

2020 DDS Volunteer Dentist Survey

Dear Donated Dental Services Dentists,

Thank you for taking the time to complete the Donated Dental Services 2020 Survey. Here is a glimpse of what you shared with us.

About 50 of you responded to the survey.

Regarding satisfaction with patients, you have mostly had positive experiences. Here are some of your comments:

- *"I love giving back to the community!!"*
- *"The patients that receive the care are so appreciative and I enjoy giving back to our community that we receive so much from."*
- *"In general, our Donated Dental patients have been very appreciative of the treatment that we are able to provide. Most have waited years to have their dental needs addressed."*
- *"Majority of our cases have been very positive. We had one that soured us a bit but we are still willing to help."*
- *"Some days, your DDS patients give us our "Best" smiles of the day!"*

Regarding satisfaction with the coordinators, the comments were neutral (2) or positive. Here are representative responses:

- *"The coordination of care/ communication with the service and other providers has been excellent. It has been a positive and professional experience always and the whole way thru."*
- *"very organized and efficient and the patients present ready for the care. I believe this is due to the excellent prep from DDS."*
- *"very helpful and always in our corner"*
- *"Not sure, I have never spoken to them"*

As program manager, I love hearing the comment "always in our corner" because that is our goal. Without you, we do not have a program, so we are always looking for strategies to make the DDS process run more smoothly for you.

Here is some feedback you offered for improving our program:

We have provided responses below each suggestion so you can get a better sense for how we manage our program.

- *“Need an actual list/network of labs and specialists who are part of donated dental”*
 - Our preference is to work with your lab of choice – one that you are familiar with using. Most of the time, your labs are on our list. We also have labs we can suggest if your lab of choice is unwilling.
- *“Ask applicant to provide their updated taxes record to keep fraudulent people from intruding the program” and “better screening”.*
 - We require proof of income documentation for each member of applicant’s economic household. Many of our applicants do not pay taxes however all are either elderly or disabled so they usually have a Social Security awards letter or other form of documentation. We also ask for their expenses to see if there is a mismatch between expenses and income. This may alert us to other forms of income that are not mentioned. Most of the time, the patients are well under our guidelines.
- *“Explaining limitations to the prospective patient”*
 - We try to inform patients of what to expect at their first appointment, the approximate timing related to denture work, healing times from surgery, the difficulty of adjusting, fitting dentures, etc. We also encourage them to be proactive in their care by asking questions while they are at their appointments. We prefer not to intervene in the dentist / patient relationship- I usually decline to ask questions for the patient unless it is a billing related issue.
- *“I think the program should have a goal of meeting the needs of more people. There are so many people on the waiting list. More guidance in treatment planning would be helpful. What is the best use of your resources?”*
 - We are one of the only free programs in Virginia through which a patient can get comprehensive dental care and dentures. Indeed, the treatment plans dentists in our program offer are time consuming. The only resources we offer are the lab and specialist support and willingness to make termination phone calls if necessary. Our volunteer dentists are donating resources of time, materials and overhead to make our program successful. We do not want to overtax our dentists with multiple patients at a time unless they request it. Thank you!
- *“I'd love for you all to get even more dentists involved so we may help even more people.”*
 - Actually, our bottleneck is not dentists – there are many generous dentists in Virginia willing to see pro bono patients. We need more coordinators to place the patients with dentists!

- *“Make sure patients are aware the services are a donation, not reimbursed. Also, appointments should not be changed, missed or tardy.”*
 - These suggestions are indeed part of our guidelines and we feel it is very important to make sure they know this. The guidelines are given to the patient both in written and verbal form to be sure they are very clear that the work you offer is a gift. We reinforce the importance of being early for appointments and the impact on the dentist when patients are no shows or late cancellations. We let them know they endanger their participation in the program if they are a no show or late cancellation. If the dentist wants to terminate the patient, we make the phone call to the patient to let them know.

- *“My experience has been very good. I was especially pleased that she was able to recruit a dental lab that we work with to participate.”*
 - Yay!

- *“Wished I was contacted more often”*
 - We are deeply touched by comments like this and feel sad that we cannot make more placements due to the time-consuming nature of what we do and the number of coordinators that we have. We are grateful that over 400 general dentists and over 100 specialists across Virginia are willing to donate pro bono care to qualified applicants.

Here is what you enjoy most about the Donated Dental Services Program:

- *“Treating patients through this program has brought me such joy! In the hustle and bustle of today’s dental offices, it allows me to take a step back and be reminded why I decided to pursue this incredible profession.” Brandon Wong, DMD*

- *“The pre-screening of the patients is very good.” Thomas Schleicher, DDS*

- *“I love my profession and to help people chew, be out of pain, and look better was its own reward.” Mitchell J. Bukzin, D.D.S.*

- *“Donated Dental Services gives us a chance to serve our needy neighbors. We are able to do that using the help of VDAF and dental laboratories. The program is a win 4 times over for the VDAF, the dentist, the dental laboratory and most especially the patient.” Richard L Taliaferro*

If you have not filled out our survey and would like to add to our results, please do so:

<https://www.surveymzmo.com/s3/4770976/DDS-Volunteer-Dentist-Survey-2020>

Thank you! We are grateful for YOU!!!

Julie Erickson

Program Manager