



Testimony to the Legislative Committee on Senior Citizens, Veterans and Adults with Special Needs

February 22, 2016, 9:00AM

Room 2135 of the Legislative Building, 401 S. Carson St., Carson City, NV

Good morning Chairman Hardy, for the record my name is Linda Haigh, founder of the Adopt-A-Vet Dental Program (AAVD). With me today is Debi Koester, Program Supervisor, and Jim Snyder, Veteran Liaison, who is a Marine and a graduate of the AAVD program. We would like to spend a few minutes to provide you with information on this important program which provides vital dental services to veterans in Northern Nevada.

There is an epidemic of dental disease among our veterans in Nevada. Only an estimated 5% of veterans enrolled at Reno VA qualify for dental care. Must be:

- 100 % service-connected (disabled)
- Injured in jaw or mouth while in service
- Been a prisoner of war

As a result of the lack of VA dental benefits, low-income veterans cannot afford to see a dentist and go years without treatment and continually live with oral decay, abscesses, infections and pain.

AAVD addresses the overwhelming challenge by providing no-cost to low-cost dental care to low income veterans who do not qualify for dental care and cannot afford to see a dentist. Northern Nevada dentists and oral surgeons have stepped forward through the AAVD program to provide emergency and full restorative dental care to these needy veterans. AAVD saves and transforms the lives of veterans by eliminating their oral decay and pain so they can eat and digest their food properly and smile again.

AAVD is a collaboration between the Northern Nevada Dental Health Programs and Community Health Alliance, a non-profit federally-qualified health center.

AAVD receives no Federal (including the VA) or State funding and relies on solely on grants, private donations, and fundraising. The majority of veteran referrals for dental care are from the VA. This grass roots program was started in Reno in April 2010 and now serves 10 counties throughout Northern Nevada. To our knowledge there is no other program throughout the U.S. like ours that harnesses the skills and good will of dental professionals.

In September 2014, we received a national award from Newman's Own and the Fisher House for our innovative dental program to veterans. The award was presented to AAVD at the Pentagon by former Joint Chief of Staff General Dempsey.

Last October we received a \$442,000 grant from the Pennington Foundation to help us clear the AAVD waitlist, pay for oral surgeries and lab fees for dentures.



COMMUNITY
HEALTH
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At this time, I would like Debi Koester, to tell give you some of our statistics to date.

For the record, my name is Debi Koester, AAVD Program Supervisor. I would like to give you a quick idea of just how AAVD is serving in Northern Nevada veterans.

- AAVD includes 106 dental professionals and 13 dental labs.
- Since its founding in 2010, AAVD has provided almost \$2.7 million in donated dental care including emergency dental services and full-scope services including dentures.
- To date, AAVD has provided full service dental care to 356 veterans and emergency dental services to 349 veterans.
- 90 veterans are in process, 144 veterans are scheduled for pre-screen classes, and we are pleased to announce we have eliminated our 3 year waitlist.
- For every \$1 donated to AAVD, \$5.80 in dental services are provided for our veterans.

To be eligible for the AAVD program, veterans have to meet certain qualifications including:

- Must be at or below 150% of the Federal Guidelines of low income
- Enrolled at the VA and be current with a primary care provider following their health care
- Must be a full time Nevada resident
- Must be clean and sober, and must agree to our standards of conduct
- Must not have dental insurance

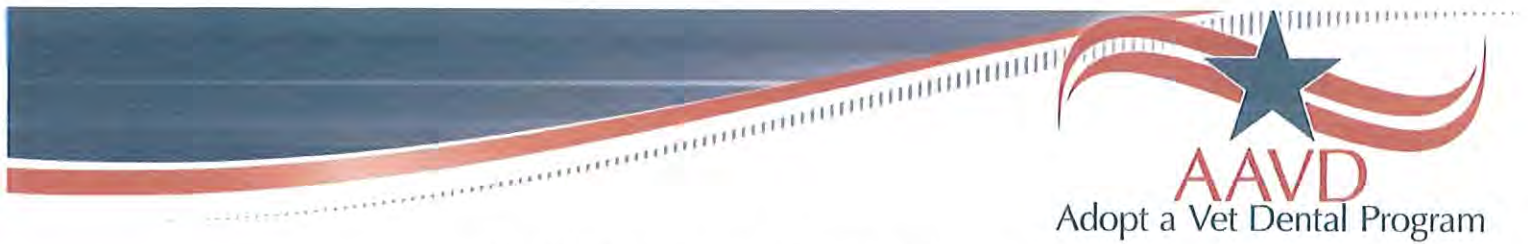
We do ask our veterans to pay a \$200 commitment fee, but can waive the fee if they cannot afford it.

