

Caring for the Community

MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE DISPARITY OF DENTAL CARE



DID YOU KNOW?

- Tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease, five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever.
- Poor children suffer twice as much tooth decay as their more affluent peers.
- One out of four children in America is born into poverty, and children living below the poverty line have more severe and untreated decay.
- More than 51 million school hours are lost each year to dental-related illness, pain and suffering. Left untreated dental diseases can lead to problems with eating, speaking and learning.

Poor dental care, or none at all, can have serious health consequences—and not just for the teeth and gums. The mouth is the gateway to the body, and when we have oral health problems, other health problems follow—or get worse. In fact, many health problems first appear in the mouth.

And in the elderly ...

- The number of Americans older than 65 is expected to double to about 71 million by 2040 (U.S. Administration on Aging). What's more, the population of Americans older than 85 is expected to increase to 9.6 million by 2030.
- As people live longer, the complexity of their dental treatment tends to increase.
- Oral infections, especially those of the gums, can adversely affect the heart, brain and other organs.

It's been said that every society is judged by how it treats the least fortunate among them. UTHealth School of Dentistry is committed to making a difference in the disparity of dental care and improving general health in Houston and the region through its community outreach programs. We serve patients of all ages, but in particular, we are focused on children and the elderly—two of the most vulnerable populations.



How the School of Dentistry Makes a Difference

CLINICAL AFFILIATIONS

UTHealth School of Dentistry works with a number of community outreach programs, education projects, schools and health care centers in the community. This care is provided by our faculty, residents, students and dental hygiene students.



Our clinical partners include:

- Access Health Dental Clinic
- Bering Omega Community Services
- City of Houston - Sharpstown Clinic
- Epiphany Community Health Outreach Services
- Harris Health System
- La Nueva Casa de Amigos
- Michael E. DeBakey Veterans Affairs Medical Center
- San Jose Clinic
- Star of Hope Mission
- Texas Children's Health Plan
- TOMAGWA Healthcare Ministries, Inc.

MOBILE CARE: DENTAL VANS

One **major reason people do not get dental care is transportation**—they are unable to get to a clinic or dental office. The School of Dentistry operates two mobile dental vans, each serving a specific population and purpose.

- **For children:** Our **Ronald McDonald Care Mobile** serves young patients in the greater Houston metropolitan area. Through our affiliations with groups such as Communities in Schools-Houston and CHRISTUS Foundation for HealthCare, school-based visits are scheduled, providing annual dental check-ups and care.
- **For adults:** Our **Mobile Dental Van** serves the greater Houston area and also has a long-standing commitment to provide care in the East Texas towns of Jasper and Orange. Services include initial screening and dental hygiene, as well as preventive and restorative dentistry for some of the most at-risk populations in Texas.

For more than 100 years, UTHealth School of Dentistry has been a dependable source of free or low-cost dental care for patients of all ages, but especially for children and the elderly—two of Houston's most vulnerable populations.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Gifts to community outreach can impact the lives of underprivileged patients while supporting dental education in a variety of ways:

- Providing educational materials and oral health supplies for patients
- Providing direct patient care at community clinics or in mobile vans
- Targeting funds for special populations in need of oral health care

By donating:

- \$1,000 - you will provide oral health cleaning and education to 45 children
- \$10,000 - you will provide tooth-saving root canal therapy to 60 patients
- \$25,000 - you will provide comprehensive care to 25 patients

For more information about any of these projects or other ways to support the School of Dentistry's community outreach work, please contact:

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Mission

To advance human health by providing high-quality education, patient care, and research in oral health for Texas, the nation and the world.