

**For IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Illinois State Dental Society**

**DATE SENSITIVE – PLEASE RUN PRIOR TO JUNE 10TH**

### **Illinois State Dental Society Foundation to Host Two Days of Free Dental Care in June**

The Illinois State Dental Society Foundation hosts its first Mission of Mercy, or “MOM,” event at the Interstate Center in Bloomington on June 11-12. More than 900 volunteer dentists, hygienists and others from throughout Illinois will provide free basic dental care and oral surgery to patients who would not otherwise have access to necessary dental treatment. The volunteers will utilize 93 portable dental units, which include chairs and dental equipment.

“We expect to deliver free care to about 800 people each day, providing an estimated \$900,000 in free dental services to both children and adults. Our emphasis will be on basic dental care, such as fillings, extractions and cleanings, but not all dental services will be available,” said ISDS Foundation President Dr. Luanne McClean.

Patients will receive care on a first-come, first-served basis. No appointments will be taken, and no pre-registration is available. Priority will be given to those with the most critical need. Only limited lab work will be offered (one tooth treatment partials). No false teeth will be made.

Doors will open each treatment day at 6:00 a.m. Patients will be screened for medically compromising health conditions that would prohibit treatment, such as extremely high blood pressure, high blood sugar levels, or severe disabilities. They will not be screened for income requirements; anyone can receive treatment.

“Based on other Mission of Mercy events held across the country, typically there is a great deal of interest among prospective patients, some of whom travel hundreds of miles to receive care,” added ISDS President Dr. Larry Osborne, who participated in Oklahoma’s MOM event in February.

The Illinois State Dental Society’s Mission of Mercy will serve to highlight the serious problem that Illinois citizens have in accessing dental care. The event will relieve some suffering, but it won’t solve the problem. Only the Illinois Legislature can provide the solution through adequately funding the dental Medicaid program in Illinois.

More than 2.6 million Illinoisan are enrolled in state sponsored health insurance. Two-thirds of those enrolled are children. While Illinois has experienced a steady increase in public aid enrollment, funding for the most critical procedures have not increased in more than 30 years.

More information on the event is available at [www.ISDS.org](http://www.ISDS.org), click on Mission of Mercy. To receive a media packet e-mail Gloria Pitchford at [gpitchford@isds.org](mailto:gpitchford@isds.org).

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