At this time, I'd like Jim Snyder, AAVD Veteran Liaison, talk about his experience in the AAVD program and briefly describe his works in preparing eligible veterans for this service.

Good morning, for the record my name is Jim Snyder, AAVD Veteran Liaison, and served in the Marine Corps. I'd like to briefly describe my experience with AAVD and how my life changed, and the lives of my fellow veterans.

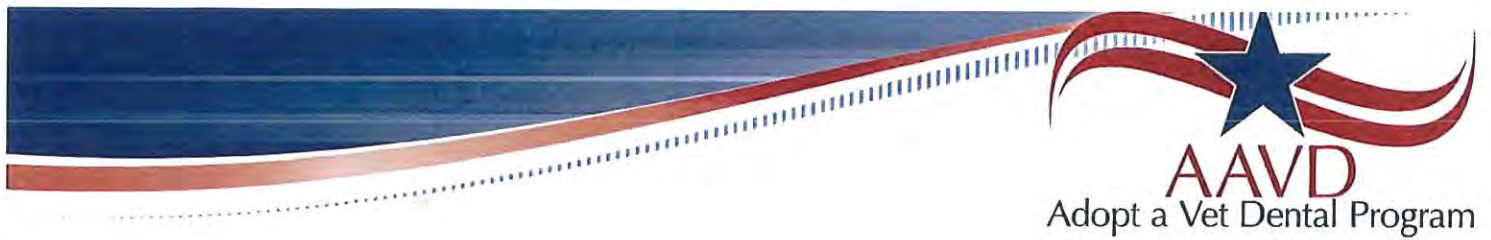
First, I would like to express the difficulty veterans have asking for help. But when the help comes, it's really hard for them to accept that they deserve it; and their treatment is really going to happen, and when you see the before and after pictures it truly amazing. So it's an honor for me to give back to the AAVD by volunteering for the last three and half years and now being on staff as an advocate for the new veterans coming in because I see them daily. I was in so much pain, and had lost everything. I found Linda, and I waited 18 months for help. This has changed my life, I am now social, and much honored to say that I received the Nevada Veteran of the Month for August 2015 from Governor Sandoval, and to be able to share that with those that helped me grow.

Again, for the record, this is Linda Haigh. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to present this information to the committee and would be glad to answer any questions.



MAJOR POINTS FOR AAVD – 2-22-16

- **95% of veterans do not qualify for dental care at the Reno VA Hospital which has led to an epidemic of oral health disease among our veterans in Northern Nevada.**
- **AAVD addresses the overwhelming challenge by providing no-cost to low-cost dental care to low income veterans who do not qualify for dental care and cannot afford to see a dentist.**
- **AAVD saves and transforms the lives of veterans by eliminating their oral decay and pain so they can eat and digest their food properly and smile again.**
- **To our knowledge there is no other program throughout the U.S. like ours that harnesses the skills and good will of dental professionals. This grass roots program was started in Reno in April 2010 and now serves 10 counties throughout Northern Nevada.**
- **110 dentists and specialists have stepped forward to provide *pro bono* dental care to low-income veterans and have donated over \$2.6 million dollars in services to over 700 low-income veterans.**
- **AAVD receives no Federal (including the VA) or State funding and relies on solely on grants, private donations, and fundraising.**
- **The majority of veteran referrals for dental care are from the VA.**
- **In September 2014, received national award from Newman's Own and the Fisher House for our innovative dental program to veterans. Award was presented to AAVD at the Pentagon by former Joint Chief of Staff General Dempsey.**
- **AAVD is a program of the Northern Nevada Dental Health Program and is administered by Community Health Alliance.**



PROGRAM PROGRESS FROM 4-30-10 TO 12-31-15

106 - Dental Professionals

87 - General Dentists

9 - Oral Surgeons

6 - Endodontists

3 - Periodontists

1 - Prosthodontist

13 - Dental Labs

\$ 2,463,975 - Full-Service Dental Care Donated *(Dentists, AAVD Clinic & Labs)*

196,725 - Emergency Dental Care Donated *(Dentists and AAVD Clinic)*

\$ 2,660,700 - Total Dental Care Donated

356 Veterans with Full-Service Dental Care Completed

349 Veterans with Emergency Dental Care Completed

86 Veterans Currently in Progress

98 Veterans Waitlisted for Dental Care

(Please note that an additional 162 Veterans in 2014/2015 are inactive because of the long wait and AAVD has been unable to contact them because some have died, moved or changed phone numbers).

Donation Leverage Factor is 5.8. For every \$1 donated to AAVD, \$5.80 in dental services are provided for our veterans.



Adopt a Vet Dental Program

Will You Join Us in Helping
More Veterans?



