Mobile Health Unit – 10 year Anniversary

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If you can’t make it to the doctor or the dentist, what if those services came to you?

That’s the idea behind Western Kentucky University’s two mobile health units.

Amy Bingham has more in this week’s View from the Hill.

This fall marks the ten year anniversary of the mobile health and dental units operated by WKU’s Institute for Rural Health Development and Research. In that time, the vehicles have logged more than 60 thousand miles in 25 counties, with no plans to slow down anytime soon.

When seventh grader Britni Hogue was called out of class into the library, she wasn’t sure what to expect.  
“When I was laying in the chair, I was a little nervous”…

Instead of checking out a book, Britni’s teeth were “checked out” by dental hygienists from WKU.

“They talked to me, told me what they were going to do and what they were putting on my teeth.”

For the past decade, WKU has brought dental services into rural areas.

“We go to seven counties around Warren and offer dental exams and dental sealants to seventh graders and second graders.”

The first mobile unit was purchased in 2001 using a federal grant secured by U.S. Senator Mitch McConnell.

A second mobile unit, funded by a grant from the Anthem Foundation, was added in 2008. One unit is devoted to dental screenings and the other to health and wellness.

“There are so many people who either don’t have access to care of they’re under insured or not insured. These programs give them at the very least free screenings to they know to go see their primary caregiver.”

WKU nursing and dental hygiene students execute treatments as part of their clinical rotation.

So what’s next for the Institute that’s already served more than thirty thousand patients in the region?

“We want to do more of the research end. We have fully developed the clinical side of the program. What we want to do now is more research on the data we’ve collected.”

While the Dental unit targets children, the Health and Wellness unit targets adults.

To find out more, log onto wku.edu slash irhdr.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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