![dientes COMMUNITY DENTAL]

Press Release

For Immediate Release: **Contact:** Sheree Storm
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Dientes Celebrates its First Ever "Give Seniors A Smile Day"
37 Seniors Receive Free Dental Care

(Santa Cruz, CA) August 15 marked a day of smiles for many underserved seniors in our community. Dientes Community Dental Care celebrated Give Seniors A Smile Day by partnering with 10 volunteer hygienists from the Monterey Bay Dental Hygiene Association to provide 37 low income, uninsured seniors with free dental care. The value of services delivered for free totaled over $20,000; and, included oral health exams, cleanings, extractions and restorative care. The event was sponsored by Bank of America. Dientes also partnered with Santa Cruz Community Health Centers and Seniors Council in order to identify seniors most in need.

One of the patients seen was Marie Aiello, a 83-year-old senior from Capitola. "This means so much because I'm extremely limited financially; especially with the cost of living increasing, I'm struggling to even buy food," Marie commented. She lost her dental insurance after she retired and is currently living on social security." I can feel that the staff here really cares. Dental care is so expensive and I wouldn't be able to afford it at a private dentist's office. Thanks to this event I can make sure that I'm taking care of my teeth properly. "

According to a study done by the Seniors Council in 2011, of all needs for seniors in our community the number one need of survey respondents was being able to pay for dental care. Many seniors lose their insurance after retirement and, like Marie, struggle to make ends meet on a fixed income. Dientes serves over 1,000 seniors in need every year ensuring the ability to eat healthy foods and providing seniors dignity through dentistry.

33% of Dientes' senior patients are uninsured (compared to 16% of Dientes' total patients). According to the Centers for Disease Control, 1 in 5 American seniors no longer have any teeth. Even though seniors are largely without dental insurance, they often are in need of the most care with extended treatment plans for their aging teeth and inconsistent oral health care.

Leslie Eggleston, RDHBS, of the Monterey Bay Dental Hygiene Association commented, "It's important to give back to the community, especially for seniors who can't afford dental care. We want to provide a better quality of life and assist in their overall health."

Dientes is a nonprofit dental clinic that will provide care for nearly 10,000 patients in 30,000 visits this year at two clinics and 30 outreach locations throughout the county. The Give Seniors A Smile Day event was held in

the main Santa Cruz clinic. Dientes has recently expanded access to care for seniors, adults and children by providing services out of a clinic co-located with the County of Santa Cruz in Watsonville. They will officially celebrate the opening of the Watsonville Health & Dental Center with the County of Santa Cruz on August 25.

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Dientes Community Dental Care's mission is to create lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults in Santa Cruz County and neighboring communities. 96% of Dientes' patients live at or below the poverty level. Dientes accepts Medi-Cal (one of nine providers in Santa Cruz County) and offers sliding scale fees for uninsured patients. Dientes is a proud partner of United Way.

Photo: Patient Marie Aiello waits for the dentist with Dientes RDA Leonor Skuratofsky.jpg

Caption: Patient Marie Aiello waits for the dentist with Dientes RDA Leonor Skuratofsky