TAKE ACTION

Discuss the funding issue with all representatives and senators. Tell them that PDA is hoping to restore the $150,000 in funding as a line item in the state budget that passes in June. Ask them to encourage House and Senate Leaders and the Appropriation committee chairs to reinstate the funding.

Look to see if you are meeting with any House and Senate Leaders and members of the Appropriations committees (particularly the committee chairs). Make a special effort to educate them about the issue and request that they reinstate the $150,000 in funding.

Mention to all senators and representatives that Sen. Edwin Erickson and Rep. Tom Murt introduced legislation to reinstate the funding in the event that Appropriation leaders do not add funding back into the budget that passes in June. Ask them to support SB 290 and HB 1446. PDA is not sure which bill will gain traction, so please mention both bills to your legislators.

Look to see if your legislators cosponsored SB 290 or HB 1446 and thank them for their support.

#DAYONTHEHILL

TALKING POINTS FOR THE DDS PROGRAM

Many Pennsylvanians who are disabled, elderly or medically compromised suffer from seriously-neglected dental problems that must be fixed before they are treated for other problems. Many cannot work because of their disabilities. Medicare, however, does not cover dental care and the state’s Medical Assistance program provides limited dental benefits to adults. The DDS program serves as a last resort resource for these individuals.

Since 1996, the DDS program in Pennsylvania has served more than 3,600 individuals because of the generosity of more than 730 dentists and 320 dental laboratories. More than $10.2 million in free dental care was provided.

During the 2012-13 fiscal year, Pennsylvania will be one of 41 states which will collectively help 7,550 individuals access $24.2 million in free dental care.

Pennsylvania has the fourth largest elderly population in the United States. As baby boomers retire, unmet dental needs and expenditures will rise exponentially.

Without the state’s funding, Dental Lifeline Network is having difficulty sustaining the DDS program. There is a strong likelihood Pennsylvania’s program will end. Dental Lifeline Network should not be considered a sustainable funding source.

FUNDING THE DONATED DENTAL SERVICES PROGRAM

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THE ISSUE

In 2009, the state cut its funding for Pennsylvania’s Donated Dental Services (DDS) program. This program recruited and coordinated volunteer dentists and dental laboratories to provide services free of charge to Pennsylvanians who are disabled, elderly and/or medically compromised, who are ineligible for public assistance but still unable to afford the cost of dental care. Many of these patients cannot be treated for more serious illnesses due to their dental problems.

This funding was used by Dental Lifeline Network, a nonprofit, to employ two regional coordinators who managed the program and facilitated between patients and dentists and dental labs. Since the state cut its $150,000 in funding, Dental Lifeline Network has operated the program on a shoestring budget but has indicated that it cannot sustain the program by itself for much longer. Dental Lifeline Network is only able to employ one coordinator who works remotely from another state. With only one coordinator, some counties have extensive waiting lists or are no longer accepting new patients into the program.

A reinstating of funding will give Dental Lifeline Network the opportunity to continue the program and rehire the second coordinator to facilitate the program, thereby improving access to care for those in need.

USE YOUR SMART PHONE TO LOG ON TO PADENTAL.ORG/DAYONTHEHILL TO FIND OUT EVERYTHING YOU WILL NEED FOR DAY ON THE HILL!

For more information about the DDS program, please log on to padental.org/dayonthehill.
Some manufacturers donate materials for dentures, crowns, bridges and implants. The demand for dental lab services is often greater than what labs have the ability to donate. At times, Dental Lifeline Network pay for lab fabrications, but this is becoming more difficult without the state’s funding to pay for other operational expenses.

A recent Dental Lifeline Network survey of volunteers revealed that a majority of dentists participate with DDS solely because they feel that it’s important to give back to the community. Dentists ARE concerned about access to care and many are willing to devote time, resources and money to care for those in need.

A second full-time coordinator is critical to the program’s success. This individual conducts telephone interviews to screen applicants and determine eligibility. He links eligible patients with nearby volunteer dentists, monitors the progress of each patient, arranges lab services, acquires the help of specialists when needed and follows up with patients and volunteers. One coordinator is not enough to manage the entire state, and the number of patients served has decreased significantly since the state cut its funding.

Through DDS, dentists and dental laboratories volunteer to provide comprehensive treatment to one or two patients each year. Volunteer dentists treat DDS patients in their own dental offices, which allow them to use their own equipment and staff. This is far less costly than treating patients in an emergency room, which will happen more frequently if there are no longer any DDS volunteer dentists. Taxpayers ultimately bear the cost of treating more serious dental problems that would have been eliminated with prevention and early intervention.

Some manufacturers donate materials for dentures, crowns, bridges and implants. The demand for dental lab services is often greater than what labs have the ability to donate. At times, Dental Lifeline Network pay for lab fabrications, but this is becoming more difficult without the state’s funding to pay for other operational expenses.

The DDS program was a successful partnership between the public and private sectors, connecting Pennsylvania’s most vulnerable citizens with dentists willing to donate their time and resources to provide them oral health care for free. The state should not squander the benevolence of hundreds of dentists and dental laboratories willing to treat these individuals who are in need.

A recent Dental Lifeline Network survey of volunteers revealed that a majority of dentists participate with DDS solely because they feel that it’s important to give back to the community. Dentists ARE concerned about access to care and many are willing to devote time, resources and money to care for those in need.

#DAYONTHEHILL

CURRENT STATISTICS:

- Average value of care per patient: $2,833
- $9.92 of donated care for every dollar spent
- 738 volunteer dentists in Pennsylvania
- 322 volunteer dental laboratories in Pennsylvania
- In 2013, 138 patients treated so far
- 92 patients are on the waiting list

COMPARISON BETWEEN 2008-09 (WITH STATE FUNDING) AND 2011-12 (WITHOUT STATE FUNDING):

Patients served in Pennsylvania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patients</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>270</td>
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</table>

Value of donated dental care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>$1,207,979</td>
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Value of donated lab services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2008-09</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value</td>
<td>$119,372</td>
<td>$77,182</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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