Centered on the community

A.T. Still University (ATSU) announced a ground-breaking partnership with the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC). The partnership between ATSU and NACHC will help create and advance interprofessional scholarly activity within Bureau of Primary Health Care-supported community health centers, and it will help improve the health status of patients and communities across the nation. This partnership is in alignment with ATSU-MOSDOH’s vision.

The relationship between ATSU and community health centers may also be seen through ATSU’s collaboration with Grace Hill Health Centers Inc. (GHHC) in St. Louis, Mo. ATSU-MOSDOH students will have direct access to patients in need through GHHC. During students’ third and fourth years, they will provide oral health services for members of St. Louis communities. One hundred percent of the students’ clinical rotations will take place in underserved populations. Under supervision of licensed dental professionals, students will gain critical, hands-on experience with patients while simultaneously providing a service to a community population in need of access to oral healthcare.

The partnership ATSU developed with NACHC, in conjunction with a focus on public health for ATSU-MOSDOH, will lead to improving access to oral healthcare and overall health for communities across the nation.

Pictured above: ATSU-MOSDOH Dean Christopher Halliday, DDS, and GHHC CEO Alan Freeman welcomed Donald Suggs, DDS, and Alphonso Trottman, DDS, at an ATSU-sponsored event to discuss the St. Louis Dental Education and Oral Health Clinic. Photographed left to right are Freeman and Drs. Suggs, Halliday, and Trottman.
Class of 2018

stats

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Passing the torch

Student spotlight: Cesar R., D2
Hometown: Agua Prieta, Mexico

“I grew up in an environment surrounded by people needing care. I was born in Arizona, but I spent the majority of my life in Mexico. My father was a physician and took it upon himself to treat patients with little to no money.

Oftentimes, he would not receive payment for care he provided. All that mattered to him was providing care for those who needed it most. His passion inspired me to pursue dentistry. I saw how oral health and overall health worked hand-in-hand.

You can make such a positive impact in someone’s life. In my experience, dentistry is unique in that you develop strong relationships with your patients. I see my dentist more often than my physician. I like the idea of building those relationships and providing care to those in need.

In my family, providing care started with my father. Now, it will continue through me. I just want to follow in his footsteps and take care of the communities that took care of us.”

ATSU-MOSDOH dental student Cesar poses with the University mascot, Bucky.

Always with a smile, Cesar plans to provide care to communities that need it most.

Community outreach: Smiles all around

ATSU-MOSDOH students partnered with ATSU-Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine students and faculty to provide dental and health services for patients attending the health fair in Milan, Mo. Dental students provided oral health education and fluoride varnish application to Milan citizens. Many who attended the fair were either underinsured or uninsured, and it marked the first time dental services were provided by supervised dental students.

In collaboration with more than 991 volunteers, ATSU-MOSDOH students and faculty members provided services and care for the Missouri Mission of Mercy. The event was a two-day, free dental care clinic that provided care to more than 1,600 individuals in the St. Louis area. The clinic represented the students’ first exposure to a similar population they will be working with extensively during third and fourth year.

ATSU-MOSDOH students coordinated with the Early Childhood Development Center in Kirksville, Mo., to educate both parents and children about the importance of oral healthcare. Parents received oral health supplies for their children, including toothbrushes and floss. Students also provided brushing and flossing demonstrations to children.
Breaking ground and building hope

ATSU’s St. Louis Dental Education and Oral Health Clinic is on schedule for its opening in summer 2015. The 79,000-square-foot, 92-operatory clinic located east of La Fayette Square at 1500 Park Avenue will focus on providing oral health access to those who need it most. This includes a full spectrum of patients including children, adults, geriatric patients, the disabled, the homeless, the underinsured, and the uninsured. St. Louis design and contracting companies, Cannon Design and Musick Construction respectively, have been instrumental in the vision and construction of the facility.

The clinic will house both ATSU-MOSDOH and Grace Hill Health Centers Inc. (GHHC) employees. ATSU-MOSDOH will be responsible for educating students and caring for patients, while GHHC will run day-to-day operations of the facility. With 100 percent of student rotations taking place in underserved areas, access to oral healthcare will become easier for those in need. This model represents an innovation in oral healthcare and dental education, and the state-of-the-art facility will provide a perfect environment for its implementation.

Leading by example

Kim Perry, DDS, MSCS, associate dean, clinical operations/director of dental services, ATSU’s St. Louis Dental Education and Oral Health Clinic, settled into her role for ATSU-MOSDOH. With more than 25 years in leadership and clinical care experience in oral health and a broad range of research focusing on health disparities in communities, Dr. Perry brings an established history of improving oral healthcare access to communities in need.

New additions to faculty and staff at the St. Louis Dental Education and Oral Health Clinic include Marco Rouman, DDS, MFDS RCS (Ed.), MFDS RCPSG, associate dean, clinical education and community partnerships, and Patricia Inks, RDH, MS, associate director, dentistry in the community and integrated community service partnerships.

Born in Cairo, Egypt, Dr. Rouman attended the Dental School of Cairo University and earned a certificate in geriatric dentistry from the University of Minnesota. In addition, Dr. Rouman earned a certificate in supplemental education in general dentistry from the University of Iowa College of Dentistry.

Inks received a bachelor’s degree in dental hygiene at West Virginia University and later received her master’s degree in professional leadership, training, and development from Carlow University.

Similar to Dr. Perry, Dr. Rouman and Inks will serve as faculty members and community liaisons. The new additions bring a wealth of experience and distinguished educational backgrounds to the St. Louis Dental Education and Oral Health Clinic.
ATSU-MOSDOH continues to receive generous contributions from individuals and organizations believing in the University’s mission and vision. Sirona Dental Systems LLC and the Missouri Higher Education Loan Authority (MOHELA) both provided significant gifts in kind toward the advancement of ATSU-MOSDOH.

Under the direction of President Ray Bayer, MOHELA pledged $100,000 for a naming opportunity in ATSU’s St. Louis Dental Education and Oral Health Clinic. This gift will be applied to the clinic’s uncompensated care fund, Missouri Smile Forward®.

Missouri Smile Forward® provides oral healthcare services for patients with little or no dental insurance benefits and who demonstrate financial need. Allowing patients the option to keep their smile through funding assistance for dental restorative services is at the heart of the Missouri Smile Forward® program.

Sirona Dental Systems LLC provided dental equipment for students to use throughout their dental education. The gifts in kind are valued at almost $325,000.

“The CEREC equipment from Sirona will allow ATSU-MOSDOH dental students to learn the most updated technology in dental ceramics while in a pre-clinical setting, working hands-on with digital impressions, computer-assisted design, and chairside milling of final dental restorations,” said Allison Crutchfield, DMD, ’09, director, pre-clinical education and simulation clinic.

Both of these contributions directly impact ATSU-MOSDOH’s vision of providing access to oral healthcare across the country.