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# The UMB Pulse Podcast

## How UMSOD Is Expanding Oral Health Access and Promoting Preventive Care

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The UMB Pulse Podcast

### How UMSOD Is Expanding Ora

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Show Notes

Transcript

**Dana Rampolla:** 0:00

Now that we're into the new year, I know it's a time where we prioritize looking at ourselves, our health, our well you know, mind, body, and spirit as they say. For me, I know I've made a couple resolutions for myself, and I know most people most people do, but There are certain people who have a hard time following through with those resolutions, and not it's not always because they can't or don't have fortitude to do it. It's sometimes related to other things, like access to health care. Right?

**Charles Schelle:** 0:28

Yeah. Absolutely. I mean, we all have Goals, some of us don't reach them. I'm guilty of that. But a lot of people when we're talking about resolutions, we're talking about, like, losing weight or eating healthier. But one of the things that gets overlooked a lot, I think, is oral health care. So many

things that go on through the rest of your body are just linked to your teeth and gums. Like, you can go into a dentist chair, And they can look for signs of throat cancer or diabetes, anything that you can think of. So it's really important to, Go see a dentist because maybe your health journey is gonna go off track because of something the dentist could've spotted

**Dana Rampolla:** 1:08

Well, today, we are going to have a nice conversation with two of the dentists from our school of dentistry, doctor Robert Windsor, And he is the director of clinical operations in the division of general dentistry, And Vineet Dhar. Vineet is the assistant dean of postgraduate and professional studies in dentistry. He's also the clinical professor and chair of orthodontics and pediatric dentistry and the division chief of pediatric dentistry. And that's gonna be important as we have this conversation because he has a lot to share about pediatric checkups and well care to avoid traumatic situations later.

**Charles Schelle:** 1:43

And the University of Maryland School of Dentistry has a ton of community programs. And we won't get to them all, but you will hear a few of them that are making tremendous impacts in the community.

**Dana Rampolla:** 1:55

Okay. So then let's talk teeth.

**Jena Frick:** 2:01

You're listening to the heartbeat of the University of Maryland, Baltimore, the UMB pulse. Pulse.

**Dana Rampolla:** 2:15

Bob and Vineet, welcome to the UMB Pulse podcast. We really appreciate you joining us to kick off the new year, 2024. How do we get here already. But I think it's important that when we're looking at the new year, we can we can talk about things that relate to health and well-being, and one of those is certainly our dental or our oral care. So, I read something recently that says oral health is a critical component of overall health. And why why is that? Why would why would you say that?

**Bob Windsor:** 2:47

So when I was considering, that that statement, I, I was kinda looking to see what I could find, and I found that the World Health Organization stated it much more eloquently than what I could. So I'll just read what they defined. It is quite quick, but it that they define as a state of the mouth, teeth, and oral, facial structures that enable individuals to perform essential functions such as eating, breathing, and speaking. It also encompasses psychosocial dimensions such as self confidence, well-being, and the ability to socialize and work without pain, discomfort, and embarrassment. I mean, that really states it. If if we think about our patients, You know, we we have patients that come in, they're gonna be interviewing for a job and and they're missing a tooth, or or they have a tooth that's black or something along those lines. And that, very dramatically affects their self confidence and even if they if they're gonna follow through with that application. You know, the the thing that Vineet and I noticed is that the oral diseases disproportionately affect the

vulnerable populations or the disadvantaged populations and it can be profound effects in nutrition and systemic diseases. So oral health is a very important, thing for us.

**Vineet Dhar:** 3:58

Allow me to add to that. Dana, first of all, it's a pleasure to be here, and thank you for having us. And And and greetings to all the listeners. I wanna say that regarding the quote, simply put, oral health is an integral part of oral health and well-being. So, let's think of mouth as a gateway to the rest of the body, and poor oral health will have serious implications on overall health. So from that perspective, dental care is medically necessary care.

