

SIU SDM Provides Record \$70K In Free Care At 4th Annual Veteran's Care Day

by Megan Wieser

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EDWARDSVILLE - More than 100 veterans received free dental care during the annual Veteran's Care Day event hosted by the Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM). On Thursday, Nov. 11, the SIU SDM provided more than \$70,000 worth of free dental treatment to veterans in need. Services included, but were not limited to cleanings, x-rays, fillings, and extractions.

“We surpassed our previous Veteran's Care Day success by providing over \$20,000 more in dentistry this year than last and seeing almost 20 more patients,” said SIU SDM Director of Community Dentistry Katie Kosten, DMD. “Many of the patients seen also

established SIU SDM as their dental home. This will allow them to get their remaining needs met and have somewhere to go for routine care.”

Among those providing patient care was U.S. Navy veteran Tabitha Hanson, a fourth-year SIU SDM student. Hanson noted that serving fellow veterans was an extremely satisfying experience, particularly caring for a World War II veteran.

“To treat a WWII vet and help eliminate his pain was incredibly rewarding,” Hanson said. “Having the pleasure of serving a WWII veteran who gave his service during one of the most crucial wars in American history is an experience I will remember for a lifetime.”

“In my mind, we owe the world to veterans for their sacrifices for this country,” she continued. “Thanks to all the veterans for their service! I am glad we could spend the day giving back to these wonderful people.”

This marked the SIU SDM's fourth annual Veteran's Care Day, which combined have provided more than \$180,000 worth of free dental care.

“It was a great team effort,” Kosten emphasized. “The veterans and their loved ones were grateful for the opportunity, and our SIU SDM family enjoyed serving them in this way.”