



dientes
COMMUNITY DENTAL

Word of Mouth

SUMMER 2016

**Making Prevention
More Common than
Treatment**

■ Director's Letter



The need for access to oral healthcare in Santa Cruz County is massive; and, that is where partnerships come into play.

Our newest collaboration is Oral Health Access Santa Cruz County. This group of local health industry experts, community leaders, and education advocates will work to define concrete ways to address the results and recommendations from our recently completed oral health needs assessment.

We are also thrilled to partner with the Homeless Services Center on the opening of our new 1-chair Outreach clinic, which operates one day a week.

Additionally, thanks to the generous support of the Central California Alliance for Health, Dientes is providing its patients with specialty services, including endodontics and oral surgery.

Uniting patients and community members is helping Dientes create a more robust board. Towards this strategic goal, Dientes welcomes its second patient board member, Camille Smith-Ballon.

Teamwork, dedication and staff commitment are the reasons that our most recent patient survey boasts an impressive 98% satisfaction rate for the care that Dientes provides.

Hand-in-hand, we will improve access to dental care for all.

Thank you for partnering with us to improve the health of our community!

Laura Marcus, Executive Director

Dientes Offers Specialty Care

Until recently, Dientes had to refer out for procedures that required a specialist; most commonly, for root canals (endodontist) and complex extractions or other surgical procedures (oral surgeon). There was no endodontist in Santa Cruz County or surrounding counties who took Medi-Cal, and patients had to pay thousands of dollars to see a private endodontist. In the case of needing oral surgery, patients had to travel out of the county and endure a 3-4 month wait list for an appointment. Dientes is now providing both specialty care services at our Santa Cruz clinic twice a month. Dientes Dental Director Dr. Sepi Walthard explains, *"This kind of comprehensive care is not available anywhere else in our community for those who struggle in poverty. For this, I am especially proud!"*

Outreach Clinic Opens at Homeless Services Center

July 6th marked the first day of operations at our new 1-chair Outreach clinic located in HSC's renovated locker bay. *"Transportation is a real challenge for our homeless patients and having a dental clinic on the same campus as other services, including healthcare, makes it easier to get dental care,"* comments Dientes Outreach Manager Tana Stragalinos. The clinic will be open one day a week to serve homeless day-users as well as families that are living in the Rebele Family Shelter!



Marvin Martinez, RDA and Dr. Kuo take care of one of our first patients.

Oral Health Access Santa Cruz County Launches



A school child has difficulty paying attention and avoids raising her hand. A veteran is unable to sleep and has missed a job interview. A senior citizen is losing weight and cannot maintain proper nutrition.

What do these people have in common? They suffer from untreated dental disease.

Limited dental care access might not seem like a crisis, but poor oral health has serious consequences. The resulting pain and complications of dental disease impact a person's ability to speak, chew, socialize, hold a job or attend school.

“Even if you are not a dentist, you can help solve the dental care access and oral health challenges of Santa Cruz County.”

In a study where welfare recipients with severe dental problems received care, those who completed their dental treatment were twice as likely to get jobs or move off of welfare as those who did not.

Additionally, evidence has shown a link between oral disease and diabetes, adverse birth outcomes, cardiovascular disease, Alzheimer's, stroke, and more. Proper dental care is crucial to preventative medicine.

Dientes commissioned an oral health needs assessment to get a picture of oral health in Santa Cruz County that offered some alarming results shown on page 3. In reality, the problem is even larger than these numbers suggest. They do not include the uninsured or those without public health benefits. Further, Medicare does not meet seniors' dental needs.

The tremendous lack of dental care access and education in Santa Cruz County must be addressed. Dientes Dental Director Dr. Sepi Walthard and County Supervisor Zach Friend are enthusiastic about chairing Oral Health Access Santa Cruz County. This steering committee of local health industry experts, community leaders, and education advocates, will work to define concrete ways to address one of the county's major hidden health epidemics.

For more information and to share your ideas for change:

<http://oralhealthsc.org>.



Chairs:

Supervisor Zach Friend
County of Santa Cruz

Sepi Walthard, DDS
Dientes Community Dental Care

Members:

Nannette Benedict, DDS
Monterey Bay Dental Society

David Brody
First 5 Santa Cruz County

Javier Carrillo
Central California Alliance of Health

Ceil Cirillo
Santa Cruz Sentinel, Palo Alto
Medical Foundation & Sutter Health

Randolph Cross, DDS
Salud Para La Gente

Mark Ebrahimian, DDS
Monterey Bay Dental Society

Leslie Goodfriend
County of Santa Cruz,
Human Services

Kathleen King
Pajaro Valley Community
Health Trust

Salem Magarian, MD
Santa Cruz Community
Health Centers

Cynthia Mathews
City of Santa Cruz

Elisa Orona
Health Improvement Partnership
of Santa Cruz County

Amy Peeler
County of Santa Cruz,
Health Services Agency

Raquel Ramirez
County of Santa Cruz,
Health Services Agency

Mark Stone
29th Assembly District

Michael Watkins
Santa Cruz County,
Office of Education

The State of Oral Health in Santa Cruz County

It may look like everyone has access to dental care, but you have to look deeper

80,000

people in Santa Cruz County are on Medi-Cal



25,000

have been to the dentist in the past year



30.8%

of children have never been to the dentist

24%

of pre-k children have untreated dental decay (all income)



Seniors on Medicare

have **no dental benefits**, except for extreme situations



Medi-Cal

17.6%

of adults on Medi-Cal received dental care in 2014

Santa Cruz County has **only 10 private dental offices** that take Denti-Cal (+ 5 clinics that are at capacity)



oralhealthsc.org

New Board Member, Camille Smith-Ballon

We are excited to welcome Camille Smith-Ballon to Dientes' Board of Directors! Camille is the founder/owner of CruzFit and is passionate about improving the overall health of the Santa Cruz community. The daughter of a dentist, she is an advocate for access to oral health. Coming from a patient perspective, Camille looks forward to raising awareness around the importance of preventative dentistry for children and access to care for low-income seniors.



**Newest Boardmember
Camille Smith-Ballon**

Santa Cruz Connect Day of Service

In May, Dientes participated in the 7th annual Santa Cruz Connect. Dientes Outreach Manager Tana Stragalinos described our involvement, *"Our participation in this one-day event focuses on bringing those struggling with homelessness out of pain and on a path to improved oral health."* Dientes provided free dental care including exams, x-rays, fillings and extractions. A total of 31 patients left with healthier smiles.



Part of the care team: **Lupe Ortiz DA, Dr. Newel, Haidee Hernandez-Barron RDA, and Dr. Kuo**



Dientes is a proud partner of United Way.



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MISSION : *Creating lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults of Santa Cruz County and neighboring communities.*

WHAT people
are **SAYING.**

98%
SATISFIED

- "Made me feel like I was in a special place, very caring dentist, assistants and all staff."*
- "After 25 years of dental anxiety, she has eased all my fears."*
- "The thankfulness I have is beyond words. You have brought a smile to my face and changed my life."*

Excerpts from our recent patient survey, where Dientes received a 98% satisfaction rating!

Thank you to our staff, who make this possible!