

# Reducing Oral Care Barriers and Providing Comprehensive Dental Services for Special Health Care Needs Through a Collaborative Program

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## Background

Patients with special health care needs (SHCN) encounter numerous barriers to accessing oral care services, leading to unmet dental needs that can adversely affect their medical conditions and overall quality of life.

## Objectives

This study aims to present a partnership between **Special Day Foundation**, which is dedicated to improving the quality of life for SHCN patients and **UF Hialeah Dental Center, AEGD program**.

The collaboration seeks to reduce barriers and provide high-quality dental care for SHCN patients.

## Methods

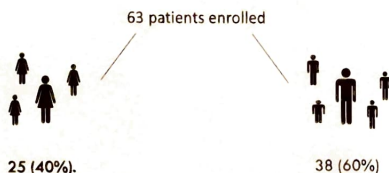
The program comprises:

- Preventive care** delivered by a hygienist through offsite visits, including hands-on oral hygiene training for patients and caregivers, fluoride varnish application, and desensitization as needed;
- Training for residents and staff** to enhance their ability to provide quality oral care for SHCN, thereby increasing accessibility
- Comprehensive dental treatment** for the patients.

## Results:

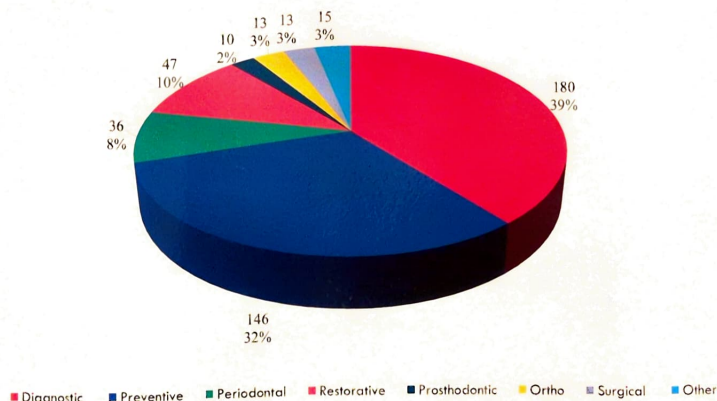
### Demographic data

From July 2023 to June 2024:



- 29 years (5 to 62 years)
- 210 **Offsite visits**: 47 (75%) patients
- 26 (41%) patients needed **dental treatment**
- Of those, 6 (23%) patients were referred to **sedation or general anesthesia**
- **460 dental procedures** performed

### Dental procedures



## Conclusion

The collaborative program has successfully addressed the dental care barriers faced by SHCN patients. It effectively provided a range of comprehensive dental services, including preventive care, home visits, and resident training, which facilitated the diversity and complexity of procedures performed.

This approach has significantly contributed to the overall well-being and quality of life of the patients.

Future initiatives should build on this model to further enhance accessibility and the quality of dental care for SHCN individuals.

## References

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