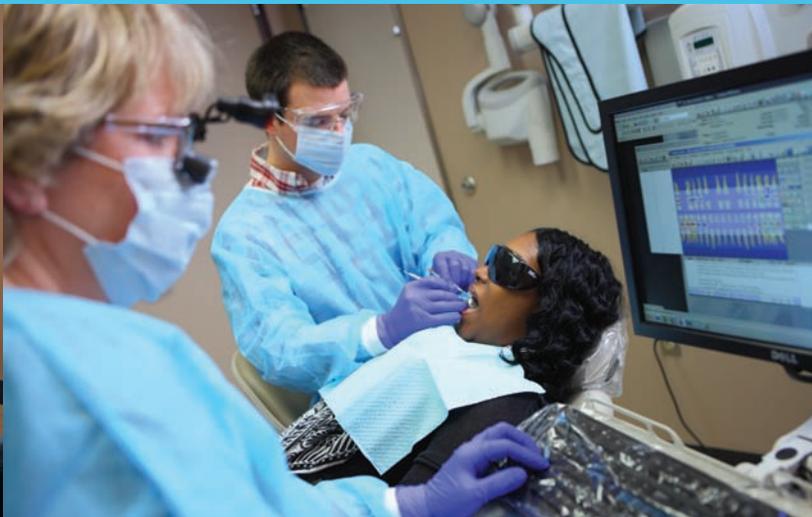




# COMMUNITY BOUND

Penn Dental Medicine Expanding its Reach in West Philly at New Sayre Health Center Clinic



## On a chilly Friday morning

in February, Dr. Gregg Rothstein, Director of Penn Dental Medicine at Dr. Bennett L. Johnson Jr. Sayre Health Center, has just finished treating one of the five patients on his schedule in the West Philadelphia facility.

Situated in a neighborhood without many dental health care options, there is great demand for dental health care at the Center. "We're seeing patients who have not had dental care in years, who are now starting to seek care," Dr. Rothstein says. "It's very convenient for them. We put banners up and people started coming in."

Open since this past September, this new clinic is the first Penn Dental Medicine facility to offer comprehensive dental care alongside Penn Medicine doctors and nurses, making it a convenient one-stop health care center for patients, most of them from the surrounding community, and offering Penn Dental students an opportunity to gain clinical experience in a community health setting.

The dental care center at Sayre is among several programs funded through a \$2 million grant awarded to the School's Division of Community Oral Health in 2010 from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The grant was awarded to support community and public health training for Penn Dental Medicine students (see box, page 5).

### Interdisciplinary Collaborations with Penn Colleagues

Penn Dental Medicine at Sayre Health Center is one of the latest examples of Penn Dental Medicine dentists and students working in interdisciplinary collaborations with other schools and colleagues across the University of Pennsylvania campus.

[Penn Dental Medicine at the Dr. Bennett L. Johnson Jr. Sayre Health Center offers comprehensive dental care for patients of all ages. Students in the School's community health honors program are providing care at this new clinic site.](#)

The Dr. Bennett L. Johnson Jr. Sayre Health Center, located since 2006 at the back of Sayre High School at 59th and Walnut streets, is a full-service, primary care health center staffed by physicians in Penn's Department of Medicine and Community Health. It is a federally qualified health center and, as with the new dental care facility, patients pay for services based on a sliding fee scale that takes into account their ability to pay.

"Access to dental care remains problematic for many individuals in West Philadelphia," says Dr. Joan Gluch, Penn Dental Medicine's Director of Community Health and Associate Dean of Academic Policies and program

director/principal investigator of the HRSA grant. The new Penn Dental Medicine facility at Sayre Health Center, Dr. Gluch says, "offers a welcoming setting for patients to be treated in a comprehensive health care environment."

That sentiment is echoed by patient Réne Coleman, who says receiving dental care in the same building where she, her daughter, and granddaughter all go for health care is a huge convenience. "I live about two blocks away and I'm glad to

have it in my neighborhood," she said before a recent dental appointment.

### Building a Dental Care Facility in the Community

Between patients one recent morning, Dr. Rothstein shows off the state-of-the-art dental treatment room that he helped design last summer. In addition to the treatment room, which features digital radiography, the dental area at Sayre includes a laboratory/sterilization area and storage room.

Dr. Rothstein, who has a general dental practice in Richboro, Pa., sees patients at Sayre Health Center on Fridays and some Wednesdays. Before taking this position, he spent Fridays as an attending faculty member with PennSmiles, Penn Dental Medicine's mobile clinic that provides dental care for children at area schools. When asked by Dr. Gluch and Dr. Robert Collins (D'71), Clinical Professor of Community Oral Health and Director of International



Relations, to head up the new dental facility at Sayre Health Center, Dr. Rothstein says, "I was eager to do it."

The clinic offers comprehensive dental care for patients of all ages, and Dr. Rothstein says he does "a little bit of everything," including fillings, crown and bridge work, dentures, oral surgery and extractions, as well as limited endodontics.