**Dana Rampolla:** 4:27

Yeah. That's so true. My dentist reinforces that that same thought every time I go. He talks about getting good vitamins in your system and everything just That also help affect your teeth. We recently put out an issue of what's called here at UMB the M Dental Magazine, which is our dental school's magazine that shares all kinds of interesting information, some of which we're gonna talk about today because you've been featured in there. And Dean Mark Reynolds of the school of dentistry recently said, "At the University of Maryland School of Dentistry, expanding access to oral health care is among our top priorities." So let's jump in and talk a little bit about what some of these programs are, what these initiatives look like, and how we are helping to serve that the the community that may not traditionally get the health care that they need.

**Vineet Dhar:** 5:16

Absolutely. Looking forward to the discussion.

**Charles Schelle:** 5:19

And there is so much going on at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. Overall with the state initiative, we're celebrating the one year anniversary of Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental Program. And that's really critical for seniors, but targets everybody in Medicaid 21 and up. Bob, what does that program encompass, and how does it work?

**Bob Windsor:** 5:39

So Maryland Healthy Smalls is is the new name of the medical assistance program. And, as you mentioned, Charles, it began in January 2023 essentially, the the state combined, programs that we had for pediatric patients and also for pregnant mothers that they were covering at that time. And there was another experimental program but then they They moved them into one program covered by one entity. I guess, Skygen is the administrator for that, But they also added eight hundred thousand adults to that, and and that was really the big thing for us. And it's a pretty comprehensive program. Covers checkups, exams, you know, um, X rays, cleanings, fluoride treatments um, some emergency treatments. It'll also cover some things that haven't been well covered in the past, such as root canals uh, crowns on teeth of head root canals, and on teeth of knee crowns also. It it covers extractions and anesthesia for that. So it it is a a pretty comprehensive program.

**Charles Schelle:** 6:44

How was it getting dental coverage before? You mentioned a few things that that were added, but

but did this Does this program make it, I guess, simpler to tap into those benefits?

**Bob Windsor:** 6:54

Yes It does. I mean, the, I guess the process, if if we wanna talk on that that for for a minute, is that our patients need to make it you know, to determine whether or not they're part of that Maryland Healthy Smiles uh, program. That's something that they can do through department of health or, or, different things like that. And I I I would imagine that's probably the same for the pediatric patients. I I think that Vineet can help us out with that. But, once they've determined that they do have that coverage, then they can come to the school and we can, bring them into our program. We can provide some numbers if you want later on, maybe call center numbers, for because that's the way to enter into the school. Essentially, you call that and and they, that person who answers the phone determines, where that patient's going to be going, the arrangement before screening clinic and then, we can move the person into our our system. So that's that's the way it works for us.

**Vineet Dhar:** 7:54

So Maryland Healthy Smiles dental program is essentially a dental care for Anyone who's eligible for Medicaid services. Mhmm. And this is the whole gamut of those services, That can be included in that. It's all they're all covered services. Before, we had a Medicaid coverage for the children under twenty one years of age, pregnant women, now it's been expanded to adults as well. And that's what Bob was alluding to. Coverage has increased, and that's has this increased advantage in improving access to care.

**Charles Schelle:** 8:27

Great. Thank you for for explaining that and and adding to that. You you can take this in in a couple different directions, but, what does dental health care normally look like for maybe someone who's elderly, maybe they have Medicaid, maybe they don't and maybe for others who are underserved that may or may not have coverage, and they're, looking to to get just even basic work done.

**Bob Windsor:** 8:50

For me, I I I look at dental health care as kind of a moving target because it depends upon a couple different factors. There are financial factors. We all have our priorities in how we can spend our available funds. And, sometimes if people, are struggling with with their finances, you know, they have take care of childcare, housing, food, things like this. Those become the priority. So, their oral health suffers because they don't have the enough funds to be able to handle that. Other things that can fit into it access access to care. Can, do can they drive? You know? Is it easy to get there by public, you know, transportation? Can you get time off of work to visit the dentist? You know? I mean, you need your job. You can't take off time because then you're gonna lose that job. And then your overall general health, has a lot to do with this well.

