

Dental Clinic Moves to STCC;
Western Mass. Hospital Clinic to Provide
Oral Health Care for Springfield-Area Families in New Location

Springfield-area families, particularly those who use MassHealth, will gain convenient access to full dentistry services at the Springfield Community Dental Clinic, now located at Springfield Technical Community College.

The dental clinic, operated by the Western Massachusetts Hospital, was previously located at the hospital's main site in Westfield. Now situated in the center of Springfield, the clinic was introduced with a ribbon-cutting ceremony on April 3. It is expected to open for patients in late May or June.

For several years, area health professionals and organizations had sought a solution to the increasingly serious need for oral health care for families in Springfield who are uninsured or underinsured. Partners for a Healthier Community, an affiliate of Baystate Health; the Preschool Oral Health Task Force; and the STCC School of Health and Patient Simulation had hoped to establish a network of dental providers, particularly in the Springfield public schools, to help young children get a healthier start in life.

The City of Springfield department of health and human services, through a grant, was able to establish a clinic at the German Gerena School; however, other Springfield schools had no clinic available to which they could refer their students, and as the students grew older, and progressed to middle school and high school, there would be no continuity of service.

Many Springfield individuals and families had been travelling to Westfield to access the services of the clinic at the Western Mass. Hospital. When that clinic was scheduled to be closed for large-scale renovations, Partners for a Healthier Community and STCC joined with Western Mass. Hospital's then-CEO, Blake Molleur, to bring the clinic to the center of Springfield.

According to Partners for a Healthier Community Executive Director Frank Robinson, "At a conservative estimate, the dental clinic will serve more than 10,000 individuals and families in Springfield, who live within a mile of Springfield Technical Community College. "

Initially, the Western Mass. Hospital will operate the clinic five days a week, from 8:30 to 4:30. According to Western Mass. Hospital CEO Derrick Tallman, "The patient focus is to provide full dentistry to uninsured and underinsured individuals and families. The hospital will serve patients with MassHealth and will provide a sliding fee scale of self-pay individuals."

Funding for the clinic came from a mixture of public and private groups, including the Oral Health Foundation, funded by Delta Dental of Massachusetts; the Western Massachusetts Hospital; The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Division of Capital Asset Management; Partners for a Healthier Community Inc.; Massachusetts Dental Society; and Springfield Technical Community College. Chairs for the waiting room were donated by East Longmeadow dentist Lawrence Life.

