

Smile Again Program™ Volunteer Participation Recommendations

Your role as a Smile Again volunteer is the most essential in our continued efforts to provide a “healing, transformational life experience” for survivors of domestic abuse to encourage their journey toward self-sufficiency and optimal health. **By establishing recommendations, we aim to facilitate the most efficient and streamlined volunteer experience with the most appropriate dental outreach.** Please remember that the Smile Again Program™ was created for dentists; by dentists. We strive to make the most effective use of our limited human and financial resources to the maximum benefit of our community. These recommendations are not intended to interfere with the doctor/patient relationship or dictate treatment services. All services continue to be provided at your discretion.

→The main objective is to **restore oral health** and to **“normalize” the patient’s smile**. The goal is to provide care that will motivate them to achieve a larger transformation. We recommend priority of treatment be focused on pain, then function, then appearance; in the order needed to get the patient back in the workforce. Sometimes interim cosmetic procedures may be necessary to help the patient maintain their dignity and to facilitate the process of securing employment.

→This program’s intention is to **treat existing dental conditions only (pain, function and appearance resulting from trauma and neglect)**. It is not our intention for you to provide ongoing donated care after the initial treatment plan is completed. Once major dental issues have been resolved and oral health/dentition has been restored, patients must be encouraged to take accountability for their homecare and recall care. *Discounted, continuing recall options have been established through the Community College of Denver’s Dental Hygiene Program and are available to Smile Again patients and their families once initial treatment has been completed. Patients will only be advised of this service upon successful completion of the Smile Again Program™.*

→We suggest, prior to treatment planning, that you **discuss and consider factors that may compromise the patient’s success in receiving care** (i.e., frequency and/or length of appointments, pain threshold for treatment, ability to afford incidental medications, etc...).

→**Simple explanation of treatment is vital.** Smile Again Program™ patients also need to be extensively counseled on the importance and lifelong benefits of maintaining this treatment. Remember that the patient may never have been instructed on how to care for their oral health. Please take the time to educate them on the importance of home care and maintenance.

→**Share the dollar value of treatment with your patient.** They need to understand that you are making an investment in their future potential.

→Keep in mind that newfound independence is an ongoing process for these patients and there are limitations to affording dental care. It is imperative that patients have an **optimistic chance of affording the long-term maintenance of the treatment you have provided to them.**

→ **Stress that you are an advocate who is voting for the patient on their journey toward success.** In return, they need to follow your office protocols (showing up for scheduled appointments, avoiding excessive cancellations, etc). In the event that a patient becomes uncooperative in any way, please contact the Smile Again Program™ immediately at (303) 488-9700, ext. 3270.

-OVER-

→ The **Metro Denver Dental Foundation will be responsible for the payment of dental laboratory fees associated with Smile Again Program™** cases. We are pleased to inform you that **you may work with any dental lab you like**. In an effort to sustain this unique benefit, we ask that you **take our limited financial resources into account when treatment planning your patients**.

→ **Consider the characteristics and resultant implications for treatment of this population:**

- *Be sensitive to physical contact.*

- *It is important to keep reassuring the patient of your concern for them and to ask them if they have any questions. The patient may believe that they deserve deteriorated oral health/ugly teeth as a punishment for involvement in "bad relationships."*

- *Any positive interaction with the doctor/staff will go a long way to restoring the patient's trust, enhancing self-esteem and developing self-confidence.*

- *Be aware that substance abuse may be a concurrent issue with domestic abuse in some patients. We will make you aware of the patient's substance abuse history in the selection process. If you have accepted a patient with this issue, and would like further information on medications which are considered to be safe and unsafe for the chemically dependent patient, contact (303) 488-9700, ext. 3270. As with any patient with a history of past substance abuse, be mindful of access to your prescription pads.*

- *Initially, because the patient is being asked to trust a professional who is unknown to them in the context of an intimate physical environment, we recommend that male volunteers consider having a female staff member present.*

- *A prerequisite of Smile Again Program™ patient eligibility is access to reliable transportation. Some patients must utilize public transportation and are expected to plan accordingly for appointment times. Be aware that due to bus schedules they may arrive early for appointments and, despite their best efforts, may experience the occasional frustration of delays (through no fault of their own). If you experience any issues with your patient's ability to effectively utilize transportation, please contact (303) 488-9700, ext. 3270.*

→ If patient requests additional services or dental resources for family/friends, refer them to (303) 488-9700, ext. 3270. Please do not accept referrals from these patients. **We educate the patient that the generous care provided through the Smile Again Program™ is for them only.**

→ Be aware that some Smile Again patients will be emotionally demonstrative about the treatment they are receiving. Others will likely show limited emotion (they have been conditioned to believe that emotion is a sign of weakness). **They are in the process of improving their socialization skills. Please be sensitive to this so you do not mistake guardedness for a lack of appreciation or apathy.**

→ **Call with ANY concerns, questions, issues, potential problems, progress updates or suggestions at (303) 488-9700!** We want to hear from you and are here to ensure your success within the Smile Again Program™!

Thank you for making an investment in great potential and the Smile Again Program™!