

Kingsport Dental Clinic of the Appalachian Highlands

Rural Health Access Modernization Program (RAMP)

Multi-institutional collaboration

Accomplishments

Phase 2 Conceptual Drawings

Phase 3 Master Plan Drawings

Multi-institutional Collaboration Supporting Public Health in Kingsport, TN

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Introduction

Tennessee faces significant gaps in access to oral health care, particularly in rural and at-risk communities.

To help address these disparities, the State of Tennessee, in partnership with the Tennessee Department of Health, launched the Healthy Smiles Initiative.

A key component is the Kingsport Dental Clinic of the Appalachian Highlands, operated by UTHSC and developed through a public-private-philanthropic collaboration, including the City of Kingsport.

Objectives

- **Expand** Tennessee's dental workforce pipeline
- **Improve access** for at-risk and underserved populations
- **Recruit/retain** providers in rural communities
- **Deliver affordable care** through the Kingsport clinic
- **Integrate public health + collaboration** into patient care

Methods

The clinic uses team-based and intraprofessional care.

Learner teams include:

- **UTHSC predoctoral dental students**
- **ETSU dental hygiene students**
- **Northeast State CC dental assisting students** (*new partner*)
- **AEGD-approved training site** (*starting July 2026*)

Training emphasizes oral health equity, public health, and collaboration

Partnerships help reduce systemic barriers to care



Results

- Expanded **high-quality, affordable** dental care for vulnerable rural patients
- Strengthened **intraprofessional clinical training** and collaboration
- Increased **advanced training capacity** through **AEGD** experiences
- Building a stronger **rural workforce pipeline** through rural training exposure



Conclusion

A coordinated state-supported, multi-sector partnership can expand rural access to dental care while preparing a workforce equipped to advance equity, collaboration, and community-based care.

Acknowledgments

- Ballad Health
- BC/BS of Tennessee
- City of Kingsport
- Delta Dental of Tennessee
- East Tennessee State University
- Eastman Foundation
- Kingsport Chamber
- Northeast State Community College
- State of Tennessee
- Tennessee Department of Health
- UT Health Science Center

References

Healthy Smiles Initiative
<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/oral-health/Healthy-Smiles-Initiative.pdf>

Tennessee State Oral Health Plan
<https://www.tn.gov/content/dam/tn/health/documents/2022%20State%20Oral%20Health%20Plan.pdf>

