

CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH THE CURRENT DENTAL SYSTEM:

- 1.) Qualified Dentists have left dental practices because they are not being paid enough, thereby leaving dental offices not able to help above populations.
- 2.) People in the above populations have various needs that regular dentists are NOT specially trained in how to deal with. This is dangerous and a waste of everyone's time!
- 3.) Hospital care with Anaesthesia does not complete the need for dental care and only allows for one visit to see a Dentist in OR setting annually! The OR uses only Panel X-rays that regular dentist do not use. This is problematic for regular dental care needs such as maintenance and preventive care needs.
- 4.) People in the above populations don't understand the need for dental care and are not able to link symptoms to problems and thereby falling through the cracks!
- 5.) The above situations leads people with Intellectual disabilities and other special needs groups to the ER for their care. In most instances, this overwhelms the system and still does not completely cover the needs of the Special Needs/Seniors/Low-income populations.

SOLUTION:

"Tela Dental" Program:

A funded by grant or low-cost sliding scale outreach all encompassed Dental Services Program (Health Advocacy), where specially trained Hygienist (supervised by Dentists) and Dentists that go directly to the communities and homes of Clients and Patients: This would entail Seniors and People of all ages with disabilities (and clients of the Region Center) and other special needs and low-income groups. The Tela Dental program will provide much needed Quarterly Preventive and Maintenance Dental care. The goal of Tela Dental is to bridge the gap in dental care needs for these populations and curtail the future needs for any Dental emergencies (very expensive) or possibly eliminate the current need (or some of the need) for the use of the required Anaesthesia use or need (very expensive with side-effects and can be lethal).

REAL LIFE EXAMPLES ILLUSTRATING THE DYER NEED FOR TELA DENTAL PROGRAM! For privacy reasons I have changed the names of individuals for their privacy and protection):

1.) My twin-sister "Penelope":

Penelope is an adult with Intellectual Disability (client of the Regional Center). She is mildly developmentally delayed and is a rape survivor who just began speaking a little after almost 21 years! In addition, she has Scoliosis and exhibits features of an individual who has Autism. She is scared of certain noises; a lot of people; and mostly, she is threatened by machinery. In addition, Penelope has problems opening her mouth and problems brushing her teeth. Although Penelope lives in Independent living, requires full-time supervision. Penelope has problems with her gums bleeding easily and not reaching certain areas of her mouth. Her teeth are starting to move as a result to loss of bone. Since there has been disruption in services, she recently has lost 2 of her teeth. This has been a result of a back log of patients that need the same type special

needs care. "Penelope" as a result, fell through the cracks of having her needs met. This has been excruciating being in the condition of needing help in pain and not getting it! Then to finally have to lose her teeth over it! What devastation. This should not have been the case!

Firstly, her doctors that she used to have at the Dentist office, Hospital Dentist office and Primary Care office are all no longer there. Doctors are always leaving!

Some physicians retire, but for Penelope, her physicians left because they simply are not being paid enough. As much as I have grown to depend on them and need them for my sister etc., I don't blame them!

For the regular dentistry office (place where she needs a referral to get specialized care) "Penelope's" needs make it very difficult for them to be able to serve people like "Penelope" because they are not specially trained. For example, something as small as taking x-rays that we take for granted at our dentists, we find that the dental assistants at the regular office cannot perform. Not only do they get frustrated with her because it is taking more time than a regular patient without these needs, and the dentists are stressed because they need to serve the next patient (they do not set enough time for patients with special needs), but, I have witnessed it be a dangerous situation (they had her on her tippy toes balancing on her own trying to fit up to the machine in a very awkward position). She could have easily fallen with her Scoliosis. In addition, her fear of the machine once the noises were to begin could have caused her to brake her neck or some other part of her body after possibly falling down or possibly getting caught in the machine itself! I could not have this process continue, and as her Conservator, I felt that this process was a danger to herself and put a stop to it. The assistants had no idea on how to support "Penelope" or her special needs!

I have seen the actual dentist get so upset and practicably yelled at me very angry like because of the circumstance and the dilemma at hand (where they cannot help because they can't do anything because they are not specially trained even if it is a simple cleaning because they legally need the x-rays first). Simple was not possible here. As a result, the dental office could not charge for the visit and made me very aware that they have lost time! For us, we were just trying to go to the regular dental office to get a cleaning and check up (this is very necessary).

In the end, "Penelope" ends up getting booted and sent over to a Hospital setting where they use Anaesthesia in an OR setting (only allowed once a year—if you are lucky (wait-list) and this does not complete the process. They only do panel x-rays and these are not useful for a regular dentist. So, the whole process happens again. There is no regular maintenance or preventive care. It is only what is needed at that time. Tele Dental would be excellent here!

2.) Neighbor "Fred":

"Fred" is adult with disability and also a Regional Center Client who is higher Functioning than Penelope. He lives in Independent living. In his household growing up he was taught that you did not need to brush your teeth. It was a foreign concept. A while back I was asked by him (actually in was inferred as it was late, he looked out of the show, Night of the living dead dripping with blood on his shirt and out of it like) to drive "Fred" to the hospital as he ended up with an

infection in his mouth. "Fred's" tongue was filled with Puss and they had to surgically remove parts of it. "Fred" did not understand the need to daily maintenance care for his teeth! If I can give you a picture to imagine, "Fred" standing at the door was very frightening! Not only did this affect "Fred's" life, it almost led to him losing his housing! Tela Dental services would be educational and fund for necessary cleaning and preventive care and advocacy and support!

Since then "Fred" has experienced even more medical issues that may have been associated with his infections that led to more hospitalizations and visits for follow-up care.

3.) Jay (Lives in another building with people with disabilities):

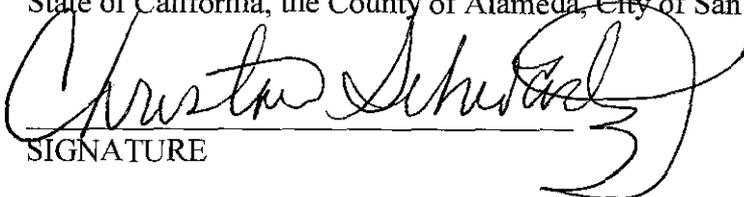
Our friend Jay is adult with disability (higher functioning) and a client of the Regional Center. Jay was having bouts of headaches. For a long time, she was told and thought that she was having severe sinus attacks. She later found out that, NO, that all of her headaches were due to an infection in her mouth. She then was given antibiotics to fight the infection!

All the above are just three samples true accounts (I am aware of)! I am scared to think of the rest of the folks! The first two examples are 2:16 unit apartment building. They all live in low-income housing.

I pray that the above examples will show the need for Tela Dental Serves and CHANGE in our health/dental system and hopefully we can together start bridging the GAP! Hopefully, this will lead to happier, healthier, better, and more stable quality of lives and dental preventative and maintenance care!

Thank you for your time!

I declare under penalty of perjury that the above statements are true and correct signed in the State of California, the County of Alameda, City of San Leandro, on 09/23/15.


SIGNATURE

CHRISTINE SCHWARTZ
PRINT NAME