



# **SIU SDM Receives \$2M ILCHF Grant to Treat Pediatric Patients**

April 24 2019 12:17 PM



EDWARDSVILLE - The Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) has received a \$2 million grant from the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF). The SDM will build a medical operating suite with general anesthesia capabilities for children with special dental care needs within a new Graduate Programs Patient Clinic.

The grant will allow the SIU SDM to annually serve an additional 550 pediatric patients requiring oral health services performed under general anesthesia. The project is in response to the need identified in the ILCHF, Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation and Michael Reese Health Trust commissioned report, Oral Health in Illinois (Dec. 2016).

Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease in the United States, disproportionately affecting minority children, the poor, the disabled, and those with special healthcare needs and medical problems. SIU SDM manages approximately 35,000 patient visits annually at its clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 individuals annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists.

"This gift will enable us to treat some of the most vulnerable patients in our state," said SIU SDM Dean Bruce Rotter, DMD. "The support of Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation will help us more effectively manage the treatment of the hundreds of patients seen through the Special Dental Care Needs Program each year. With our new ambulatory center and this new ability to administer general anesthesia to treat pediatric patients with complex dental care needs, we will be able to significantly expand our overall capacity and provide better care to these children."

"Far too many children in Illinois don't receive the dental care they need," said Heather Alderman, ILCHF president. "Untreated tooth decay can affect children's diet, sleep and ability to learn. This situation is unconscionable when you consider how treatable and preventable these diseases are."

ILCHF began investing in children's oral health programs in 2004 as a part of its strategy to make comprehensive health services available to all Illinois children. The Foundation's early findings that oral health was one of the most pressing, unmet healthcare issues facing Illinois children, resulted in the Foundation's Children's Oral Health Initiative.

About Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation

Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) is the only statewide private foundation solely focused on improving the health of all children in the state of Illinois. ILCHF was created in December 2002 through an action of then-Attorney General Jim Ryan and an Illinois insurance carrier. This action and a settlement of approximately \$125 million established the Foundation.

From 2004 to 2018, Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation has provided more than \$81 million in grants which have been invested in programs aimed at improving overall children's health in Illinois, with a focus in oral health and mental health. For additional information about ILCHF, visit [ilchf.org](http://ilchf.org).

The SIU School of Dental Medicine students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.

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Photo: Bruce Rotter, dean of the SIU School of Dental Medicine.