

Dental Clinic Overview

A visit—any day—to the Fourth Street Clinic's waiting room quickly reveals that for those living in poverty, dental care is both a top priority and virtually nonexistent. Dani's mom lost her teeth by the time she is 40 years old, so she just expects it to happen to her. Behind Dani sits Sam who is leaning against the wall with ice to his face as he waits for a follow up medical appointment for a recent tooth extraction. In front of Sam is Sidney who hasn't had teeth in five years and looks forward to the day that he can eat solid food again. When asked who else in the waiting room has trouble with their teeth, 80 percent raise their hands.¹

Fourth Street Clinic, in operation for 25 years, is Utah's only nonprofit that provides comprehensive health care and support services to homeless Utahns. With a staff of 50 and a volunteer network of more than 150, Fourth Street Clinic serves 3,800 homeless men, women and children with medical, mental health, substance abuse and pharmacy services. By increasing homeless Utahns' access to primary care, Fourth Street Clinic is a major partner in ending homelessness, promoting community health, and achieving across-the-board health care savings.

Dental care is a major service gap for uninsured, poor Utahns and decayed or missing teeth erode self-confidence, contribute to unemployment and perpetuate homelessness for generations. Today, we have an opportunity to restore health and break this cycle of poverty.

Thanks to a \$2.9 million capital improvement grant, Fourth Street Clinic is currently constructing a four-chair, on-site dental clinic to fully integrate dental care into medical services. When fully operational by 2015, the Dental Clinic will provide 5,760 visits annually. Services will be delivered by a combination of paid staff to incorporate efficiency and oversight, volunteers to encourage community involvement and control costs, and students to ensure that future professionals can respond to the full scope of our community's oral health needs. **Now homeless Utahns will have access to comprehensive oral health care to save their teeth and bring back smiles.**

To fund the Dental Clinic, Fourth Street Clinic is currently engaged in a broad-based community fundraising campaign to increase operating revenue by \$450,000 a year. Together we can create opportunities that give the sickest and poorest among us a chance to overcome health care challenges and move out of homelessness.

¹ Taken from patient interviews with Fourth Street Clinic and Desert News, May 1, 2012