

Allegany County Health Department

“Promoting Health and Preventing Disease”

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MISSION OF MERCY ORGANIZERS NAMED 2011 “PUBLIC HEALTH HEROES” Annual Award Recognizes Excellence in Community Service to Public Health

CUMBERLAND, MD – Each year as part of its observance of National Public Health Week, the Allegany County Health Department presents a “Public Health Hero” award in recognition of an individual or group that has provided outstanding service in the promotion of public health. No effort more perfectly exemplifies the spirit of that award than the Western Maryland Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic, held at the Allegany County Fairgrounds last October.

“The sheer magnitude of this event and the months of meticulous planning involved in order to provide dental care to hundreds of underserved members of the community made the Mission of Mercy the obvious, stand-out nominee for this year’s Public Health Hero award,” stated Dr. Sue V. Raver, Health Officer for Allegany County. “Our appreciation goes out to each and every agency, dental practice, and community member who contributed to the success of this event. They are all Public Health Heroes.” Dr. Raver said.

Western Maryland has always been a region where communities pull together to get things done and help out those in need. Therefore, it was not surprising that the Western Maryland Mission of Mercy Dental Clinic was such a tremendous success in spite of the staggering amount of planning and coordination it required. Eighty-five dentists and forty dental hygienists from around the State joined with multiple agencies and countless volunteers to organize the two-day, free dental services clinic, providing over \$800,000 worth of dental care to around 850 underserved/uninsured adults in Western Maryland.

The actual expenses involved in providing over \$800,000 of dental services at the clinic amounted to just \$40,000 thanks to the committed dental professionals and support personnel who volunteered their time and services.

“This was the first Mission of Mercy dental clinic to be held in the State of Maryland,” stated Dr. Diane D. Romaine who spearheaded the effort to bring about the event. “Plans are already under way for the next Mission of Mercy to be held this October, and we are busy lining up volunteers in anticipation of serving even more clients now that word about the event has spread.”

The dates for the 2011 Western Maryland Mission of Mercy are October 28, and 29 at the Allegany County Fairgrounds in Cumberland. Future clinics are planned in Southern Maryland and on the Eastern Shore.

Anyone interested in volunteering at the October Mission of Mercy event is encouraged to contact Dr. Romaine at docromaine@comcast.net or visit www.westernmdmom.com.