

Presentation to the Sparks City Council

July 27, 2018, 2:00 p.m., 431 Prater Way, Sparks, NV

Mayor Martini and Council Members,

For the record, my name is Linda Haigh, Founder of the Adopt a Vet Dental Program (AAVD). With me today is Jim Snyder, Veteran Advocate, who is a Marine and a graduate of the Adopt a Vet Program.

We have an epidemic of oral health disease among our veterans in Northern Nevada. A shocking 90% of our veterans enrolled at the Reno VA do not qualify for dental care because the qualifications are so restrictive. A veteran must be 100% service-connected disabled, injured in the jaw or mouth while in service, or have been a prisoner of war so you see that leaves out the vast majority of our veterans. The Adopt a Vet Dental Program (AAVD) targets the low-income veterans who do not qualify and cannot afford to see a dentist.

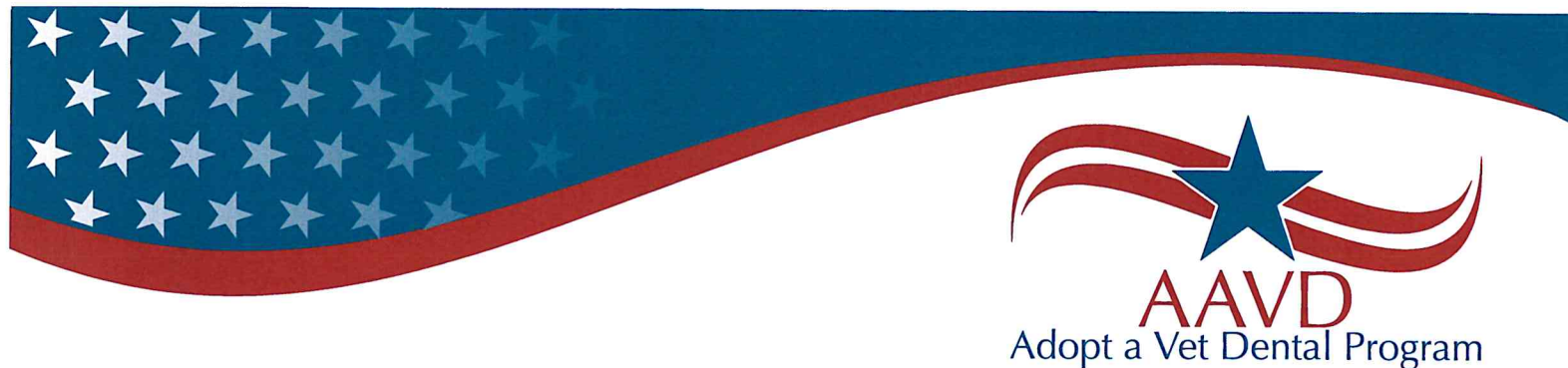
Since April 2010, AAVD has provided dental care to over 1,000 low-income veterans with 126 veterans still waiting up to a year for dental care. We recruit dental professionals to volunteer their time and services to help our veterans. To date, 130 dentists and specialists have stepped forward and donated over \$5.2 million dollars in services. However, AAVD is responsible to pay for all the dental lab work (dentures, partials, crowns), and the operational costs for our program.

These veterans live every day with pain, abscesses, and infections, and this really affects their overall health which is already comprised with chronic illnesses. Because they have not been to a dentist in 10 to 30 years, their dental treatment can take up to eight months to a year to complete and then we follow-up with them for up to a year. We have helped 75 low-income veterans in the Sparks and Sun Valley area and currently have 12 veterans still waiting for dental care. The cost for AAVD to process and complete one veteran case that includes full restorative dental care is \$1,200.

AAVD would like to give the Sparks City Council an opportunity to help us provide dental care to five veterans living in Sparks for a total of \$6,000. Please join us and become a part of the solution to addressing this overwhelming challenge among our veterans. Our goal is to get our veterans out of pain, fix their teeth, give them their smile back, and have them become a productive member in our community by working or volunteering.

In 2014, AAVD was awarded the Newman's Own and Fisher House award for our innovative approach to providing dental care to our veterans. To our knowledge, there is no other program in the United States like the Adopt a Vet Dental Program. The Adopt a Vet Dental Program is a program of the Northern Nevada Dental Health Programs, the nonprofit arm of the Northern Nevada Dental Society. And our program would not be possible without the generosity of these volunteer dentists and specialists.





