



NEWS RELEASE

HealthLink Dental Clinic, Inc.
1775 Street Rd, Southampton, PA 18966
(215) 364-4247 phone
(215) 791-1907 fax
www.healthlinkdental.org

15 Years Strong: Clinic Provides \$720,853 in Free Dental Care Last Year

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Raquel Braemer, CFRE
Development Director
rbraemer@healthlinkdental.org

(Southampton, PA) In 2016, HealthLink Dental Clinic provided \$720,853 worth of dental care to low-income adults living in Bucks and Montgomery Counties at no cost to the patient. The clinic was visited by 1,779 adults for more than 2,660 appointments. At these appointments, eligible adults received care ranging from fillings (of which 1,534 were provided) to cleanings (1,084) to extractions (240) and even root canals (95) and crowns (11).

In 2001, HealthLink opened its doors to the community “bridging the gap” between those who qualified for Medical Assistance coverage and those who could afford health care coverage. While much has changed in the 15 years since then, the free clinic remained committed to meeting the unmet needs of its underserved adult neighbors.

2016 was the organization’s first full year officially known as HealthLink Dental Clinic. Having previously provided medical care on-site, HealthLink made the strategic decision in 2015 to focus exclusively on providing dental care after the implementation of the Affordable Care Act, the expansion of Medicaid, and the existence of two other free medical clinics in Bucks County meant that a dwindling number of adults in the community would require medical care.

Dental care, however, was left largely unaddressed, despite the lack of access in the clinic’s two county service area. In fact, according to the 2016 Community Health Needs Assessment of Abington Jefferson Health, more than one quarter (27%) of residents did not see a dentist in the last year. Those people living below 200% of the poverty level were 51% less likely than those above this level.

Low-income adults in our community simply cannot afford to see a dentist and receive proper oral health care. HealthLink eliminates this financial barrier by providing these underserved adult residents of Bucks and Montgomery Counties with quality, compassionate dental care at no-cost.

A partnership with Temple University’s Kornberg School of Dentistry began in March 2016 and meant that HealthLink patients now had access to root canal treatment on-site and still at no out-of-pocket cost. Once the clinic began offering root canals, the next step was to provide crowns to protect the dental work.

“We’re thrilled with the success of the partnership with the Kornberg School of Dentistry and what it has meant for our patients,” says Bernie Dishler, DDS, Board President and Volunteer at HealthLink. “We’ve expanded the on-site services available, and this means that we have been able to continue to evolve with the changing healthcare landscape and the needs of our community.”

HealthLink Dental Clinic is not part of a large hospital system, nor is it funded by the government. Its operating budget is funded entirely by donations from foundations, corporations, and individuals. With the help of a small staff, oral health services are provided by local dentists volunteering their time to the charity and its mission.

To learn more about the clinic, its mission, and who is eligible for free care, visit www.healthlinkdental.org or call (215) 364-4247.

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HealthLink Dental Clinic is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to improve the overall health of qualified low-wage earning adults in Bucks and Montgomery counties by providing free preventative and restorative dental services and oral health education. HealthLink is located at 1775 Street Road in Southampton, Pennsylvania. More information is available online at www.healthlinkdental.org.

Photo 1: HealthLink Dental Clinic provides free dental care to low-income adults living in Bucks and Montgomery Counties. In 2016, this amounted to \$720,853 worth of services provided at no cost to patients.

