

In April, the Virginia General Assembly passed the 2016 Appropriations Act which provides state funding for the 2017-2018 biennium. Governor McAuliffe had recommended \$100,000 in his budget for fiscal year 2017 (July 1, 2016-June 30, 2017) for the Mission of Mercy (MOM) program. The General Assembly agreed with the Governor's recommendation and also added \$100,000 in fiscal year 2018 (July 1, 2017-June 30, 2018). The VDAF is very grateful to the Governor and the General Assembly for recognizing the value of MOM, and providing much needed funding to support our work. VDA Executive Director Dr. Terry Dickinson, VDA lobbyist Chuck Duvall, and VDAF President Pat Finnerty played a significant advocacy role in securing this funding.

The Mission of Mercy (MOM) is Virginia Dental Association Foundation's mobile dental clinic program, developed by Dr. Dickinson in 2000. MOM projects improve the oral health of an average of over 4,000 people – primarily uninsured adults – each year by providing preventative, restorative and surgical services in strategic locations across the state.

While the MOM program has provided nearly \$40,000,000 in free dental care since its inception, it has faced funding uncertainty each year. With this game-changing commitment from the Commonwealth of Virginia, the VDAF can now focus on developing strategies for the program's long-term sustainability and growth. With its mission to provide access to dental care to underserved Virginians, there will always be work to do to serve those in need. But with the Commonwealth's robust partnership, together we will be able to create solutions that address the often invisible oral health crisis that affects so many of our neighbors in Virginia.