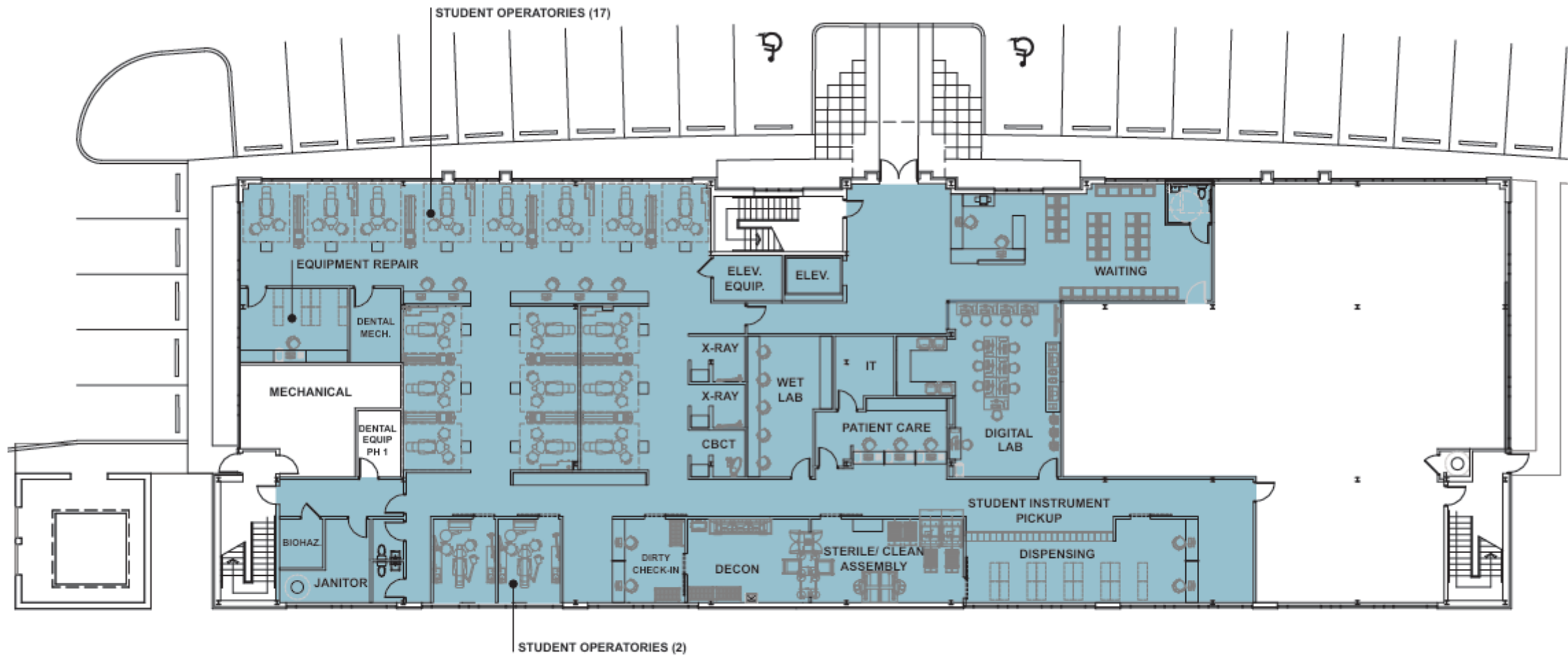
Accomplishments

- Phase 1 opened in the fall of 2024
 - Funded through a public private partnership
- Over 2000 appointments and ~4,000 procedures
 - High number of pediatric patients
- Advanced Education in General Dentistry (AEGD) began in July 2026
 - In partnership with Ballad Health
- New partnerships
 - East Tennessee State University Dental Hygiene students
 - Northeast State Community College Dental Assisting students
 - Dobyys-Bennett High School Career and Technical Education students (Healthcare)



Kingsport Dental Clinic - Project Status

- Phase 1 – Opened in the fall of 2024
 - 12 operatories
- Phase 2 – Conceptual design has been completed with a goal of moving to a construction phase in Q1 2027
 - Adds 17 additional operatories, sterilization, and administration/student space
 - Total project cost for phase 2 is \$6.5M
 - Funding is available through State appropriations, UTHSC, City of Kingsport, and private donations.
- Phase 3 – Master plan for the buildout of the remaining space
 - Adds additional operatories, expanded lobby/waiting room, classroom space, and administration/student space
 - Estimated total cost \$6.5M



