

# MEMORANDUM

## MENDING Poverty

### MARCH 2011: MEND'S DENTAL CLINIC PROGRAM UPDATE

The Dental Clinic served over 3,700 clients in 2010 making it one of the fastest growing services at MEND. Currently, 23 volunteer dentists, 10 dental assistants and 4 receptionists provide oral exams, X-rays, cleaning, fillings, extractions, root canal treatment, crowns, dentures, partial dentures, sealants and -- most importantly -- oral hygiene education. Annual events also include "Give Kids a Smile Day" in February and "Head to Toes" in August, during which more than 500 children are screened, treated and given toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and instructions on how to better take care of their "pearly whites". In operation since 1991, MEND Dental Clinic patients through the years attest to its benefits. Denise Sanchez, Dental Clinic Manager, further shared that "MEND is aware of the community's need for dental services and addresses each patient as an individual to fulfill his or her needs. We provide basic educational, preventive, and restorative dentistry as well as referrals for more specialized services."



#### Virtual Check-Up!

An innovative collaboration allows for virtual dentistry where in-person dental care is limited. University of the Pacific approached MEND to be one of the pilot project sites for "Virtual Dental Home", a unique teledentistry service that enables a dentist offsite to view patients' x-rays and dental records via computer, and then provide dental treatment plans in emails returned to MEND. The Virtual Dental Home project has positively impacted MEND's Dental Clinic by allowing volunteer dentists to immediately start treating patients when they come in, using the prepared treatment plans. This means that the dentists can maximize their time spent in the MEND Dental Clinic and treat more patients. One other exciting part of the project: MEND's volunteer dental

assistants are now able to place Interim Therapeutic Restorations. This kind of restoration usually is done by a dentist, but new training was provided to our assistants by dental faculty from UOP which received special permission to offer this by the Dental Board of California.



#### A Smile is Priceless!

Many people don't know the value of a smile. For years, Gilbert's health made his teeth slowly decay. He was out of money and out of hope. He simply endured the aches and pain of rotten teeth. Because his family needed him, he decided to give the money he received from disability to provide for the needs of his children. It all changed for him last year when a friend told Gilbert about the great help MEND was providing to the community. At MEND's Dental Clinic, volunteer dentists surgically extracted 26 teeth and implanted dentures for a new smile. After several visits to the Clinic, Gilbert is now pain-free and fully able to care for his family with a smile. He can also enjoy a delicious steak!



#### You Can Help!

Volunteers are needed more than ever in MEND's Dental Clinic! Volunteers of any type can become involved, *even if they do not have any dental experience*. Consider helping as a receptionist or a dental assistant or with data entry or even recruiting your dentist to volunteer at MEND. Donations to fund dental supplies will further help the cause. For more information, please contact Denise Sanchez, Dental Clinic Manager, at 818/686-7337 or email [denise@MENDpoverty.org](mailto:denise@MENDpoverty.org)

*Thanks to our volunteers: Young-Ji Lee, Denise Sanchez, Mary Castillo and David Jimenez for developing this update!*