

Remote Area Medical (RAM) event in Baltimore 6-8 Sept 2019

-LT Kindel Kaelke

Remote Area Medical is a non-profit organization that organizes health care events providing care to in need patients at zero cost. Services provided during the event spanned the full health care spectrum. Patients in attendance were able to obtain all of the following services for themselves and their families:

- Dietitian and individual counseling
- Nutrition education
- HIV/AIDS education
- Hepatitis education
- Opioid education
- Veterinary education
- Mental/behavioral health services
- Physical therapy sessions
- Dental care
- Optometry services
- Translation services

Care was provided by Public Health Service officers from as near as the DC area and as far as Alaska. Providers and volunteers from the local area also participated. Three of the participating PHS officers are currently assigned to the Coast Guard. Carol Wong, DDS, MHA, CDR, USPHS District 5 Senior Dental Executive and Senior Health Services Officer; Rachel A. Rachuba, DMD LCDR, USPHS Dentist USCG Training Center Cape May; and Kindel J. Kaelke, DDS, MPH, LT USPHS Senior Assistant Dental Surgeon US Coast Guard Academy Health Services.

Over the course of two days, 665 patients received treatment. Of those, 347 were dental, 294 medical, and 280 vision. Total care donated totaled \$283,870. In addition to volunteers providing care, there were 368 general volunteers coordinating the operations and logistics of the weekend. This equaled a financial value of \$132,480. But, truly, in the words of the head RAM coordinator "The volunteers are actually of infinite value to this operation, but we had to assign a lower number so these computers can handle the math." Providers can only do the work with the aid of the supporting volunteers.

Patients drove in from as far as 6 hours away to receive care. Patients began lining up Friday night, spending the night in the school parking lot. When the doors opened at 7am Saturday morning, there was already a line down the block. One of my patients reported to me that she and her family keep up with the location of the RAM events nationwide and depend on them to receive their regular health care.