

Victors for Veterans



Dr. Ron Paler, UofM Adjunct Professor presents a donation form the Michigan Section of ICD to fund the Victors for Veterans program. L to R: ICD Fellow and Victors for Veterans U of M Director, **Howard Hamerick**, U of M Director, Victors for Veterans, VINA volunteer **Ron Paler**, **Jim Gilmore**, Executive Director

Victors for Veterans at VINA Community Dental Center

By: Samantha Jorgens

VINA Community Dental Center is a nonprofit dental clinic in Brighton, Michigan that provides affordable dental to care to low-income, uninsured adults in Livingston County. The VINA clinic partners with the University of Michigan School of Dentistry to provide free dental care to veterans through the Victors for Veterans program under the direction of **Dr. Howard H. Hamerink**. The Michigan Dental Association Foundation funds the program.

The Victors for Veterans program serves veterans living in a seven-county area in between major cities like Flint, Detroit and Lansing. This is the second clinic of its kind, the first operates in Northern Michigan serving the Traverse City area. The program offers free, comprehensive dental care and education to low-income veterans. This includes full exams, crowns, bridges, cleanings, fillings, dentures, root canals, oral surgery and more.

Jim is one of the many patients receiving free dental care through the Victors for Veterans program. He served in the Army for three years in Korea. He comes into the program having not seen a dentist in nearly a decade as he stopped receiving care at the University of Michigan dental clinic when it became too expensive to keep up with. Jim only has one lower tooth, and his dentures are in poor condition, causing him problems during day-to-day tasks like eating or smiling and would often try to hide his smile. Jim felt nervous when he first started receiving dental care, but quickly became comfortable because of the kindness and care of those working the clinic.

ICD-USA Regent's Report Stephen R. Harris DDS



I guess one cannot report on the activities in 2020-2021 without the lament... cancelled because of Covid-19. What a challenging year we have all endured. It has been strange and sad not to have face to face meetings, conferences and of course our ICD Convocation. However, one thing we have learned is how resilient and resourceful we have become. How many of us had ever heard of Zoom before the pandemic? Now it is a household name and quickly has become the go to platform for committee meetings, webinars and even board meetings. We have adopted Zoom for all the business of ICD-USA and have found it very effective in getting the work and governance done. I expect we will use it for years to come. Last December we held our first ever and hopefully the last, Virtual Convocation for the new fellows that chose to be inducted in 2020. Though not the same as walking across the stage in gowns with all the pomp and circumstance, it was professionally produced and was very well received. Like good Marines, as Clint Eastwood's character said in Heartbreak Ridge, "We adapted and overcame".

ICD-USA is still alive and active in our support of our core values: Integrity, Leadership and Service. We continue to financially support the dental schools of District 9 White Coat Ceremonies and the Senior Leadership and Humanitarian awards. Though Covid-19 put a damper on the International Student Exchange Project, we can be sure it will continue in the near future. The dental exam program for Peace Corp volunteers continues to be successful and we are developing a national program to help our country's veterans. Here in Michigan, our chapter has financially supported the VINA Clinic in Brighton where many veterans have received comprehensive care through U of M's Victors for Veterans project. Most recently we have donated funds towards their first digital radiography unit, something sorely needed. If you have ever questioned the value of ICD membership, your dues dollars go to fund all these great works. Thank you for continuing your support of our college.

Unfortunately Covid-19 has reared its ugly head again forcing us to cancel our Convocation Ceremony in Las Vegas. With the rise of the delta variant, MGM Grand has mandated mask wearing throughout their building. How can the new fellows be photographed and honored if they are all masked up, receiving their key and plaque? Surveys of the incoming fellows of 2021 showed a growing reluctance to attend in person. So virtual it shall be. We all hope this all ends soon!



Executive Board

DEPUTY REGENT

Steve Sulfaro DDS

607 N. Saginaw Street

Holly, MI 48442

(O) 248-634-4671

Fax: 248-634-6424

drsulfaro@comcast.net

DISTRICT IX REGENT

Steve Harris DDS

34024 W. 8 Mile Rd. Suite 106

Farmington Hills, MI 48335

(O) 248-478-4755

(F) 248-478-1139

Steve@stephenharrisdds.com

TREASURER

Irene Tseng DDS

29626 Ann Arbor Trail

Westland, MI 48185

734-422-4900

doc@orenetsengdds.com

EDITOR/SECRETARY

Dan Murphy DDS

1680 Kingsway Ct.

Trenton, MI 48183

(O) 734-676-5656

danielmurphy327@gmail.com

LEADERSHIP COORDINATOR

Ron Paler DDS

ronjo@comcast.net

Victors for Veterans

Jim is one of the many patients receiving free dental care through the Victors for Veterans program. He served in the Army for three years in Korea. He comes into the program having not seen a dentist in nearly a decade as he stopped receiving care at the University of Michigan dental clinic when it became too expensive to keep up with. Jim only has one lower tooth, and his dentures are in poor condition, causing him problems during day-to-day tasks like eating or smiling and would often try to hide his smile. Jim felt nervous when he first started receiving dental care, but quickly became comfortable because of the kindness and care of those working the clinic.

The U of M dental students and faculty generously donate their time and services to the Victors for Veterans program to give back to those who

served our country.

Specialists in Livingston County donate their time and services specifically to the Victors for Veterans program as well, including **Ward Dental Lab**, oral surgeon **Dr. Fred Bonine**, endodontist **Dr. Erika Johnson** and dental company **Ivoclar Vivadent**.



Patients like Jim are extremely thankful for those who donate and fund the program. Jim says “keep it going because people need it, they really do. It makes me smile more.” Jim raved about VINA employee **Toni Nerowski** and the U of M dental students who treat him, saying “Toni’s sweeter than a jelly donut and the students are wonderful. They explain everything and you just feel like you can talk to them. This is my happy place.”

Nerowski oversees patient scheduling at VINA and is the first and last face patients see. She says the Victors for Veterans clinic days are her favorite because of the patients. She emphasizes the importance of caring and listening to the veteran patients, saying “compassion costs nothing and they’ve given so much for us already.”

Jim is excited to continue getting his dental care through the Victors for Veterans program. He says, “I can’t wait to look in the mirror, smile and see I have teeth. And to be able to eat better, that’s a big thing.”

The Victors for Veterans program will continue through the winter of 2022 at the VINA clinic and the Dental Clinic in Traverse City.