DENTAL Care

Dr. Ray C. Williams, Professor and Dean, Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine, receives the Harvard Dental Medicine’s Highest Award, the Prestigious Paul Goldhaber Award, honors a scientist or educator of distinction whose work in dentistry and medicine has gained international recognition.

June 2013

Pre-dental students at Stony Brook University School of Dental Medicine’s inaugural Discover Dental School program.

August 2013
Why is oral health such an important part of good health?
In many ways, oral health is a foundation and an indicator for overall health. Chances are if your teeth or gums are not healthy, you may have other health problems as well. The U.S. surgeon general, Dr. David Satcher, in his report on Oral Health in America stated that the mouth is a mirror of health or disease, it is a sentinel or early warning system and a potential source of pathology affecting other systems and organs. Untreated dental disease is painful and can affect overall physical, emotional and social well being. Children with dental disease often can’t eat or sleep properly, nor can they concentrate well in school. We provide services in all areas of dentistry to ensure that our patients have optimal oral health throughout their lives.

What distinguishes Stony Brook’s approach?
At Stony Brook, we are at the forefront of recognizing the impact of oral health on overall health. We work with various departments, such as the Heart Center to screen for oral disease before patients undergo cardiac surgery and the Cancer Center to screen for oral cancers and to help prevent or detect oral complications that arise from chemotherapy and radiation treatments. We treat many medically compromised patients and work to ensure that they have optimal oral health. Stony Brook offers several special dental services including the Dental Care for the Developmentally Disabled program, a geriatric program and a dental phobia clinic for people who are afraid of dental care. At Stony Brook we can provide dental services using sedation or even general anesthesia in the operating room.

What is the connection between oral health and overall health?
Recent studies clearly show that oral health is a key factor in optimal overall health. Oral diseases can increase the risk for cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, and diabetes. In fact, periodontal disease, also known as gum disease, can have a huge impact on how well you can control diabetes because periodontal disease has been linked with insulin resistance. This means that no matter how hard you work on managing your diabetes, you will not be able to control your blood sugar levels until you take care of any existing oral disease.

ABOUT THE STONY BROOK SCHOOL OF DENTAL MEDICINE
The School of Dental Medicine (SDM) is renowned for implementing cutting-edge technology in its educational programs and in the delivery of oral healthcare services. The SDM provides dental care to more than 13,000 community residents each year and is the country’s leading dental school in translational research and technology transfer. SDM students participate in community outreach regionally, nationally and abroad in an effort to serve remote or impoverished regions of the world, including Kenya, Madagascar and the Indian Health Center at Pine Ridge in South Dakota.