Dental Public Health Activity
Descriptive Summary

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Elks Mobile Dental Program –
Dental Care for People with Special Needs in Rural Missouri

The Elks Mobile Dental Program began nearly 40 years ago. The program delivers free dental services to children and adults with developmental disabilities and/or mental retardation throughout the state of Missouri using three mobile clinics. The program is a partnership between the Missouri Elks Association, the Bureau of Special Health Care Needs of the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, and Truman Medical Center.

Basic dental services (diagnostic, preventive, restorative and oral surgical) are provided to clients from all 114 counties of the state at 43 sites. The sites were selected to be familiar and easily utilized by the clients; they include state schools for the disabled, regional centers, sheltered workshops, and Elks lodges. The annual cost of the program is approximately $485,000. The majority of operating revenue, approximately $383,000 comes from the state Bureau of Special Health Care Needs (Title V Block grant funds); and approximately $102,000 comes from the Missouri Elks. The program has made a tremendous difference in the lives of people with special needs who formerly lacked access to dental care because of their medical condition, rural location, and/or insurance status.

Lessons Learned:

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services no longer partners with the Missouri Elks Association and Truman Medical Medical Center on this Program.

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