Currently, veterans in dangerously critical need must wait up to 2 years before receiving care. And our waitlist grows weekly, which will lead to a longer delay before their first visit.

As a dental professional, you can help by donating your much-needed services. As a neighbor, please consider joining our fundraising events or donating directly. All support goes towards lab costs, emergency extractions, and other dental services.

Thank you so much for your support!

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Northern Nevada
DENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

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HEALTH
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Providing No-Cost To Low-Cost
Dental Care For Veterans Who
Need It Most.



Adopt a Vet Dental Program

Adopt a Vet Dental Program

Serving Our Forgotten Veterans in Their Time of Need

Since 2010, Adopt a Vet Dental Program (AAVD) provides no to low cost dental care to Northern Nevada's low-income veterans in critical need. These veterans suffer every day from extreme oral decay. Enduring years of severe pain from abscesses, multiple deteriorated teeth, and more.

But they do not have dental insurance, and average a humble income of only \$900 a month. Making it impossible for them to seek dental care. And they have no where else to turn, as most do not have a family or support system, which forces them to rely on help from their community.



Why don't they go to the VA Dental Clinic?

VA Dental policies are so restrictive, only about 5% of its veterans qualify for care. This means a shocking 95% of our over 55,000 local veterans can't use the VA dental services.

Who Qualifies for AAVD?

Qualifying veterans must:

1. Be at or below 150% of the Federal Poverty Level Guidelines
2. Be enrolled with the VA under the care of a primary care physician and following their medical needs
3. Be a Nevada resident

For more information or to apply call: 775-870-4358
or email Debra at: debra.koester@nmdhp.org



AAVD Quick Facts

- Over \$2.4 million in donated dental services since 2010
- 120 volunteer dentists
- 13 dental labs provide free or discounted services
- 650+ local veterans served

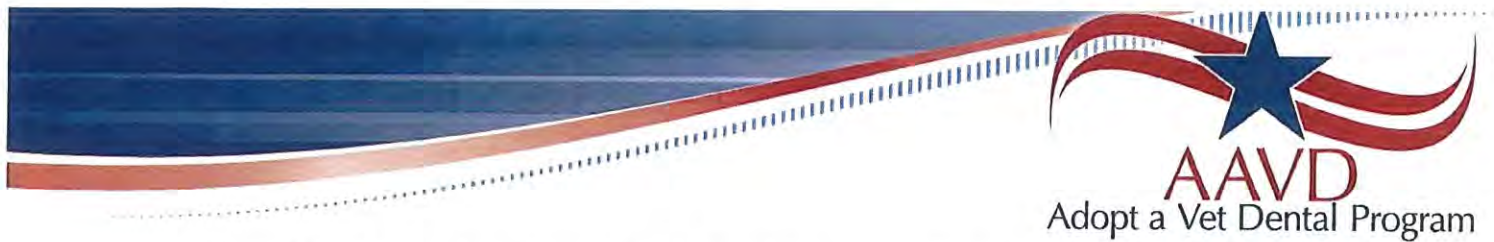
Every \$1 donated = \$6.50 in dental services

Thanks to our incredible volunteers, every \$1 you donate creates \$6.50 in dental services for our veterans. Any support you provide matters greatly.

Damon Petro, Desert Storm era veteran



"One look at my teeth, and people wouldn't hire me. I was embarrassed and felt so hopeless and depressed. But Dr. Mattioli and Adopt a Vet changed my life. My health is better, I can laugh again, and I'm actively looking for an accounting job."



Income level requirements for the Adopt a Vet Dental Program

This program is for the veteran only

1 Person Household	\$1,471.00
2 Person Household	\$1,991.00
3 Person Household	\$2,511.00
4 Person Household	\$3,031.00
5 Person Household	\$3,551.00

Requirements for participation:

Qualifications that must be met by our veterans to qualify for our program:

- Meet or be below 150% of the Federal Guidelines of low income
- Enrolled at the VA and be current with a primary care provider following their health care
- Must be a full time Nevada resident
- Must be able to provide proof of income and assets: (this may include):
 - All forms of social security
 - Available bank account or investment account statements, showing all forms of income and assets
 - Most recent Tax returns.
- Proof of full time Nevada residence,
- Provide VA-ID, DD214
- Must not have any form of dental insurance
- Must be clean and sober for 1 year in order to participate
- Must have served in the military for 1 year.
- Must be willing to comply with all the standards on the Adopt a Vet Promise to Commitment Contract
- Must attend a pre-screen orientation class. If that appointment is missed without any notice from the veteran, Adopt a Vet Dental will pull the veteran from the program
- Adopt a Vet reserves the right to refuse service to any veteran