

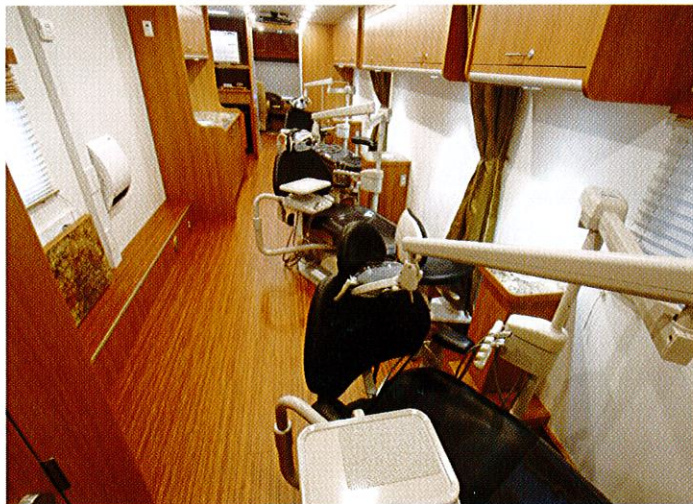
Mobile Dental Bus Rolls in Rock Island District



The way Dr. Jim Bishop sees it, if children don't have access to dental care, he and the rest of the Rock Island District Dental Society will just bring it to them. The Moline dentist has been a key player in a collaborative effort to establish a mobile dental clinic to provide quality dental care—and ultimately a dental home—to children in Rock Island and Scott counties in Illinois and Iowa.

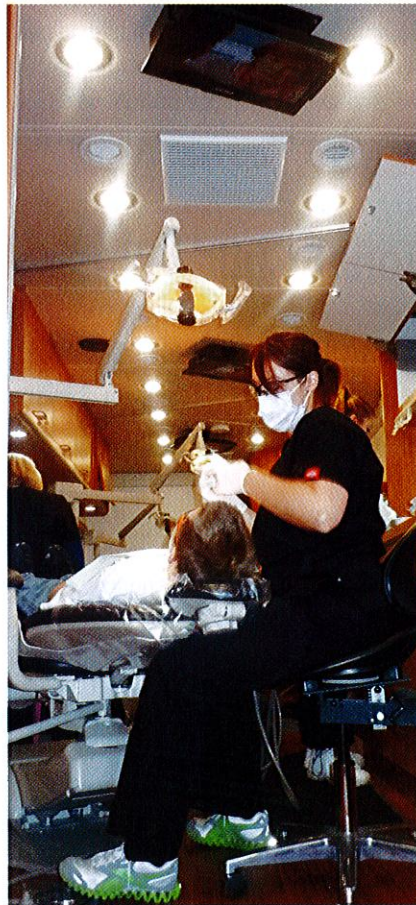
The clinic is 39-feet long, 8-feet wide, 13-feet tall, making it the size of a motor coach bus. It includes three dental chairs and offers the services of one dentist, three hygienists, and one assistant. It also has a clerical employee and a driver, whom Dr. Bishop describes as Moline's version of "MacGyver" in terms of his resourcefulness and ability to tackle any number of challenges from entertainer to crowd control to set-up and repair.

Plans for the mobile dental bus began in December 2010, and it rolled out in October 2011. The clinic is the result of the combined efforts of Bethany for Children and Families in Moline, Rock Island District Dental Society, the Davenport District Dental Society, the Scott County and Rock Island County Health Departments, as well as the support of school superintendents in the two counties. "When the idea for a mobile dental clinic came up we all looked at each other and our heads were spinning. We didn't know how we could make it fly. But Bethany had a plan. Since last fall, we have seen more than 2,000 kids," explained Dr. Bishop.



The bus is staffed by a highly skilled professional team of dentists and hygienists. In addition, there are about 94 dentists in Scott and Rock Island counties who donate their time and services to provide follow-up care to children whose dental needs go beyond what can be provided in the mobile clinic. "The key is our dental volunteers. We couldn't do it without them. They have to be there to support the program, and we have fantastic volunteers," said Dr. Bishop.

The mobile dental van was built by Farber Specialty Vehicles and received financial support from the Illinois State Dental Society Foundation,



Patterson Dental, U.S. Adventure RV, grants, and various private donors. The cost to build the bus and equip it was about \$280,000. The bus is expected to visit schools 100 days this first year and provide dental exams, dental hygiene services, sealants, and fluoride treatments to some 4,000 children in the area. "This year we are getting established with the schools. We are averaging 30-60 children per day at this point. Next year, we hope to provide services 200 days per year and care to 9,000 children," explained Dr. Bishop.

He emphasizes that working with the area schools to provide care has gone very smoothly because

school nurses ensure that all necessary paperwork for each child is complete before the dental bus arrives. He notes that he considers the dental bus to be an excellent example of what individual dentists and local communities are doing to address the access to care issue with highly skilled dental professionals while ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the patients.

He notes that state lawmakers from the area are taking notice. In fact, one area lawmaker has discussed legislation that would provide a tax credit for donated dental work. "They are coming to us and asking us how they can help because they can see the positive impact this is having on the community. Efforts like this do facilitate change. If we don't address the access to care problems, government and third parties will be seen as the answer, and they are not the way to go," noted Dr. Bishop. ■