**Dana Rampolla:** 9:39

Yeah. And as you said, then if you're not getting that health care that you need, that's going to spill over and affect a number of different parts of your life. Mhmm. We are excited to talk to you next about the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation patient care grant that was awarded to the

school of dentistry. Tell us a little bit about that grant and how that might be different or affect the care that you just described.

**Bob Windsor:** 10:05

This is a project that I began working on not too long after the, the the New Maryland Healthy Smiles came into effect. And the the one thing that we discovered in those covered services is that the One area that wasn't covered would be dentures. Alright? There's literally no no coverage there. There's a gap. I I call it a gap in the in in the coverage. Why is that? I can speculate a little bit in talking to some of the folks, you know, at at SkyGem. But, essentially, when they combine some programs, you know, pediatric patients and pregnant mothers really don't have a great need for dentures, so they just didn't think about it, it may change in the future. There there's always, they're always listening to us or they're they're good to work with that way. But we contacted Delta about this, and Delta had actually reached out to us before because they wanted to help us with our geriatric population. That was something that they wanted to, put some money towards. And so we established this this grant that will pick up That coverage for dentures both the partial denture or or a complete denture, for patients And covered a hundred percent. It's a hundred and fifty thousand dollars grant, which is, for the average case probably would affect, know, seventy five to eighty patients. And we're we're moving right along with that grant. This particular time, we have, probably about forty patients somewhere in that process um, who were, you know, were working towards. It's facilitated through all the different predoctoral clinics in the school. It can be, the special patients in geriatrics can, can work with the grant also. But, basically, the student provider recognizes that it they they have a need for financial assistance. The patient basically says to them, I don't know if I can afford that until they get talking and, so they go ahead and they contact me to find out if this patient is eligible for that grant. And, really, the only two criteria are that need to be covered by by Maryland Healthy Smiles, and they have to be over the age of sixty. Delta originally asked for sixty five. I prevailed and said, I think we have a a, a greater need, and we we can include a few more people, and and they were very gracious to allow us to go to age sixty.

**Dana Rampolla:** 12:15

You know what I think is really encouraging, just that you said they're so good to work with and that they're listening to you because you have your finger on the the community and what really is needed. So, Bob, you've mentioned elderly. You've mentioned, pregnant women. What about the special needs community, are they covered by this if they have Medicaid?

**Bob Windsor:** 12:32

At this time, they're not. That's something that we're looking into. Now I don't have a, a a perfect answer for that. And and that is a gap in our coverage, because we've had, some patients who have, some personal issues and they end up losing their teeth at at you know, in their in their thirties, and that's a a a crisis for that person, you know, because they're still quite young at that point. So we are working, you know, towards you know, it's getting some kind of coverage for them in the future, but that's that's another project for us.

**Dana Rampolla:** 13:01

Gotcha. So it's not perfect, it's it's helping a lot and True. Growing and evolving. How about in terms of patient success? Like, do you do any types of assessments For, during, after to determine what, satisfaction there is with the dental services and how that could also evolve?

**Bob Windsor:** 13:19

The faculty has a lot to do with what goes on during the treatment. In other words, faculty is present for, the treatment processes, it's it's up to us as faculty, doctor Dhar and I are both involved as faculty in in our clinics, to talk to the patient and, see how they're doing and things along those lines. We do have surveys that we send out after appointments also. Yeah, that was one of the things that I work with with the school. We were sending out email surveys, and we discovered that many of our patients, in fact, most of them probably have a cell phone, but many do not have access to Internet or or a a laptop computer or anything like that, or they don't even have an email account. But we moved it over, and now we send a text out. And there are just five questions. So it's nice and quick and easy, thirty seconds, and you can you can do a survey. And and then with our response went from about, Oh, I think four to five percent over over twenty five percent now. So we're getting a a pretty good response. We get a lot of comments that people make And that we literally review these at our quality assurance committee every other month and and then reach out to the different clinics and pass on Some of the the the positives and the occasional negative, we we answer that, and we get back in touch with people to find out why it's a negative. It gives us an opportunity to open that dialogue. And and if it's something that we've we've dropped the ball on, we're able to, help those people out and move on with it. So I think that's a pretty good process. Oh, that sounds great.

