



Committed to the future of rural communities.

Minnesota — Rural Housing Service

Regional Collaboration

Northern Access Dental Center Serves Three Native American Tribes

Outline Of Need:

The Northern Access Dental Center provides dental services to low-income residents of northern Minnesota, including members of three Indian tribes.

How Rural Development Helped:

Rural Development awarded a \$75,000 grant to purchase equipment for the facility.

The Results:

Several years ago, community members in Bemidji, Minn. realized the need for a dental health facility that would serve underprivileged and at-risk families. In December of 2008, that realization became reality when the doors of the Northern Access Dental Center opened to the public.

The Northern Access Dental Center serves people in Beltrami county and nearby areas, which includes three American Indian reservations. Because a large percentage of this northwestern Minnesotan population falls under the legal poverty line, the volume of people requiring assistance provided by this new facility was vastly underestimated.

With 17,000 people in the area enrolled in Minnesota



A USDA Rural Development grant helped the Northern Access Dental Center increase its patient capacity by 30 percent.

Health Care Programs such as Medical Assistance or MinnesotaCare, an expansion of the facility was badly needed. An increasing number of volunteers and contractual dentists also became interested in contributing time and expertise.

With the help of a \$75,000 grant through USDA Rural Development’s Community Facilities Program, the Northern Dental Access Center was able to increase its patient capacity by 30 percent. The Center now sees approximately 70 or more patients each day. The facility is also able to maintain three to four contract and volunteer dentists daily, Monday through Friday.

“Our field representatives for Rural Development were just wonderful,” said Jeanne Edevold Larson, the Dental Center’s Executive Director. “We have changed lives here, and I really hope our representatives know how much their hard work is appreciated.”

After building partnerships with other community and state organizations for over 10 years, the access center also increased its on-site partnership services. These include nutrition counseling with the University of Minnesota Extension; children’s mental health screening through Beltrami Area Service Collaborative; insurance counseling available through Community Resource Connections, and many more.

Fast Facts

Program: Community Facilities
Investment: \$75,000
Partners: See narrative
Congressional District: MN-07

Demographics

Northwestern Minnesota

Impact:

- Improved access to dental care
- Healthier community
- Ability to serve more people with essential dental health care services