

Our vision is that the hygienist would be 85% clinical, providing care to patients, and 15% administration, managing clinical regulatory programs. Mr. Gino Garza, MS, RDH, a former faculty member of UT Health Science Center Dental Hygiene Department and past president of the Texas Association of Dental Hygiene Educators was employed in August. His role as faculty led to a support role for UTHSC Dental Hygiene faculty during student rotations.

Since August 2015, he has worked with the Director of Dental Services and Associate Director of Operations to develop specialized coding and clinical procedures for Dental Hygiene, and has trained chairside assistants for unique needs in delivery of care, operatory setup, and special care of high-end instrumentation. Scheduled community education with Haven for Hope families, Wesley nurses, and presentations to San Antonio professional organizations are in place. For the period of January 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016, Gino has provided \$149,885 in preventive services to 224 unduplicated patients over the course of 264 unduplicated visits.

### **What is Preventive Dentistry?**

Preventive dentistry helps patients avoid developing problems later on, specifically, cavities, gingivitis, enamel

loss, and gum disease. This, in turn, can reduce their risk of secondary problems caused by poor oral health, such as diabetes, heart disease, osteoporosis, respiratory disease, and cancer. Premature birth and low birth weight in pregnant women may also be linked to poor oral health.

In addition to reducing our patients' risk for other health issues, practicing good preventive health can help save the clinic, and taxpayers, money long-term. The costs associated with poor oral hygiene add up. Since 2012, we've provided nearly \$13M dollars in dental care to over 9,500 homeless and working poor. A visit to the emergency room is seven and a half times more costly than a visit to SA Christian Dental Clinic. Since our patients lack financial resources for emergency dental care, we calculate taxpayer savings to San Antonio residents of over \$57M dollars since 2012.

With six month dental hygiene cleanings in place, our hope is that the short-term effect of preventive care for our patients is increased oral health, and long-term, reduced risk of secondary problems caused by poor oral health.