



left to right: MWCC Dental Program Director Cindy Cadoret, Assistant Secretary for Career Education for Massachusetts Robert LePage, Gardner City Counselor Elizabeth Kazinskas, President and CEO of The Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts Dr. Amie Shei, Fitchburg Mayor Stephen DiNatale, Dental Hygiene Student Marlene Boucher-Ripley, Representative Michael Kusmerek, Senator Anne Gobi, and Senator John Cronin. Photo credit: Mount Wachusett Community College

On September 28, [Mount Wachusett Community College \(MWCC\)](#) hosted a ribbon cutting to celebrate the opening of its newly renovated dental education clinic located within the Community Health Connections (CHC) community health center facility on Nichols Road in Fitchburg. The renovation project was made possible through a 2021 Activation Fund grant from The Health Foundation and a Massachusetts Skills Capital Grant from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Workforce Skills Cabinet, Executive Office of Education. In her remarks at the event, Dr. Amie Shei, Foundation President and CEO, commended MWCC for its unique collaboration and co-location with CHC since 2005, which has dramatically increased access to quality dental care for residents in the North Central region and to training opportunities for dental hygiene and assisting students.

The Foundation's \$74,000 grant was designated for upgrades to the clinic's sterilization and infection control center, bringing it in line with current industry standards and new COVID-19-related protocols. These upgrades were a component of a larger project that involved updates to patient treatment rooms and radiographic equipment. The improvements have enabled the MWCC Dental Program to offer new certification and continuing education programming in Infection Control and Safety as well as the only Board-approved Radiation Health and Safety Certification course in the region, which meets licensing requirements in both Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

The Foundation played a key role in the formation of the dental education clinic at MWCC through its support of the Oral Health Initiative of North Central Massachusetts, a Round 1 Synergy Initiative project. Since the clinic's launch in 2005, more than 250 graduates from

the dental hygiene and dental assisting programs have entered the workforce and 9,000 patients have received free or low-cost dental care. All total, the Foundation has invested more than \$6.3M in oral health care since 2000.

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