To: John Doe, Director

Audience Description: Executives at Our Place Society

From: Jennifer Worsham, RDH, DHP (c)

Date: February 15, 2022

Subject: Proposal to Establish a Volunteer Dental Hygiene Clinic at Our Place Society

**Introduction**

Individuals experiencing homelessness struggle to access dental care. Without a fixed address or telephone, it can be extremely challenging to arrange appointments, and the cost of service is very often totally prohibitive.

**Statement of Problem**

Traditional dental clinics are expensive, and accessing government benefit programs via these clinics can be complicated and difficult―especially for those who do not have a fixed address. Discounted or free dental clinics have long wait lists. If a homeless patient doesn’t have access to voicemail, it can be nearly impossible to set up or confirm dental appointments.

Dental infections that progress unchecked often lead to hospital emergency room visits, which cost the healthcare system thousands, and don’t even resolve the dental issues, as hospitals are not equipped to do dental work.

**Proposed Solution**

Though dental hygienists cannot personally address dental decay or infections, they can screen clients during preventive care visits and give the patient warning that an issue is occurring, hopefully allowing the patient time to work on accessing dental care before an infection becomes an emergency. Using mobile dental equipment, a hygienist can go directly to the shelter and set up a temporary operatory. Services can be rendered on a first-come first-served basis to whichever individuals are available at the time.

**Scope**

In order to determine the viability of a volunteer dental hygiene program at Our Place Society, I will assess the following areas of concern:

1. How many individuals per week would be interested in accessing a dental hygiene clinic on a drop-in basis?
2. What would be the per-patient cost of running the program?
3. What types of funding could be accessed to pay for dental supplies?
4. How many Registered Dental Hygienists would be interested in volunteering their services in a program like this?

**Methods**

My primary source of information would come from the Our Place staff and community. Sources of funding can be investigated by contacting government agencies and local charitable foundations.

Secondary sources of information can be found among government statistics regarding homelessness and recent scholarly journals regarding barriers to accessing dental care in BC.

**My Qualifications**

My career in the Victoria BC dental field has spanned twenty years. I worked as an assistant alongside dentists and dental specialists for many years and then became a dental hygienist. I own a homebased dental clinic and have mobile dental equipment that I can bring to almost any site.

**Conclusion**

The homeless community of Victoria experiences disproportionate difficulty accessing dental care. A mobile dental hygienist may be uniquely positioned to provide preventative care and screen for more serious oral problems. If you approve of this proposal, we can begin investigating the needs of the community.