LEVEL 1 PLAN

Area shaded in blue is included in phase 2 – total project cost of \$6.5M



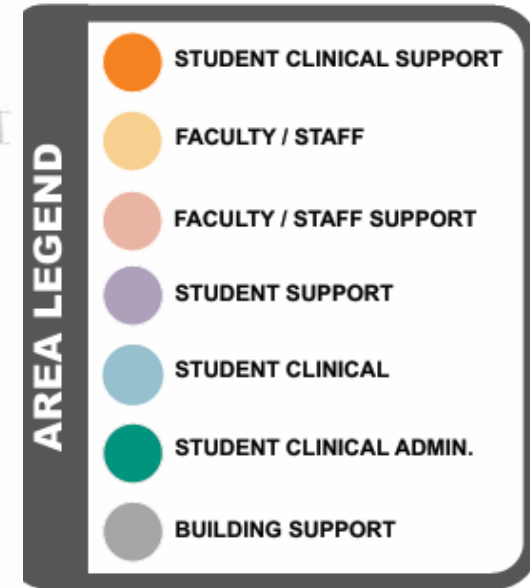
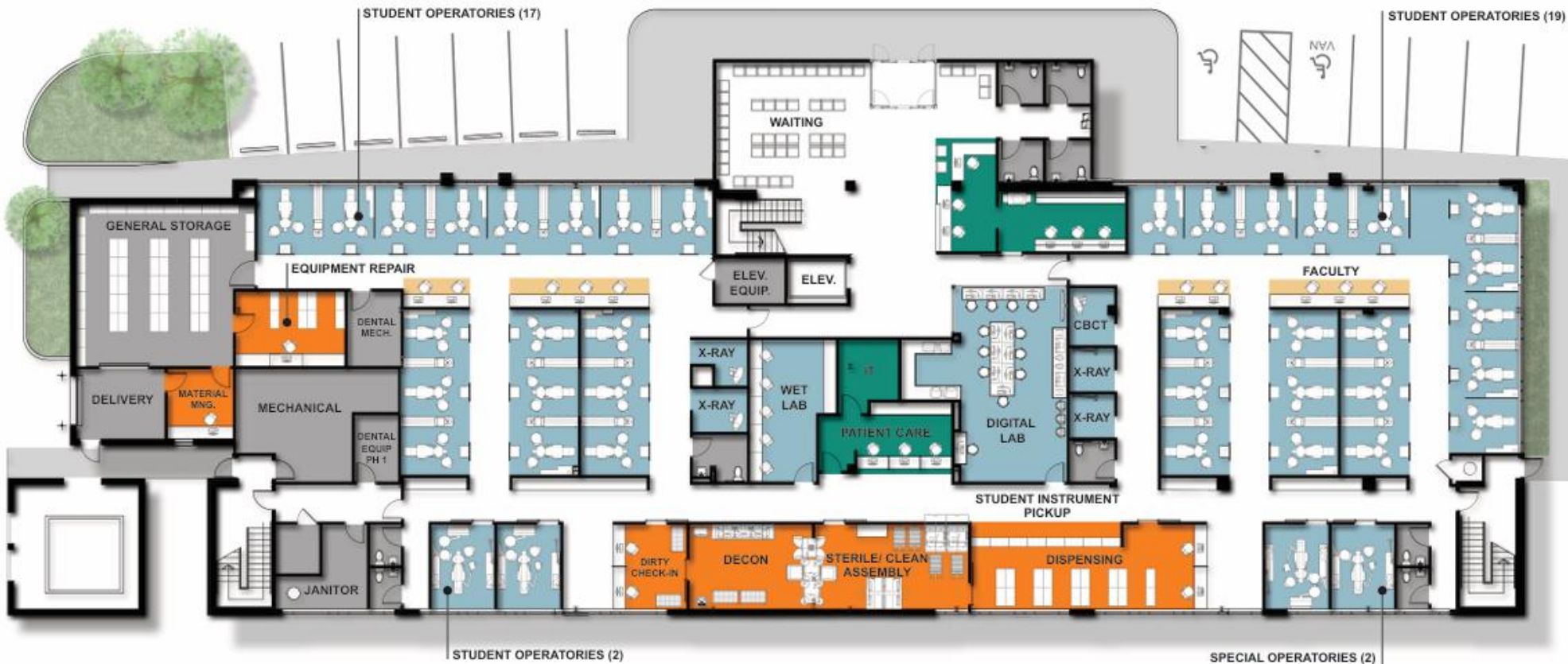
LEVEL 2 PLAN

Area shaded in blue is also part of phase 2 and includes administration and student space



Phase 3 – Exterior renovation provides new entry way, lobby, and second floor student lounge.

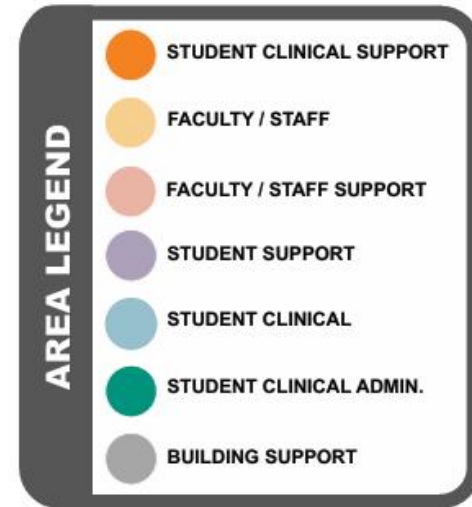
KINGSPORT DENTAL MASTER PLAN



LEVEL 1 PLAN



KINGSPORT DENTAL MASTER PLAN



Thank you!

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