



## Dental Public Health Activities Descriptive Summaries

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### Kansas Mission of Mercy

Access to dental care is a serious problem in Kansas. One in every four children in third grade has untreated dental decay and more than fifty percent of all children have experienced dental decay according to one recent study. In response to the need for dental care services, the Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation, the charitable arm of the Kansas Dental Association, administer and operate the Kansas Mission of Mercy (KMOM), a charitable dental project. Each KMOM project is a three-day event providing dental treatment services to the underserved population. KMOM is designed to serve the neediest on a first-come, first-served basis. During 2003-2005, four KMOM dental projects have been completed. The Kansas Dental Charitable Foundation held free dental clinics in the following locations:

1. Finney County Fairgrounds Exhibition Building in Garden City, Kansas (Feb. 28 – Mar. 2, 2003)
2. Kansas Speedway in Wyandotte County, Kansas (Aug. 22 - 24, 2003)
3. Campus of Pittsburg State University in Pittsburg, Kansas (Apr. 30 - May 2, 2004)
4. BiCentennial Center in Salina, Kansas (Feb. 18-20, 2005)

A total of 8,878 patients have been served at a value of \$3,394,358 of dental services delivered. The most prominent services provide by the KMOM projects are fillings, extractions, cleanings and some root canals. A dental lab is also available on site and has the ability to make a limited numbers dentures and make corrections to prosthetic devices as needed. The cost of each KMOM project is approximately \$65,000. This includes purchasing dental supplies such as amalgam caplets, chrome steel crowns, composite filling material, anesthesia, needles, gauze, cotton applicators, gloves, bibs, etc. In addition, the cost covers facility rental, insurance and security costs, and food for patients. In addition, nearly \$75,000 has been invested in purchasing dental chairs, units and lights. The KMOM projects are staffed by nearly 1,000 volunteers. Exit surveys of the patients served by the dental clinic were conducted to show the self-reported characteristics and experiences of the patients. For one of the free dental clinics, exit surveys collected responses from 98% of the patients served. Patients were predominantly adults, three-fourths of clinic patients were age 19 or older. Nearly half of patients were non-Hispanic whites; more than one quarter were African-American, and nearly 20 percent were Hispanic/Latino. Eighty-two percent of patients age 3 and older had not been to see a dentist in over a year and 17 percent were seeing a dentist for the first time. Almost one-half of the patients reported that they had been suffering dental pain before coming to the clinic. Two-thirds of the patients traveled 30 minutes or longer to attend the clinic. Nearly 25 percent traveled an hour or longer to get to the clinic. Respondents were highly satisfied with the clinic services. Ninety percent of respondents reported being "very happy" with the services received; less than two percent reported they were dissatisfied in any way concerning their experience.

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