

Thousands come for free dental care at downtown Fresno clinic

By Barbara Anderson
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Thousands came to Fresno Convention & Entertainment Center on Friday for a free dental clinic that will continue Saturday.

“The first patient to arrive came at 8 a.m. Thursday morning,” said Mary Haskin, fundraising chairwoman for the Fresno event sponsored by California Dental Association. The patients were screened and returned Friday morning for care, she said.

The Fresno clinic is the eighth CDA Cares event in California. About 800 dental professionals and 900 other volunteers are providing services at the event.

Patients came for cleanings, extractions and dentures.

John Poe, 47, of Fresno, had seven bottom teeth pulled and a set of dentures made. A car accident in 2011 left the self-employed carpenter unable to work. He had not been able to afford dental care and had been chewing food with a partial denture and a few teeth.

“I got here at 5:30,” he said. “I had my teeth extracted by 7:15 and by 10 a.m., I have both of my dentures – and at no charge,” Poe said. “You can’t beat that.”

By the end of Friday’s session, about 1,000 people, including children, will have been helped, Haskin said. Another 1,000 will receive care on Saturday, she said.

Free parking in the Convention Center garage at Inyo and O streets will be available on Saturday, a CDA spokeswoman said.

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