**Charles Schelle:** 14:51

Yeah. And and you gave some examples of, like, how this is, like, transformative for for patients and what it means to some of them. Obviously, this creates opportunities for students as well at the University of Maryland School of Dentistry. So take us through about how students get involved with some of these programs?

**Bob Windsor:** 15:09

Mostly, the the students become involved when it starts with their patient. In other words, when When we have our orientation, which, happens in in June of each year, May to June as new classes either move up or a new class comes into the clinic we start talking about some of these programs that are available. I went ahead and drew up a, a single page that we could put in our business manager's offices that would specify that and that way, they can hand that out to students as well So they stay aware of what we can do. This this Delta Dental Community Care Grant is is one of several different grants that we work with. We have a another grant that that we help people to maintain their teeth. In other words, that they if if a root canal would be a really good treatment, most people can't afford the crown coming in afterwards. So, So, basically, if the patient's able to pay for the root canal then the grant covers the cost of crowning the tooth and any other work that would have to go into getting that crown done. So that's another grant. The school also has a thirty percent reduction of fees for for people who are In between. Vineet mentioned, that we have Medicaid coverage for patients who are underneath a certain, poverty level, but we have patients that get stuck in between. You know? They're they're over that level, so they can't really get

Medicaid but they really can't afford it either. So if, you know, if they send us information in as far as their their income and expenses, and we're able to give them a thirty percent reduction on our pre doctorates, fee schedule, which is already about half of what it is out in the private sector. So, that way, it gives them an opportunity to hopefully get some work done and and to, to at least take care of urgent needs and things along those lines.

**Charles Schelle:** 16:52

Absolutely. And that's fantastic doing that for for the community. And Then as you mentioned earlier, providing another way for students to get involved and have that face to face interaction with the community. And speaking of so, Vineet, you're involved with another community dental program that's making huge difference for children in Maryland for the past decade. So tell us, what does the Oral Health for Underserved Uninsured Children program enable you to do for families?

**Vineet Dhar:** 17:20

Thank you, Charles. Before I respond to your question, I want to share some more information about the program that is, I think, very critical. So a 2016 research paper published in Lancet on global burden of diseases reported dental decay to be the top most prevalent chronic disease in general health. So it is estimated that about half a million of children worldwide have tooth decay in their baby teeth, the primary teeth. And the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, AAPD, reports and has data on how untreated tooth decay can impact the child's quality of life. It could be missed school days. It could be it could impact the ability to concentrate on studies and so on and so forth. So when we come to Maryland, there are about seven hundred fifty thousand children that receive medical and dental services through Medicaid, and about ten or eleven percent of those have dental decay. About sixty thousand children in Maryland don't have any dental insurance. They're uninsured. And in our experience, the rate of dental decay is five times in this population. So if it's eleven percent in that, it's five times more in the uninsured population. Now if you go to the school of dentistry, vision statements is advancing oral health and improving lives, And that's what we are focused on. So the Oral Health for Underserved Uninsured Children program or OH-UUC program is a dental home program, essentially. It's for children from families who have limited income and no dental insurance. So they are not eligible for Medicaid and have limited access to care and, frankly speaking, no other place to go. This is largely because of their undetermined immigration status, but there are other reasons as well. So we focus on providing care to these families through this program.

**Charles Schelle:** 19:18

That's great with mentioning all the people served through this program and go maybe more into detail about, how how this is making a a difference in the community?

