

Nameless Foundation Foundation Grant Proposal for Capital Equipment

Proposal Summary

The mission of Nameless Organization is to improve the health status of Nameless City by providing affordable, comprehensive, and high-quality primary and specialty medical care. We are dedicated to rendering care in a culturally competent, barrier-free, individualized, and family-oriented manner, with an emphasis on prevention through education and by providing state-of-the-art services. Our organization is requesting this grant in the amount of \$25,000 for the purchase of digital dental X-ray equipment that would serve to further enhance our current state-of-the-art equipment in our facility. We are proposing to improve the quality of dental care that we provide as well as to improve our operational efficiency by offering patients improved dental radiology services.

Background

Nameless Organization has been serving the Nameless communities of Nameless City for the past twenty-nine years through a network of three health centers and six school-based health centers. We are a federally qualified community health center that was founded by a local physician in 1974 as an evolution of a group practice whose goal was to provide primary and specialty medical care to the community's minority and poor residents. Our service area is not only one of the most impoverished communities in Nameless City but it is also located in the poorest congressional district in the United States. We are one of Nameless State's largest providers of ambulatory care to Medicaid patients and remain the only community health center providing routine and preventive health care in its immediate area. We serve over 25,000 community residents and in 2002 had a visit volume of 123,000.

In 2001, we relocated our main site to a newly constructed \$ 14 million 36,000 square-foot facility. As part of this move, we were able to finance new furniture and equipment that included digital medical radiology equipment, a bone mineral densitometry, pulmonary function testing equipment, and cardiology testing equipment. We also added dentistry to our full array of services. We have four state-of-the-art dental operatories however, our dental radiology equipment is not digital. Therefore, we operate in a less efficient manner than does our medical services. Having digital dental radiology equipment would permit us to produce higher quality dental film, reduce the radiation exposure to our patients, reduce the inefficiencies of storing and filing film, allow dental film to be transmitted electronically to outside specialists, and assure quick retrieval of the film on demand.

Description of the Problem

Nameless Organization faces epidemic proportions of many of the nation's racial and healthcare disparities inclusive of poor oral health. Our service area population is also confronted with several critical barriers. These barriers include lack of health and dental insurance, limited English-language competence, high illiteracy rates, low levels of education affecting knowledge about health care systems and or health practices, limited access to health and dental providers, as well as culture, limited resources, and poverty.

There is a growing disparity in oral healthcare among Americans and nowhere is that more evident than in the Nameless City. According to the Surgeon General's report on oral health, there is a "silent epidemic" of dental and oral diseases that burden minority populations and ethnic groups. It is no secret that there are some profound disparities that affect those without the knowledge or resources to achieve good oral care. Those who suffer the worst oral health are poor people, especially the elderly and children. Tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease. Poor children have twice the dental cavities as other children and as many as 25% of all low-income children have never visited a dentist before entering kindergarten.

Recognizing the significant need for oral health care in our community, we added dentistry to our scope of services when we moved into our new facility in August 2001. In 2002, our first full year of dental services, we provided care to 1,978 dental users who used the service an average of 2.82 times per year for an aggregate visit count of 5,578. We employ two dentists and one dental hygienist. Our next available dental appointment is over three weeks away. The need for dental care is tremendous and our ability to continue to grow impinges on our ability to improve our efficiencies.

Purpose of the Appeal

It is the goal of Nameless Organization to purchase a digital dental x-ray machine that will permit us to improve the quality of care that we provide and improve our efficiency in seeing greater numbers of dental patients.

The belief of the organization is that digital dental x-rays are the latest advancement in dental technology and will give our patients the best in quality dental and oral care. As well, Nameless Organization is making the transition from the paper charting system that is currently in use to an all-computerized medical records system in the very near future. We are confident that the benefit of having a dental digital x-ray machine will be to the advantage of both the patients of Nameless Organization and the dental department as a whole.

To begin, a digital x-ray machine uses low-radiation X-ray to produce images directly onto a computer screen. With the low radiation emission every patient and technician is at less risk for harmful exposure. Also, digital X-rays can reveal information not previously available to doctors from a conventional X-ray machine. X-rays taken by a digital machine can be colorized and images can be enhanced to show such things as bone density. The dentist can see and do more for the patient, which can make diagnosis easier, faster, and more accurate. The machine allows for easy duplication, which makes sending X-rays to another dentist and or specialist just an email away.

The dental digital X-ray machines are cost-effective as well. They allow for “instant” development and eliminate the use of film and developer. In the case of Nameless Organization, this is extremely important. Dental x-rays are usually very small and currently, we use a medical records system where all records are kept in a chart and travel with patients to every visit. This creates an environment where X-rays can be easily misplaced. With digital X-rays; the images will be stored in a computer database and readily available without the possibility of misplacing records. Overall, it will cut down on paper files and outdated films, increasing work productivity and expanding patient visits. With this advancement in dental technology added it would make life easier for all dental patients and improve dentistry at Nameless Organization.

Cost and Timeframe of the Project

The total cost of the digital dental X-ray machine is \$60,000. The amount requested by Nameless Organization from the Nameless Foundation is \$25,000. The balance of the equipment will be funded with a \$ 35,000 performance pool distribution from one of our contracting managed care organizations. The anticipated time of the project will be three months. This time will be used for the purchase, installation and training in the use of the dental digital x-ray equipment in the facility. We expect the equipment to be fully operational within this time frame.

Conclusion

It is our belief that good oral and dental care is a part of overall health and well-being. The addition of a digital dental x-ray machine will help us in keeping our mission of providing state of the art quality and specialty medical services to the Nameless City community as well as maximizing our effectiveness and efficiency.