



## Dental Lifeline Network Reaches \$300 Million In Donated Services to People in Need

### New DDS Video Urges Dentists to Volunteer

**Denver, Colo. – November 5, 2015** Dental Lifeline Network, a national dental nonprofit organization reached a significant achievement in September, exceeding \$300 million in dental services donated to people with disabilities or who are elderly or medically fragile and have no other access to dental care.

Through its flagship Donated Dental Services (DDS) program, more than 100,000 vulnerable people have benefited from life-sustaining, and even life-saving, treatment - thanks to volunteer dentists and laboratories of DLN and its partner organizations in several states. Started 30 years ago in Colorado, DDS serves people in 50 states and Washington D.C. DLN is a charitable affiliate of the American Dental Association.

"The success of the DDS program is due to the tremendous generosity of our 15,000 volunteer dentists and 3,700 labs that willingly provide comprehensive dental therapies to people in critical need of care," said Fred Leviton, DLN president. "Many thousands of people in the U.S. suffer from painful dental conditions including fractured teeth, advanced periodontal disease and the inability to eat normally. After years of being unable to afford treatment, these patients' ages or disabilities can make the burden of added dental disease devastating for them. Their lives literally are transformed through the safety net provided by DDS volunteers," he noted.

One such patient is Amanda, age 34, who uses a wheelchair and help from family members for mobility. A birth defect prevented her joints from fully developing. After working at a bank for many years, she now relies on disability benefits. Amanda types with her mouth. She cracked a tooth and, unable to afford dental care, postponed treatment until a much bigger problem developed. Eventually, she connected with the DDS program.

"Every single day that I have a healthy smile and a healthy mouth, I can do the things I need to do and feel confident," Amanda said. "You guys (DDS) did that for me . . thank you!"

More volunteer dentists are always needed to meet the ever-growing demand. Chicago dentist Dr. David Gershenson joined his father's dental practice after completing his dental education, and began volunteering for DDS as his father and now partner, Dr. Richard Gershenson, has done for many years.

"It's really meaningful to me to see the look on a (DDS) patient's face after they've completed treatment and you've really helped improve their lives," Dr. David Gershenson commented. "It gives me more meaning as to why I'm a dentist.

"This is a call to action on my fellow professionals: DDS doesn't require a lot of time. You can see one patient a year or you can see as many as you want," Dr. Gershenson added.

Also a DDS volunteer, Dr. Tina Smith of Arlington Heights, Ill., noted, "A smile is such a big part of your face . . This is where your thoughts come out of. It's important to restore a smile." She encourages ADA members, "Get out there and volunteer. It's easy. It's rewarding. There's no downside."

Both Drs. Gershenson and Smith and DDS patient Amanda are featured in a new video, *Volunteer Today. Help Thousands Smile Again*, produced for Dental Lifeline Network as a public service by the ADA, urging other dentists to join them as DDS volunteers.

The 3-1/2-minute video, features three additional patients: Diane, a grandmother who suffered an accident in a transit turnstile that resulted in permanent injury, and David who experienced a brain injury. A third patient, Jesse, was diagnosed as a child with osteoarthritis and joint distortion. Later employed as a high school teacher, he also was a video editor until his disability prevented him from working. All had severe dental problems until three DDS volunteer dentists changed their lives. (To view the video, visit [www.DentalLifeline.org](http://www.DentalLifeline.org) or [ADA.org/en/member-center/volunteer-opportunities](http://ADA.org/en/member-center/volunteer-opportunities).

An increasing number of patients who are medically fragile are being referred to DDS, because dental disease prevents many with chronic health problems from receiving life-saving medical treatments. Dental health often is a prerequisite for cancer patients who need chemotherapy, candidates for organ transplants or kidney dialysis, people with autoimmune diseases who require life-saving medications, cardiac patients requiring surgery, and patients with crippling arthritis who need joint replacements.

Since DLN began, it has grown through collaboration with state dental associations and national strategic partners. Funding to support the volunteers comes from a variety of sources including state governments, foundations, dental organizations, some state Delta Dental plans and corporate and individual donors. Considerable support also comes from the dental trade industry including the Dental Trade Alliance and its member companies and the DTA Foundation through both financial contributions and donated materials such as teeth, alloy and dental supplies used by dentists and by volunteer laboratories for fabrications.

DLN was founded in 1974 by DLN's chairman and CEO Larry Coffee, DDS, a graduate of Northwestern University Dental School. For information to become a volunteer dentist or laboratory or to make a donation, please visit [www.DentalLifeline.org](http://www.DentalLifeline.org) or call 888-471-6334.

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**Dental Lifeline Network** is a national dental nonprofit organization providing access to comprehensive dental care for people with disabilities or who are elderly or medically fragile and have no other way to get help. Through the overwhelming generosity of 15,000 volunteer dentists, 3,600 volunteer laboratories, dental products manufacturers and distributors and local communities, DLN transforms lives through the delivery of life-sustaining and even lifesaving care. These volunteers have provided \$300 million in dental treatment to more than 100,000 people in all 50 states and the District of Columbia since the start of the first program in Colorado 30 years ago. For more information, visit [www.DentalLifeline.org](http://www.DentalLifeline.org)

**Strategic Partners:** American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, American Academy of Implant Dentistry, American Academy of Periodontology, American Association of Endodontists, , American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, American Association of Orthodontists, American Association of Women Dentists, American College of Dentists, American College of Prosthodontists, American Dental Assistants Association, Hispanic Dental Association, National Association of Dental Laboratories, National Dental Association, The Pankey Institute

**DLN is recognized by:** American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons, American College of Cardiology Foundation, American College of Emergency Physicians, American College of Gastroenterology, American College of Physicians, American College of Rheumatology, American Diabetes Association, American Nurses Association, American Psychiatric Association, American Society of Clinical Oncology, American Society of Transplant Surgeons, American Thoracic Society, Association of Oncology Social Work, Forum of End Stage Renal Disease Networks, Renal Physicians Association, Society for Transplant Social Workers, Society for Vascular Surgery