



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Catharine Young

## Senator Young Secures \$372,000 in Funding for Mobile Dental Services from UB's Dental School

CATHARINE YOUNG August 23, 2018

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Albany, NY – Building on her longstanding commitment to improving health care access in rural areas, Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I – 57<sup>th</sup> District) secured \$372,000 in funding in the 2018-19 state budget to support UB Dental School's mobile dental van. An initiative aimed at serving rural communities in the Southern Tier lacking access to dental care, the mobile dental unit serves children as well as a growing number of veterans and seniors.

Approximately 4,000 patients in total receive services each year.

A longtime champion of the program, Senator Young secured an additional \$122,000 this year to expand the program's dental services and to launch new prevention-related educational activities.

“Good dental care is not only important for oral health; it impacts an individuals' quality of life and overall physical health and longevity. Particularly for children, early dental care can have a lifelong positive impact,” said Senator Young. “Yet, for residents in our rural communities, access to dental care is often limited or nonexistent. The University at Buffalo's state-of-the-art mobile dental unit addresses this challenge by going where the need is – to rural schools, Head Start programs, community centers and, more recently, veterans' organizations. Their expertise and commitment to this program has been extraordinary which is why I've been such a strong supporter and worked to secure increased state funding to expand their services.”

The 2018-19 grant brings the overall total funds that Senator Young has secured for the program in the past four years to over \$1.2 million. In addition to general program support, this year's increased funding will help expand the “Dentistry Smiles on Veterans” event, a free dental care clinic. The program aims to deliver needed services to veterans who lack dental insurance or do not qualify for dental treatment through the Veterans Health Administration, a benefit reserved only for those with service-related dental injuries.

The “UB S-Miles to Go” dental van will be serving veterans the week of August 27 – 31 at the Mayville Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Post at 10 Memorial Drive, Mayville from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. The following week, September 4 – 6, dental services for seniors will be offered at the VFW Post. Appointments can be scheduled by calling 716-449-1674.

“Providing critically-needed dental services to our veterans is an important way we can help those who selflessly served and sacrificed for our nation. They demonstrated a tremendous

commitment to our country through their military service. Now, it is our turn to show our commitment to them by doing all that we can to advance their access to dental care and its many health benefits,” said Senator Young. “The program is also increasing its services to seniors which I wholeheartedly support. Medicare does not cover most dental care which forces many seniors on fixed incomes to forgo needed services. The dental van can help fill that gap.”

”Senator Young’s support for our mobile dental unit and our “S-miles to Go” program has been critically important in expanding access to oral health care for children and more recently, veterans, throughout the southern counties of Western New York. Without her support, the School of Dental Medicine would be hard pressed to continue these important outreach activities,” said Dean Joseph Zambon.

Additional new initiatives the program is undertaking include an Oral Disease Prevention training program, which will be presented in collaboration with ARC to ensure staff and residents oral health needs are being addressed. The school will also be partnering with the Chautauqua County Office for the Aging to offer the Wisdom Tooth Project, a program of Oral Health America whose goal is to encourage preventive dental care among the senior population.

The program serves the twin goals of providing oral health care to underserved areas while also training dental students and introducing them to the challenges faced by patients who lack access to dental care. It is an opportunity that motivates some students to practice in these rural settings.