**Vineet Dhar:** 19:30

Sure. So we are treating about five hundred such children in this program every year. And this is only possible because of our multiple community partners in the area. How it's making a difference? Well, We are we have developed an innovative and replicable community based program. When I say replicable, I'm saying it's it's a leaders countrywide, And it's gaining that

national reputation, and the purpose is to promote health equity by reducing disparities. It has enhanced our ability to serve vulnerable populations regardless of the insurance status. We have created over a thousand first ever dental homes in the last couple of years. These families are more than grateful. And a nonfinancial feature of this program is that it has increased patient experiences for our dental students, resulting in more young dentists committing to oral health care for underserved children and as well as increasing their interest in specializing in pediatric dentistry. So it's really it's a it's a win win from many perspectives and really making a very meaningful difference in the society.

**Charles Schelle:** 20:37

Now you mentioned that the phrase dental home what does that really mean for someone having a dental home?

**Vineet Dhar:** 20:44

A dental home is an ongoing relationship between a dentist and a patient. So it's an inclusive environment, which covers all aspects of oral health care delivered in a safe, comprehensive, continuous, and a and a family centered way regardless of social or financial barriers. So the American Academy recommends that every child should have a dental home by age twelve months, So first year of life which is hard to achieve, but we have been advocating strong for it, and we have obviously helped with the financial barrier in this program for parents to be able to reach to us. This is to provide a lifetime of optimal and or optimal oral health. Our message is clear. We we are saying that every child deserve deserves a dental home. And We are saying to the families, yes. We can see the need, and, yes, you can trust us. So every child deserves a dental home is what we are pushing.

**Charles Schelle:** 21:39

You received multiple grants over the years to support this program and particularly from Delta Dental Community Care Foundation And and even the Baltimore based Abell Foundation. How are these grants helping you expand your outreach? And I guess it sounds like they're maybe targeting, who they're helping or serving. Right?

**Vineet Dhar:** 21:57

Absolutely, Charles. I if I'm reminded of twenty sixteen when we started this grant, this program rather, it was a support of five thousand dollars from Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry to see twenty five or thirty kids. And we were seeing in our clinics, families coming to us with bringing their children for urgent care only. So they were not bringing them for preventive care, routine dental care, just for urgent care. So we knew there's a population out there that needs our help. These are Maryland children that need our help. And with the help of these grants, Delta Dental, Abell Foundation, Maryland Department of Health, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, and now state support, We have come to a a position where we are able to support so many more kids. From twenty kids to more than five hundred children in a year is where we are reached because of these supporting grants. So a lot of gratitude to these foundations for supporting the right cause that and, you know, supporting the dental home for everyone's support.

**Charles Schelle:** 22:55



Absolutely. That's a Huge, huge accomplishment going going from that you know, Small start to to how big you've grown, so kudos. Thank you.

**Dana Rampolla:** 23:04

Those numbers are incredible. Coming from a mother's standpoint, if I'm bringing my child to you am I I'm what I'm hearing is I'm I'm coming for wellness visits too, right, to try to negate for the traumatic care later or the specialized care later.

**Vineet Dhar:** 23:20

That is our focus. We want children to come for well visit get their oral health education, get their anticipatory guidance, which is age appropriate, get preventive care. And, hopefully uh, they don't need any urgent care at all, but any routine care that we can get for them, we should do that first. If they need urgent care, we are always there. So we are we are open for the urgent care. We allow walk ins. You can just walk in. If there's a family that doesn't have the insurance, they can just walk into the school of dentistry, pediatric dentistry clinics, with their child, and we'll provide care.

**Dana Rampolla:** 23:55

And is there a continuum of doctors that the Family will see, or is it just depends on the day you get there?

**Vineet Dhar:** 24:04

There is continue continuity of care uh, for most of the part. It being a residency program that there is a thing that residents graduate and they're new residents after every two years. So that that is part of the program, the the nature of the program. But other than that, it makes a child more comfortable when they're seen by the same provider. So as much as possible, we try to do that.

**Dana Rampolla:** 24:25

That sounds great. Thank you for sharing all that about that program. That really does fill that void, one of the voids we talked about earlier. Let's talk a little bit about the Mission of Mercy. That's been around for quite a number of years, and my understanding is that operates out of Shady Grove right now. Can you explain where Shady Grove is and then kinda what that program focuses on?

