit communities in need.”

Visit massdental.org/grant-recipients to learn more about the Foundation’s grant recipients.

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The [MDS Foundation](#) is the charitable arm of the [Massachusetts Dental Society](#). The MDS Foundation is dedicated to directing its charitable resources to improve the oral health of Massachusetts residents. To learn more, visit massdental.org/Foundation.