



Expansion of Public Dental Clinics

Overview and Background Facts:

As of 2006, the Illinois Department of Public Health lists 121 public dental clinics operating in Illinois. This includes federally qualified health centers (FQHC), city/county health departments, not-for-profit and charitable dental clinics. Some of these operate on a full-time basis, while others only offer part-time hours.

There are 39 FQHCs in Illinois, and many operate multiple locations. They are required by federal law to be open to all residents regardless of income and to establish dental fees at a comparable level as private dentists in the community. Discounts may be made available to the working poor based on the individual's ability to pay.

Some provide the full array of dental services, while others may not provide dentures, root canal therapy, orthodontics or other more involved and complicated services such as impacted extractions.

Comments:

Safety-net healthcare providers are usually public clinics that are funded by federal, state or local tax revenues. It is only appropriate that all citizens assist in the funding of these facilities.

ISDS wants to encourage the development of public clinics. Public clinics should also attempt to provide a fully array of services beyond offering simply preventive care.

ISDS Position Statement:

Public clinics are a key factor in providing dental care to the working poor and Medicaid populations. ISDS supports public funding to establish and sustain additional dental clinics and to make it attractive for dentists to practice in there clinics.

Public clinics should provide dental services to achieve good oral health and not just limit care to preventive services.