**Bob Windsor:** 24:48

So the mission of Mercy is This incredible experience for both patients and students because you get involved in this Strictly to do dental care for people. You're not worried about a requirement for a school. You're not worried about, whether someone's paying for the service because it's just strictly charity. The the faculty will get involved and, you know, give up their selves. You know, The The staff who get involved in it, are are doing, very similar things too. Catholic Charities helps us out. Um, They basically, the patients apply to Catholic charities uh, to be seen at in in a Mission of Mercy. And so we start to arrange that. We're trying to do it twice a year right now in April and October. We we have plans to perhaps add a third time. But it is it's just a a wonderful time to, see people and work with people. Some of the things we're in need of for the Mission of Mercy are people that can translate. That's I think that's one of my deficiencies As an American citizen, I speak one language. We're very lucky that it that English is so universal, but We really need to have greater facility with Spanish because that is the second language in this country now. And so, many

of our patients who come to us from the Mission of Mercy um, you know, require Spanish translators. So we have several of the nursing students who come in and help out with that, some of our staff members speak Spanish. I think that uh, Vineet can tell you in in his pediatric clinic at the school too, there's there is a great need as well. But Mission of Mercy generally, we see about one hundred and twenty patients, at a time and like I said, it's a it's just a joyous occasion. The Shady Grove campus is, I think, down towards Rockville. In that area, it is part of the University of Maryland Maryland system. It's a very, very nice facility down there.

**Dana Rampolla:** 26:49

That's terrific. Thanks for that clear definition. So that's happening twice a year, And we'll put the information about all of these programs we're talking about in our show notes, of course, so people can learn more and, access to to get more information.

**Charles Schelle:** 27:03

Particularly for Mission of Mercy, how does someone, if they need care like that, how do they sign up to to get a chair?

**Bob Windsor:** 27:11

Essentially, they need to go through Catholic Charities. They apply to Catholic Charities for for an appointment. Catholic Charities reaches out. They we we get a medical history ahead of time so so they become entered into our system and then they literally schedule an appointment. We do accept walk ins as well but we try to schedule a lot of appointments just get an idea of how many patients we're actually seeing. We we schedule about eighty patients. Not all of them show up. That's part of of of dentistry sometimes, sometimes the tooth hurts that particular day And, when when you signed up for that appointment and you're, you're really looking forward to getting taken care of, but you wake up that morning and it's not hurting anymore. And the fear of dentistry takes over at that particular time and overwhelms, the desire to get something taken care of. That's a hard thing for us in dentistry is that, the the fear of what we do is is a big obstacle to overcome for some patients.

**Charles Schelle:** 28:12

If you haven't been to the Samuel d Harris, National Museum of Dentistry. They have a lot of great things over there to help kids feel more comfortable about, going to the dentist and and make it more fun. We also had a previous episode interviewing them. So, we can put the put a link to that in our notes as well if you haven't heard that episode. But getting back to the task at hand Bob, there's that other partnership uh, that began in April of twenty twenty three between the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery and Total Healthcare, and that helps residents in West Baltimore. And faculty are involved with that too. Before you go in in-depth about that program, I see this term a lot when mentioning this, how it's a federally qualified health center. And not a lot of people probably know what that designation is and why it's important. So tell us about the significance of that designation for for this partnership first.

**Bob Windsor:** 29:07

Total health care is part of, of that program, the Federally Qualified Health Center. They're dedicated to caring for the underserved communities in Baltimore. Basically, they They look at at,