Good afternoon, for the record my name is Jim Snyder, AAVD Veteran Advocate, and served in the Marine Corps. I'd like to briefly describe my experience with Adopt a Vet Dental Program (AAVD) and how my life changed, and the lives of my fellow veterans.

First, I would like to express the difficulty veterans have asking for help. But when the help comes, it's really hard for them to accept that they deserve it, and their treatment is really going to happen. And when you see the before and after pictures, it's truly amazing. So it's an honor for me to give back to the AAVD by volunteering for 4 ½ yrs. and now being on staff as an advocate for 2 ½ yrs. I am now able to talk to every new veteran signing up for AAVD. I was in so much jaw pain, and had lost everything (my home, job and dog). Then I found Linda at AAVD, and I waited 18 months for help. This has changed my life -- I am now social, and very honored to say that I received the Nevada Veteran of the Month for August 2015 from Governor Sandoval, and to be able to share that with those who helped me grow.

The reason I am here today is to express the need of dental care for veterans and how it saves lives. I have been told by a VA heart specialist that 75% of heart infections are caused by oral infection from the mouth.

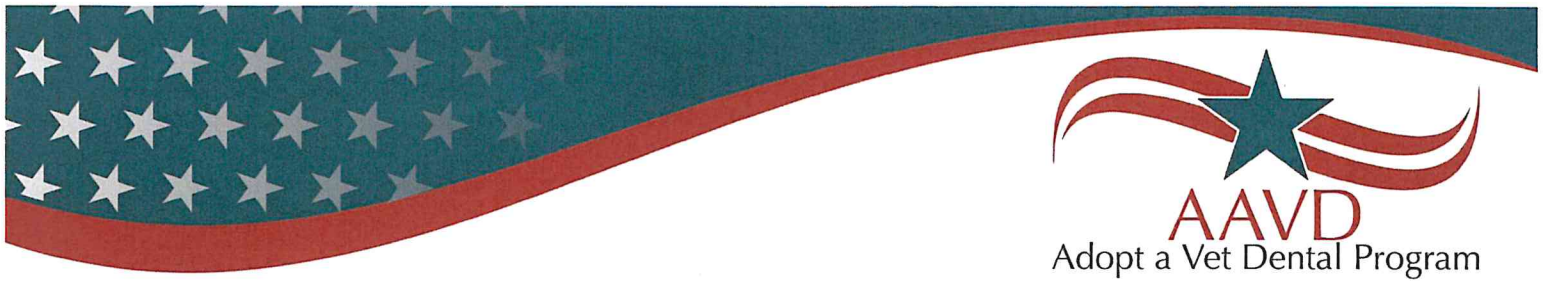
Since I talk to every vet that applies for our program, I can see the difference in the before and after of their confidence and smile. Many have cried after seeing themselves in the mirror.

Our staff shows so much care to them and I have asked each one why they work for (AAVD) and the first thing out of their mouths is for the veterans.

Jim Snyder, Veteran Advocate
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AAVD - MAJOR POINTS

- **90% of veterans do not qualify for dental care at the Reno VA Hospital because the qualifications are so restrictive. This has led to an epidemic of oral health disease among our veterans in Northern Nevada. AAVD addresses this overwhelming challenge by providing dental care to low-income veterans who do not qualify for dental treatment and cannot afford to see a dentist.**
- **AAVD saves and transforms the lives of veterans by eliminating their oral health disease and pain so they can eat and digest their food properly which improves their overall health. They can SMILE again which gives them the confidence to become more social, seek employment, or give back to their community by volunteering.**
- **130 dentists and specialists have stepped forward to provide *pro bono* dental care to low-income veterans and have donated over \$5.2 million dollars in services for over 1,000 low-income veterans. In cases of full restoration, donated services can exceed \$15,000 per veteran with an average of \$7,800 per veteran. AAVD is responsible for all the dental lab and operational costs and provides these services for an average cost of \$1,200 per veteran.**
- **AAVD receives no Federal (including the VA) funding and relies on funds from a two-year State Appropriation, grants, private donations, and fundraising. 98% of all veteran referrals come from the VA.**
- **To our knowledge there is no other program throughout the U.S. like ours that harnesses the skills and good will of dental professionals. This “grassroots” program was started in Reno in April 2010 and now serves 12 counties throughout Northern Nevada.**
- **In September 2014, AAVD received a national award from Newman’s Own and the Fisher House for our innovative dental program to veterans. This award was presented to Linda Haigh, Founder, at the Pentagon by the former Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staffs, General Dempsey.**
- **AAVD is a program of the Northern Nevada Dental Health Programs.**

