For Immediate Release

MCHD Smile Express ramping up for school season; consent forms needed

MORGANTOWN, WV (Aug. 15, 2019) — Monongalia County Health Department’s mobile dental unit, Smile Express, is ramping up for another year of school visits. Students in participating counties will be getting MCHD Smile Express consent forms and parents or guardians of students who wish to be seen when Smile Express visits their schools should fill out the consent forms and return them.

MCHD Smile Express was launched last year thanks to grant funding though Delta Dental, with additional support from Monongalia County Commission and Rotary Club of Cheat Lake. MCHD Smile Express debuted last year as the new school season was getting under way. Participating counties include Monongalia, Marion, Harrison, Lewis, Braxton and Wetzel.

During the previous school year, MCHD Smile Express traveled to all of those counties to provide dental exams and care to students with the exception of Wetzel County, which was recently added to the roster.

“We are really excited to get back out to the schools,” said Tiffany Summerlin, registered dental hygienist and Smile Express coordinator. “We look forward to growing the relationship with Boards of Education all the way down to counselors that work with the kids.”

Children with or without insurance who do not have a dental home or who haven’t been seen by a dentist in more than a year can visit MCHD Smile Express for an exam and possibly a cleaning, X-rays, sealants and fluoride treatment. If the child has dental insurance, the insurance will be billed. Children without insurance will be seen without any cost to them.
“We have been able to see children who did not have a dentist of record,” Summerlin said. “More than 50 percent of the kids we saw had cavities, so we were able to connect them with a local dentist for additional work.”

MCHD Smile Express is a converted 2005 Winnebago Voyage motorhome with three slide-outs. It has been retrofitted with two dental operatories and equipped with a sterilization center, X-ray equipment with software that allows information to be sent back immediately to MCHD’s full-service dental office, a video game system to play while waiting, a reception area and a bathroom.

“By providing a safety-net program, we hope to reduce the likelihood that a child will need extensive and expensive dental procedures,” said Dr. Dan Carrier of MCHD Dentistry. “This helps promote a positive outlook of patients toward dental professionals and their own oral health. We hope this extends into adulthood.”

Check out monchd.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD and on Instagram at #wvmchd for up-to-date information on health and wellness in the community.

—30—