again, the the income and poverty level in certain neighborhoods, and they reach out to those neighborhoods. They're in Baltimore, I mean, I could list, whole lot of them all all the way from Bolton Hill to Upton to, you know, Ridgely's Delight you know, Washington Village. All a whole lot of different neighborhoods in fairly close proximity to the school. The school is is located in in in a good position to to help these folks as well. The oral maxillofacial surgery department reached out to help out, with what they can do as far as, doing extractions or the things along these lines, for patients there or just to do some some general screening. This this program, Total Healthcare is as it describes. They're looking at at both medicine and dentistry together as a as a a a full healthcare package for people. And so this is an opportunity for us in dentistry to partner with, with our with medical personnel um, to move on with our patients. We're very fortunate that the new dean of the of the, uh, school of medicine, Mark Gladwin, is is very much in involved in a collaborative effort between dentistry and medicine, and that's something that that will be coming more in the future. I know that, our Dean Reynolds is is close with with Dean Gladwin, and and they're working on that too. So, Um, that's that's something for the future for us. Maybe that maybe that gap that we have for our Our our, special needs patients can be handled by that too as as Dana and I talked about earlier.

**Dana Rampolla:** 30:47

The school the dentistry school here at University of Maryland, Baltimore is doing a lot of good work in the community, and it kinda makes me think back to we are one of the the primary providers of opportunities for education In professional areas, dentistry being one of them. You mentioned school of medicine. We actually have six professional schools and an interdisciplinary graduate school. We talk about our mission here at UMB a lot. Can either of you comment on, just how you feel we are living out our mission through these programs?

**Vineet Dhar:** 31:21

As I kinda alluded to earlier, UMSOD's purpose statement is advancing oral health and improving lives. I think what the effort in the direction of our purpose has been to work in all areas of teaching, research and patient care. And we uh, I think under Dean Reynolds' leadership, have progressed a lot in this area. Patient centered care is in the is in the heart of what we do, and we try our best to make it evidence based. So our our faculty, our our staff, they're all really geared towards that. And it's not only about the education to students. It's also about how best can we take care of the vulnerable populations, how best can we give back to the community, how best can we train our our students, and how can we make sure that all of this is based on good research and good evidence. So I I think the school of dentistry is living to its purpose and really moving it forward.

**Dana Rampolla:** 32:18

Really well put. Thank you for sharing

**Charles Schelle:** 32:20

that. Of course. Absolutely. And we've been covering a lot of different programs, through this episode. But I'm sure people are listening or or watching, thinking, well, I need a crown done. I need maybe an extraction. Where do they go to to find out if they qualify for some of these

programs? Is there a central website or phone number, whether that's On a national level or even at the school of dentistry?

**Bob Windsor:** 32:49

So if we wanna look at at Medicaid programs, I can provide a phone number for that, which is 855-642-8572. And then the website for that would be [www.marylandhealthconnection.gov](http://www.marylandhealthconnection.gov). So I can provide these. Maybe that way you can listen on the podcast later on. But, I had looked those up because, again, earlier, I think we had talked about, that, prospective patient would need to verify that coverage, to make sure that they are covered, and then they can come to school. And if they wanna come to the school, you know, at that point, they wanna go through the call center, and and I can get that number also, which is 410-706-2801. And so they can talk to the folks that work down there, and they know which which clinic to send them to. Generally, they go through a screening process, and then we can direct them to where they can be best cared for.

**Charles Schelle:** 33:43

Thanks for providing those numbers. I think some people might think that it's hard or impossible to get in certain clinics that that for people who don't have coverage. So is it a challenge for people to to get seen for some of these community clinics? Or if they're screened the right way, you're able to find something some sort of program whether that might not be your program that they might qualify for.

**Bob Windsor:** 34:09

The screening is set up to benefit both our patients and students. One of the weaknesses we had in in prior years was that we screened it and then the patient had to be assigned later on. So they ended up entering into this void And they sometimes they got lost. So we've changed that. The students are assigned to a screening block. In other words, that's for five days are going to be involved in the screening clinic. And at the time that they see that patient, the patient's assigned to that student right away. So this is continuity of care. So as soon as they're involved in the screening, they they move right in with the student. Now there are times when that case is more advanced, there's a lot more breakdown, or different things along those lines, and they need to be assigned to a residency program. Vineet, can maybe you can tell us as far as how how the pediatric patients come in too along those same lines.

