

# VENTURA COUNTY STAR

## Dental clinic attracts many in need of emergency treatment

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RICHARD QUINN/SPECIAL TO THE STAR Dr. Oleg Krutikov takes a look at a tooth causing pain for Juan Garcia during California Dental Group's free emergency dental care clinic Friday at the group's office in Port Hueneme.

PICTURE BY RICHARD QUINN

PORT HUENEME, Calif. - Amber Castillo said she couldn't decide which tooth to have treated — the broken one or the one that lost a filling — as she waited in line Friday morning for a free procedure at California Dental Group's clinic in Port Hueneme.

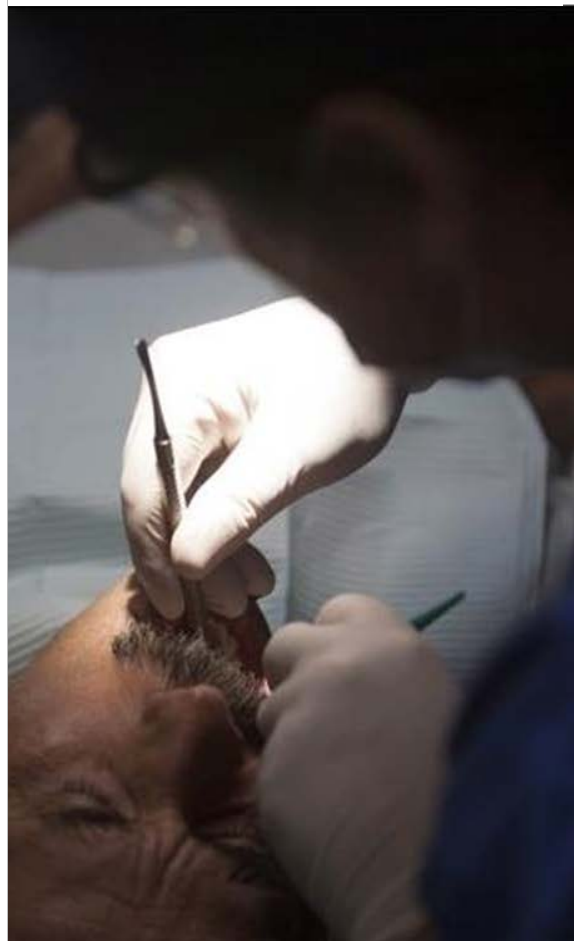
"I don't have dental insurance. I think they're a godsend for people like myself. It's a blessing until I am able to get medical insurance," she said.

California Dental Group offered its annual free emergency dental care day at the clinic on Friday. Free dental services, including fillings, emergency root canals, extractions, toothache treatments and cleaning of infected gums were provided on a first-come, first-serve basis. Each patient was given one emergency treatment.

While the early morning line for the clinic wasn't as long as it had been for the previous two free dental clinics, office manager Mahnaz Moravveji said she had fielded calls from people who planned to arrive at the clinic around noon.

After about 100 patients had been seen, Moravveji said employees would be handing out cards entitling the bearer to a free emergency visit that could be scheduled at another time.

The free clinics are the idea of California Dental Group owner Dr. Kamran Sahabi, who offers them at all seven of his office locations in the Southern California area. Sahabi is 1991 graduate of the University of Southern California's dental school.







At a previous free clinic in Port Hueneme, Sahabi explained that he got the idea of offering the free clinics from his father, who always encouraged him to give back to the community. He was not at the clinic on Friday.

Dr. Oleg Krutikov was on hand, ready to see about 70 patients. Krutikov said the most common procedures he sees at the clinics are broken teeth and fillings.

He said the days are exhausting.

"Of course, I get tired. It's hard and I am alive," said Krutikov, adding that the No. 1 problem he sees is "terrible hygiene."

He said he tries to have patients work with the hygienist to learn how to better care for their teeth by flossing and getting regular cleaning.

"Even if I focus on one tooth, they have a lot more things they need to do," Krutikov said

Candace Osuna said she has three teeth that need to be pulled but lacks insurance. A resident of a group recovery home, she found a pamphlet on the free dental services.

"I think it's awesome that they do this, especially for people without insurance," Osuna said.

Tiffany Forrest wrangled 2-year-old daughter Hailey as she stood in line.

"I need to get a tooth fixed. I have a big cavity," Forrest said. "I think it's really good that they have this free clinic."

