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Imagine having a toothache, standing in line all day, and then hearing “come back tomorrow.” Even worse, imagine your child enduring the pain of a toothache and not being able to get help.

An American Dental Association study found that 90 percent of the Lakota people on the Rosebud Reservation have chronic tooth decay or gum disease.

This is our harsh reality – a dental health crisis that is the result of living in one of the poorest counties in the United States.

However, through a mix of volunteer and paid dental staff, the SFM Dental Clinic is doing its best to help as many people as possible as quickly as possible – people like the two quoted below.



*“I’ve had teeth pulled and fillings done through the clinic, and I get my yearly cleanings done there. I have never had any bad experiences and love my dentists and all staff. They have been very helpful. I will continue to get all of my work done there.”*

*“I got a root canal done at SFM Dental. I’ve brought my whole family at one time with the excellent scheduling done by the SFM Staff. I now tell all of my relatives to come here instead of going off of the reservation.”*



**MAKING AN IMPACT**

**Spotlight on our  
Dental Clinic**



*Dear Friends,*

A warm hello and peace of Christ to you.

Welcome to the second of our 2024 printed newsletters spotlighting programs and stories from the St. Francis Mission among the Lakota.

I hope you will gain insights from this update, which **features our Dental Clinic** – a crucial program supporting our mission of “Wellness, Community, and Leadership” among the Sicangu Lakota.

In the United States, people expect to have a dentist nearby. They might make jokes about not wanting to go, but they take it for granted. And, as many experts have pointed out, **quality dental care supports not only oral health, but overall health.**

**For the Lakota Sioux of the Rosebud Reservation, however, dental care is scarce and sparse.**

Consider these statistics:

- According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the **national average is 1 dentist for 1,600 people.**
- The World Health Organization indicates that adequate coverage to achieve dental health is – **at the bare minimum – 1 dentist for 7,500 people.**
- **But the Rosebud Reservation has only 1 dentist per 14,000 people.**



This is why, in line with a vision that all people on the Rosebud should have access to adequate dental health, **St. Francis Mission opened its Dental Clinic in 2013.**

Here, volunteer dentists, hygienists and assistants from dental schools at Creighton University, Indiana University, University of South Dakota, University of Nebraska, University of Missouri, and University of Connecticut, provide dental exams, x-rays, fillings, cleanings, treatments, follow-up checkups and education in preventive care.

The Dental Clinic is a great blessing to our people, and friends like you are a great blessing to the St. Francis Mission.

Thank you.

Fr. Edmund Yainao, SJ  
Pastor  
St. Francis Mission



*Message from the Manager*

Hello!

As an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and a long-time resident of the reservation, I am honored to serve our community through our commitment to addressing the dental needs of our people.

After graduating from the Lake Area Tech Dental Assisting Program in 2016, I have had the privilege of serving as a Registered Dental Assistant for various healthcare organizations, including Indian Health Service, Horizon Healthcare, Delta Dental of South Dakota and, most significantly, the St. Francis Mission Dental Clinic.

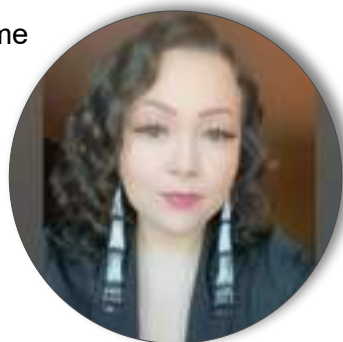
My association with the St. Francis Mission Dental Clinic began when I was fulfilling clinical requirements for my dental assisting program. Since then, I have worn multiple hats within the clinic, serving as a lead dental assistant, billing clerk and, now, as the manager. I owe a great deal of my growth and success to Marty Jones, our previous manager, who has been an exceptional mentor. Under her guidance, I have gained valuable administrative skills and insights, which I am eager to apply in my new capacity.

One of my primary goals as the new manager is to foster strong relationships with both past and new volunteers. Our dedicated volunteers' commitment to our clinic's mission is invaluable, and I am excited to collaborate with each person to further our impact within the community. I am also eager to streamline our operations and expand our clinic's reach by scheduling more clinics in the near future.

I am deeply passionate about our clinic's mission to provide accessible dental care to all members of our community. **With your financial support and collaboration, I am confident that we can continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve.**

Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions and ideas. Thank you for caring about the wellness of our community!

Macee York  
Dental Clinic Manager  
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*An American Dental Association study found that 90 percent of the Lakota people on the Rosebud Reservation have chronic tooth decay or gum disease.*