

“They Understand the Need... And They Support It”

By Kristen Proffitt

Updated 06 May 2019

From 2012-2015, the Emergency Room at Frederick Memorial Hospital (FMH) served an average of 1000 patients per year for severe dental pain alone. Though this is an unbelievably high number, it is not that surprising considering it is directly supported by the 2012 Frederick County Human Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment explicitly reads “dental services are inadequate for uninsured and underinsured individuals.”

A large population subsequently finds the costs of routine dental care simply too excessive to pay for. As a result, they wait out any dental problems until it is too late and there is no other choice but to utilize the Emergency Room. The problem with this is that though Emergency Rooms are capable of handling dental emergencies when the need is urgent, they are not generally equipped to handle dental care at all.



Upon review of the Frederick County Human Needs Assessment for 2012, the need for adequate and adult dental care services was heard by local non-profit organizations in the community. These non-profits then actually met this need through opening the Monocacy Health Partners Dental Clinic in June of 2016.

The clinic opened directly for the purpose of assisting low income adults in Frederick County who find themselves in that uninsured and underinsured population. Currently providing to well over 2,000 patients, the Dental Clinic serves roughly 22 patients each day and provides services such as emergency dental care, fillings, and extractions.

United Way of Frederick County provided Monocacy Health Partners with a Live United Grant of \$4,000 in 2016 that played a large role in the launch of this clinic- funding dental equipment and essential operational costs. Moreover, the money from this grant was used to purchase a machine called an autoclave, which is remarkably still being used today- three years later.

Melinda Hite, Dental Clinic Manager, says “the fact that United Way [of Frederick County] has been at the table since 2012 for the Human Needs Assessment shows that they understand the need that we are trying to meet and they support it.”

United Way has always strived to ensure that each individual and family in Frederick County is able to afford basic human needs, which includes proper health and dental care. Therefore, through financially supporting the dental clinic, they are upholding their own values of a thriving community as well.

United Way of Frederick County provided vital funds to assist in the beginning of this program, and as a remarkable result, Hite says “from an emergency room standpoint, we had over one thousand visits per year

for dental pain. This has significantly declined and now we are projected to be at less than 350 this year [2019].” That is more than a 50% decrease in patients seen in the ER for dental pain.

Routine dental care is a basic human need that no person should be driven away from due to costs. United Way of Frederick County works each day to ensure that each individual in the community has access to such services. Providing grants to other select non-profit organizations, United Way is confident that they are investing directly into the Frederick Community. Hite remarks on her experience with United Way of Frederick County as “it’s been a wonderful experience working with United Way... they have consistently showed support for adult dental needs.”

When you give to United Way, it is more than a non-profit organization that you are giving to. You are investing in your own community and improving the lives of others in the process. Giving to United Way of Frederick County today means that they are able to continue to support organizations such as Monocacy Health Partners, bettering the health, education and financial stability of our own community.