He is joined at Sayre Health Center by Deanne Wallaert, RDH, a public health dental hygiene practitioner, who became part of Penn Dental Medicine's Division of Community Oral Health in July to help run this new clinic. In Pennsylvania, hygienists can practice in a public health setting without a dentist in attendance, and Wallaert sees patients in the Center five days a week for preventive care and evaluations. In addition, she manages clinic operations, and is responsible for scheduling appointments, billing, and ordering supplies as well as for community outreach initiatives.

Accompanied at times by dental students, Wallaert attends community health fairs, does dental screenings at area schools, teaches students about preventive dental care and otherwise helps bring better dental care to the community, while making sure residents know they can receive care nearby at Penn Dental Medicine at Sayre Health Center.

Penn Dental Medicine students joined the dental care team at Sayre starting in January. Laura Barunas (D'12), a fourth-year student in the community health honors program, is one of the first dental students to provide clinical care at Sayre Health Center. Barunas spends every other Friday at the Center, where she has had the chance to do

oral exams, restorations, extractions, and other procedures. "I feel lucky to have this opportunity," she says. "It builds confidence and skills and it is a great experience to work in the community."

For the dental students, working at the Sayre Health Center is worthwhile because it offers experience in

community-based dental care in an environment that is similar to a private practice, Dr. Rothstein says. In addition, Barunas says treating patients in the community has helped her "learn to communicate with different types of people and cultures." Chris Maliken (D'13), also a community health honors student, appreciates the "opportunity to provide comprehensive treatment in a setting more like a private practice," as well as the "efficiency of communication" between dental and medical professionals at the Center.

Because enhancing dental education is a primary grant objective, Dr. Gluch expects the program will be expanded to include additional students in the second, third, and fourth years over the next year or so. By working at Sayre Health Center, Dr. Gluch says, Penn Dental Medicine students will "gain from the experience of treating patients in a public health setting and learn from the interdisciplinary perspective while

working alongside physicians at the health center. They also learn about the neighborhood around Sayre High School."

#### Coordinating Health Care for the Sayre Community

Although it doesn't take up a lot of space, the dental treatment room at Sayre has a prime location in the middle of the health center, offering proximity to the doctors and nurses who also



The proximity to doctors providing care for many of the dental patients, offers an ease of collaboration between the dental and medical students and staff working at the Center.

provide health care for many of the dental patients. This offers an ease of collaboration that is appreciated by both the dental and medical staff and students working at the Center.

"Because of this proximity, we are able to consult with physicians very efficiently about patients," says Dr. Rothstein, pointing out it is not unusual for patients to forget what medications they are taking or the details of their medical history. In other instances, he adds, doctors and dentists can readily consult about such concerns as suspicious oral lesions.

For instance, Wallaert saw a patient who had a patchy area on her tongue and whose mouth was a bright magenta color. She consulted the patient's physician, who ran tests and determined that the patient had a vitamin deficiency that was causing these symptoms. "The accessibility of the doctors and dentists creates better care opportunities for patients," says Wallaert.

Dr. Kent Bream, founding Medical Director of the Dr. Bennett L. Johnson Jr. Sayre Health Center and Assistant Professor of Clinical Family Medicine and Community Health in Penn's Perelman School of Medicine, is pleased to have Penn Dental Medicine colleagues working alongside medical colleagues at the Center.

"You can't think about comprehensive primary care without thinking about oral health," says Dr. Bream, adding that delivering dental care as part of a primary care center "is an efficient way to provide much-needed care to the Sayre community."

The dental and medical care providers also collaborate on community health initiatives, such as the SHIELD (Sayre Health Initiatives, Education and Leadership Development) program, a training and mentorship program to help prepare Sayre High School students for college and careers as medical professionals. "The collaboration is invested in making a

bilateral difference in people's health, their future careers, and their lives," says Dr. Bream.

Indeed, Penn Dental Medicine's collaboration with Sayre High School goes back to 2001, says Dr. Gluch, when the principal requested that Penn Dental Medicine begin an oral health education and screening program for the high school students, who had little access to dental care.

Now, with the opening of the Sayre Health Center facility, Penn Dental Medicine has been successful in enhancing dental care in the West Philadelphia neighborhood, while providing dental students with experience in community-based dentistry, Dr. Rothstein says. "Our job is to educate great dentists, and do it while providing outstanding care and promoting health education in the community." **PDJ**

—Debbie Goldberg

### HRSA GRANT SUPPORTING SAYRE CLINIC, OTHER COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

In Fall 2010, Penn Dental Medicine's Division of Community Oral Health received a \$2 million grant from the Health Resources Services Administration to support community and public health training programs. In addition to funding Penn Dental Medicine at Sayre Health Center, the grant is also providing support for:

- The community health honors program for talented second-, third- and fourth-year dental students (the honors program includes a 20-hour seminar course and a 120-hour community field experience beyond what is required of all dental students).
- Expanded support for students in the dual-degree Master of Public Health/DMD program.
- Expanded community-based experiences for second-year dental students through enhanced participation with six University of Pennsylvania-affiliated community health sites, including the Homeless Health Initiative of The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, Puentes de Salud, United Community Clinics, University City Hospitality Coalition, Chinatown Clinic, and Eliza Shirley House.