

January, 2025

Dear Colleagues

The Lehigh Valley Dental Society is re-imagining our Veteran's Access to Dental Care program, which began in 2016. During the pandemic of 2020-2021 a number of practices stopped participating in this access program, and many of our original participants have retired. We are asking for your help in reviving this important program for needy veterans.

You may know that the Veteran's Administration does not cover dental care for veterans unless (with few exceptions) they are 100% disabled. Most veterans do not qualify, yet they have put their lives and health at risk defending our nation's freedoms. We are asking you to give back to underserved veterans by participating in this initiative.

We have partnered with the office of Veteran's Health at Valley Health Partners (VHP) as well as the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council. VHP will identify financially disadvantaged veterans who have dental needs, then refer them to offices who are willing to participate in this program. This is not a one-time "Give Vets a Smile" program, but a program which finds dental homes to provide comprehensive care.

We are asking participating offices to provide basic care at no cost to these veterans. This would include basic preventive procedures and restorative/surgical care. You may wish to extend this courtesy to more advanced procedures at no charge, or charge a reduced fee to cover your lab and material expenses. Whatever you decide, please communicate your policies to these patients so they are well aware of any financial responsibilities they may have.

In some cases, there may be family members of veterans who need care including their children. You may wish to take on an entire family or only one veteran – the choice is completely yours.

Although general dentists are the backbone of our program, we are particularly in need of specialists to provide more complex care including endodontists, oral surgeons, periodontists, pediatric dentists and orthodontists. VHP will keep that list and use it to assist offices in referring patients out for specialty care.

However, if your general dentistry office can provide some of these specialty procedures, that would really enhance the services we can offer these patients.

Signing up is simple – go to www.lvdental.org and click on the “Information for Dentists” tab, then click on the “Veterans Care” link. Fill in the office information and click on any specialty procedures you are able to provide, then hit “Submit”. We will share your information with VHP and they will refer patients in need. Your office policies regarding late or missed appointments, etc. are in your control. Should a veteran need to be dismissed, please let VHP know. If you are already part of the program, please sign up once again via the online form so we have all office information in one place.

Once you have completed care for a veteran, please go back to the LVDS website and download the “VDC Report Form” which is at the top once you click on the “Veterans Care” link. Follow the instructions for completing this form and fax or email it to VHP. For HIPAA reasons, LVDS cannot accept these forms. However, VHP will report the value of services provided by our volunteer dentists to LVDS, so that we can proudly share our successes with others.

Thank you in advance for your willingness to consider and participate in this unique and vital program. Your help in serving those who sacrificed so much by defending our nation for us is truly appreciated. If you have any questions or require more information, please reach out to me at cjidmd@ptd.net

Charles J. Incalcaterra, DMD for the Lehigh Valley Dental Society Board of Directors.