COVID-19 Addendum

CVIM Mini-Grant Letter Proposal
Chester County Community Foundation
May 15, 2020

Community Volunteers in Medicine (CVIM) is grateful for the opportunity to provide the following addendum to our COVID-19 mini-grant letter submitted to the Chester County Community Foundation on March 18, 2020.

COVID-19’s Impact on CVIM Dental Operations

COVID-19 dramatically impacts CVIM’s dental patients. Early on during the pandemic shutdown, the Pennsylvania Department of Health issued guidelines suspending all dental services, except for emergencies. This state government mandate affected CVIM’s entire dental operations and CVIM had to suspend preventative and restorative procedures, most critical to CVIM’s patients who suffer from years of dental neglect due to lack of access to affordable care. CVIM’s goal is to save the teeth of our patients. However, untreated oral decay will lead to severe infections and the need for root canals and unfortunately many times an extraction.

Earlier this month, the Pennsylvania Department of Health provided revised guidelines for state-wide dental practices. While no data is available to assess the risk of COVID-19 transmission during dental procedures, there is a better understanding of which procedures have increased risk of transmission and how to utilize Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reduce the risk. The Pennsylvania Dental Association interprets this as a step forward, but not a return to routine dentistry. If lack of dental services will cause irreversible harm to a patient, then dental professionals now have the flexibility to provide care if they can put systems are in place to assure best practice safety precautions. For CVIM, that means full body protective clothing from face shields down to foot coverings, and minimizing procedures that produce aerosol spray.

Request

At CVIM, we are turning our thoughts to what clinic operations will look like as the world slowly “opens up” again. Even as the pandemic continues, we are looking at the future and have started discussions on how our healthcare model will adjust. The CVIM dental program is one clinical service that requires the purchase of additional equipment to provide for the safe resumption of preventative dental care in accordance with the revised guidelines. CVIM needs to fund the acquisition of three Extraoral Dental Suction Systems to remove the droplets and aerosols produced by high speed hand pieces and other equipment during dental procedures. The suction power, medical grade filtration system and aerodynamic design will protect the safety of our dentists, dental assistants, hygienists, and other patients. The price of each unit is approximately $2,000 and we have seven dental operatories. To help with these costs, we respectfully request a grant of $10,000.
CVIM COVID-19 Update

CVIM continues to serve patients, primarily though telehealth. Patients coming to the clinic are limited to urgent medical care not possible through telehealth, dental emergencies and contactless medication pick-ups in the parking lot. Highlights since mid-March include:

- Over 1,000 telehealth visits, with 22 providers serving 673 patients.
- More than 1,500 outreach calls to patients, checking on their health and well-being.
- Thousands of prescriptions filled, with contactless deliveries in the CVIM parking lot.
- 3-4 emergency dental procedures per day, with heightened safety protocols.
- Nearly 100 new patients served.

COVID-19 has touched CVIM directly. We have access to COVID testing through our partnerships with Penn Medicine and Main Line Health. We had few patients calling with symptoms in March but are now experiencing an upswing in May. To date, we have confirmed seven COVID-19 cases among our patients. Three of them had to be hospitalized and have since recovered, three are recovering at home, and one was recently admitted to the hospital. We have one nurse practitioner specializing in COVID diagnosis/testing, and a bilingual nurse practitioner monitoring homebound sick patients carefully through daily phone interaction. Sadly, we lost a true healthcare hero when one of our long-term volunteer nurse practitioners passed away from COVID-19 on April 24. She had been working in a nursing home.

CVIM anticipates a surge in the need for our services due to the continued economic downturn, loss of jobs and health benefits. We remain committed to our role as the healthcare safety net for low-income families who fall through the insurance gap in our healthcare system. Thank you for allowing us to submit this addendum. We would appreciate the Chester County Community Foundation’s assistance with financial resources to strengthen our infrastructure and serve our vulnerable patients.

During the school year, young Britany comes to CVIM on a school bus from Southern Chester County along with other children who need dental care. Recently, Britany’s dad called letting us know she has dental pain. He is recently unemployed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and has no transportation. Dr. Ram talked to Britany’s father during a telehealth visit and determined the pain was coming from the tooth where she needs a root canal. Dr. Ram prescribed antibiotics and the CVIM dispensary prepared the medication. One of our dental assistants, observing social distancing guidelines, delivered the medication along with a gift card to buy food for the family.