



Cassandra Coole (left), Da'sha Tardy (center), and Bailey Woodcock (right) treat a patient, Will Wong, at a free dental screening event held by Mesa Community College dental students and hosted by The Arizona School of Dentistry of Oral Health on Feb. 3, 2023. (Photo by Diego Esquivel/ The Mesa Legend)

#### NEWS

## **Dental patients receive free screenings from Mesa Community College dental hygiene students**

Diego Esquivel 02/05/2024

The Arizona School of Dentistry & Oral Health opened its doors Saturday morning for Mesa Community College's spring dental screenings where eligible patients received free treatment.

The event's services were established as a learning experience for MCC students to perform assessments on patients and

prepare for future semesters and professions in the dental industry.

After weeks of hearing about the free screenings offered by MCC, community members filled the waiting room lobby of the Mesa based medical facility near Recker and Baseline Roads to get in line for one-on-one treatment.

Patient Sunni Golden first heard about the screening when student Da'sha Tardy made a post on Reddit asking if anyone was interested in attending.

"A lot of people are afraid to go to the dentist for a myriad of reasons, just anxiety, or fear, but also the cost associated with it," said Golden.

"You're likely going to see a lot more that they (students) can learn from than just perfect teeth. Perfect teeth are great and all but they're (students) just going to see a lot more range and I think that's really important," added Golden.

Upon walking inside the dental room, students in red gowns and faculty in yellow gowns were seen treating many patients.

Patients received oral cancer screenings where students examined the gums for bacteria. Each booth had two to three students and faculty, with one performing the assessment and others there for assistance.

Patients were also taken to another room for X-rays, with free health history exams also offered where students examined blood pressure and provided glucose screenings.

Communication and collaboration were a clear component of the screening process. Students made sure to interact and establish a sense of comfortability when engaging with patients.

MCC dental hygiene student Jessica Einwaechter was a first year student working for her second time at the free screening event.

“It’s definitely preparing us for next semester, our second year. We get to see our second year, kind of perform assessments on their patients so we get to mentally prepare ourselves,” said Einwaechter.

Einwaechter described a step up in activity compared to last semester’s screenings, where she is now taking vitals, helping out with radiology and documenting within the clinic.



Linda Ortega inspects an early morning patient, Quentin Duranat, at a free dental screening event held by Mesa Community College dental students and hosted by The Arizona School of Dentistry of Oral Health on Feb. 3, 2023. (Photo by Diego Esquivel/ The Mesa Legend)

Student Linda Ortega also attended for her second screening and spoke to The Mesa Legend fresh off of treating an early morning patient.

“When we complete the treatment, some patients that haven’t been seen in years, they don’t realize how it can affect them not only in their mouth but in their body as well because the mouth and body are basically connected,” added Ortega.

Ortega described the different health problems and harms that can come from a disregard of proper care for the mouth.

“If you have any oral conditions you can actually lead to other health problems, so basically affecting the heart and just the bacteria that’s in the bloodstream from within the tissue of the mouth can actually go towards the heart. I think it’s very important that they come here and our prices are pretty reduced so it’s a pretty good deal,” Ortega explained.

Patients would receive results after their screening and if necessary, are given the option to return back to the facility or speak with a dentist of their choice.

Patient Will Wong spoke immediately after receiving the screening treatment and explained hearing about the service on a broadcasted announcement on TV news, further showing examples of the efforts the college has made to spread the word about the event.



Bailey Woodcock (right) and Da’sha Tardy (left) treat patient Will Wong, at a free dental screening event held by Mesa Community College dental students and hosted by The Arizona School of Dentistry of Oral Health on Feb. 3, 2023. (Photo by Diego Esquivel/ The Mesa Legend)

Wong spoke on not only how the screening process benefitted his dental health but also the experience for the students