

# ADANews

## Current Issue

### **San Diego dental groups, veterans' rehab center collaborate on clinic**

April 20, 2015

By Michelle Manchir



**Dental progress:** *Dr. Stacey Moon, dental fellow at the UCSD Free Dental Clinic Project and Ryan Pham, UCSD pre-dental student, talk with ADA President Maxine Feinberg at the UCSD Pacific Beach Free Dental Clinic site in March. The UCSD Pre-Dental Society runs four free dental clinics based in the San Diego County area with the help of dental professionals. An upcoming site at Veterans Village of San Diego, in conjunction with the San Diego Dental Health Foundation, will expand the program further.*

**San Diego** — Some disadvantaged veterans in need of dental care in San Diego will have a state-of-the-art clinic to visit beginning this summer, thanks to a collaboration between a rehabilitation center and local dental groups.

The San Diego Dental Health Foundation is working in partnership with the University of California, San Diego Student-Run Free Dental Clinic project and the Veterans Village of San Diego to build a dental clinic for disadvantaged and homeless veterans.

San Diego County Dental Society members will provide volunteer dental care, while UCSD pre-dental students will manage the administrative aspects of running the clinic and screening for volunteer dentists. The new clinic will supplement the services already offered at Veterans Village of San Diego, including medical care, rehabilitation and mental health services, substance abuse recovery, legal services, job training, food and housing.

ADA President Maxine Feinberg, who visited the site of the future clinic in March, called the effort “amazing.”

“Some of these veterans are coming out of rehabilitation and out of homelessness, having combatted drug addiction and alcoholism. They’re trying to regain footing in society and this dental clinic will be a major component of helping to reintegrate them back into productive members in their community,” said Dr. Feinberg in a recent interview.



**Looking ahead:** Standing among other UCSD pre-dental students at Veterans Village San Diego are (from left) Diewitt Duong, former student director, UCSD Free Dental Clinic Project; Charlotte Chiu; Akanksha Shukla; Daniel Witcher, oral surgeon, San Diego; Thomas Bordieri, former student director, UCSD Free Dental Clinic Project; Dr. Donna Silverstein, professor, UCSD School of Medicine and advisor, UCSD Free Dental Clinic Project; Dr. Thomas Brandt, general dentist, El Cajon; Dr. Maxine Feinberg, ADA president; Michael Koonce, executive director, San Diego County Dental Society; Justin Montenegro; Dr. Irvin B. Silverstein, director, UCSD Free Dental Clinic Project; Patrick Anghel; Rick Ochocki, development director, Veteran’s Village of San Diego; Sean Sullivan, director, Patterson Dental, San Diego; and Philip Yoong.

Several members of the board of directors of the San Diego Dental Health Foundation, which is the charitable arm of the county dental society, have already provided needed dental services in their own offices for some residents of Veterans Village of San Diego, according to Annabel Wulfhart, care coordinator for the San Diego County Dental Society. To date, they’ve provided basic and major restorative services valued at \$100,000, according to Ms. Wulfhart.

Many of the veterans served are missing teeth and require partials or dentures, according to Dr. Irvin B. Silverstein, director and advisor for UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinics.

Assisting veterans at the dental clinic with these issues can help them not only get back to work, but also improve their self-esteem, said Dr. Feinberg.

At the future dental clinic, veterans' "dental problems are going to be addressed in a very comprehensive way so that they'll be able to go to job interviews," Dr. Feinberg said. "Dental issues will no longer be an impediment to reintegrating them into the work force. This is a very important part of helping reintegrate people back into their communities — not just relieving pain but helping to recreate smiles."

Indeed, Veterans Village of San Diego President Phil Landis said the dental clinic will be an important addition to the other needed services the facility provides.

"It's hard for a veteran to feel good about themselves and go out into the world to succeed when their smile is unsightly," Mr. Landis said. "Having the San Diego County Dental Society clinic co-located with our Veteran Treatment Center provides expanded dental care for those who need it the most."

For more information about Veterans Village of San Diego, visit [vvsd.net](http://vvsd.net). For more information about the work of the San Diego Dental Health Foundation, visit [sddhf.org](http://sddhf.org). For more information about the UCSD Pre-Dental Society, visit [fdc-pds.ucsd.edu](http://fdc-pds.ucsd.edu).

Subscriptions



Submit Comments



Advertising



Permissions and Reprints

