

# SIU SDM Provides Over \$45,000 in Free Dental Care to Veterans

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EDWARDSVILLE -The Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) provided free dental care to 85 deserving veterans during the fifth annual Veteran's Care Day on Thursday, Nov. 10. SIU SDM provided more than \$45,000 worth of free dental treatment during the event, including cleanings, x-rays, fillings, and extractions.

Veteran Marine John W. Smith attended the event for the first time. Due to various circumstances, he had to take three different buses just to get to the dental clinic. Smith wanted to make sure he was not going to miss the opportunity to gain free, comprehensive dental care.

“I need to get some teeth pulled. They hurt really bad,” said Smith. “I am thankful that the SIU SDM is doing this for the vets. It is really helping me out.”

“We know the veterans are appreciative of this opportunity,” said SIU SDM Director of Community Dentistry Katie Kosten, DMD. “We are incredibly appreciative of them and what they have done for our country.”

“Many veterans do not have comprehensive dental benefits and are without a routine provider for their care,” Kosten continued. “Veteran’s Care Day is an opportunity for veterans to access something that they normally have a hard time finding. We provide as much care as possible during the visit. We also give them the opportunity to become patients at the dental school.”

Over the past five years, \$225,000 of free dental care has been provided to veterans during the SIU SDM’s Veteran’s Care Day.

*SIU School of Dental Medicine students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at 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.*