**Vineet Dhar:** 35:06

Yeah. Thank you, Bob. I think it varies so much depend depending on different specialties and clinics. But in pediatric clinics we mostly have Medicaid patients. Again, the same rules and principles apply as Bob was mentioning. In addition, if there is any child or or families that have children that don't qualify for Medicaid not eligible for Medicaid, They can go through their our community partners. They can reach out to a social worker and get referred to us. But let me say this out to your listeners that if your child is in pain or you have reasons to believe that there are signs of dental infection, Simply walk in as a as an emergency patient during working hours in pediatric clinics, you will be seen. Please don't delay care, and that's what we are there for.

**Charles Schelle:** 35:53

Great. That's incredibly helpful message, and, hopefully, a lot of people will take that advice to heart. Thank you.

**Dana Rampolla:** 36:01

Before we sign off, is there anything else you either of you would like to share, something maybe we've forgotten to ask or wouldn't know about asking?

**Bob Windsor:** 36:09

I think the only one thing I might mention, this is for Vineet's, clinic. People often ask, well, How old should my child be before I bring them in for a dentist? So, Vineet I think, that's that's been changing, hasn't it?

**Vineet Dhar:** 36:21

Yeah. The recommendation, as I said earlier, we we say we start seeing children at at age one. So we want to promote preventive services, oral health education. We'd rather not take your child to a stage where they have decay in their mouth and need to be treated for that. So the earlier, the better. Year one of age is where we recommend. That is definitely what pediatrics uh, is strongly advocating now. I'll I'll add to it also that I'm very proud of where I work, University of Maryland School of Dentistry. I think it's a great place for the faculty staff our students and for patient care. We really all of us put a lot of hard work and with all sincerity to make it a better place every day. So that's that's what I I I'm proud to come here every day, and I really enjoy working. That's what I would add to it.

**Dana Rampolla:** 37:13

Well, we are thankful that you both joined us today, and we are very proud to be a part of an institution that truly does make a difference in the community and beyond. Thank you both for what you do every day. Thank you for joining us, and happy New Year.

**Charles Schelle:** 37:29

I wish I could say listening to the podcast about dentistry will get you maybe a dollar or two from the Tooth Fairy when you wake up tomorrow but, I don't quite have that budget, but what we can bring to you are some highlights about some episodes you missed about the school of dentistry that that we covered before. That's a present. Right?

**Dana Rampolla:** 37:49

Yeah. That's a that's a little a little New Year's gift for everybody. Actually, one one little nugget we can share with you is a prior episode of the pulse, which you can scroll back and and find that easily tied into teeth and and health and well-being for children, especially, We have something called the Samuel d Harris National Museum of Dentistry on campus. It was appointed in two thousand three by Congress as the National Museum of Dentistry. In that episode, we talk about the museum. We talk about the programs, and they have A really great program for children where it sets children up at an early age to learn about dentistry and what a visit to the dentist looks like. So, hopefully, it'll take away any fears that they might have the first time they go to the dentist. And, Vineet and Bob referenced that earlier today, so we'll put the link to that in our show notes.

**Charles Schelle:** 38:40

There's always something new going on at the museum, so we know that that episode is a little old on the shelf right now so check out their site, dental museum dot com, for for updates. The other episode you should really check out is one that came out January of last year featuring an alum, Kathryn Pawlak. She created the Planet Smilez Discovering Dentistry Camp, and that's a really cool summer camp that she hosts here at UMB where she has students from the community as well as our UMB CURE scholars in that program as they're trying to discover potential STEM careers. And they are hands on in our dentistry labs. We're working on how to do a, Filling, how to stitch, stitch somebody's gums up after uh, some dental surgery.

**Dana Rampolla:** 39:29

Charles, this was a great way to kick off the new year. I think we've provided A lot of valuable resources for our community. I learned a great deal. And as always, I am just so proud to be at a university where we do We really do make an impact in the community. So happy New Year, everybody, and happy New Year to you, Charles.

**Charles Schelle:** 39:47

Thanks. And don't forget to floss.

**Jena Frick:** 39:54

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