

To-do List Not sure where to begin?

Here's a checklist of items to help you plan your own charity day from Townies Rick and Nancy Hammel.

One Year Before

Reserve a day. Get your team excited about it.

Have a team meeting to begin planning and answer to following questions:

- Will you see children?
- What services will you perform?
- Will you see patients who have insurance?
- Will you pay your team?
- Will you need to have more volunteer dentists and/or hygienists for your capacity?
- How will you get past the “what if” questions and doubts?
- Will you need security?
- What will you do in inclement weather?

Six Months Before

Decide Basic Logistics.

Appointments vs. First-come First-served

We chose to have an early morning greeter who arrived at 5 a.m. He had two sets of alpha-numeric cards. Patients who wanted to see the dentist got a yellow card with D-1, D-2, etc. Patients wanting hygiene services got a white card with H-1, H-2. We estimated each patient would be in our office about a half-hour and the greeter could tell patients approximately what time to return so that we didn't have people just hanging out all day long.

Waiting, Shelter and Bathrooms

We are fortunate that we have a large yard and we got a couple of large canopy-type tents and the city parks department brought in benches, trash cans and tables. Fortunately, we also have a patient who owns a portable toilet business and brings in a toilet so that we don't have to have people coming into our office bathrooms.

Traffic Flow of Patients and Triage

Determine the traffic flow pattern to avoid hallway bottlenecks.

Consider asking other dentists or hygienists to do your triage and administer anesthetic as well as any pre-medication needed. And, if you have extra treatment rooms ask them if they want to serve by seeing patients. Be sure if you are bringing in providers from out of state that they can practice legally in your state.

Dental Work

Because we wanted to see as many patients as possible we decided that patients would only be able to have about a half-hour of the dentist's time, (i.e., no quadrant dentistry). The person doing the triage determines the patient's one or two most critical needs, enters treatment into the computer and anesthetizes.

Hygienist vs. Dentist

Our patients are told they can choose to see either one or the other. If they want to get their teeth cleaned in addition to seeing the dentist they have to get another ticket.

Patient Information and Consent Forms

We designed a one-page form that contains pertinent information and release that is on Dentaltown.com (see “Downloads” Section)

We chose not to use any treatment specific consent forms but every office should consider carefully their own environment. Just because the dentistry is free doesn't mean you aren't still liable if someone would choose to sue.

Give-aways/Food

Thanks to donations provided by our dental supply vendors we were able to give away items such as toothbrushes, toothpaste and floss. We also provided packs of acetaminophen and ibuprofen to give to those patients for post-operative discomfort.

Also, because people are waiting for many hours and because we have a very generous small community, volunteers serve a free lunch as well as donated bottled water and coffee and cookies both mid-morning and mid-afternoon. We contacted our local grocery store and asked them to furnish hot dogs, buns and chips. Our next-door neighbor assisted living facility donated coffee and cookies.

Marketing

We had a graphic artist design our logo and the company who maintains and designs our Web site set up a Web page for our mission – www.clay-centerdentalmission.com. We also chose to have all volunteers wear a bright colored T-shirt with our logo and date. This serves as a way to identify the volunteers.

Printed Materials

We used extraction and how to treat dry socket informational sheets.

Security

If you believe you'll have a lot of people spending the night in your yard or parking lot see about hiring some sort of security to be there to protect your property and the patients as a safety measure.

Volunteers and Donations

People in our community got really excited about becoming a part of this day of mission dentistry and said it was the “biggest high” to be a part of it. We had volunteers help with gatekeeping, trash collection, greeting and ministering, serving food, taking photos, Tweeting and running errands.

Begin conversations with your vendors about donations. Tell all your vendors about your day and solicit their help. Our very own dental supply rep will be spending his second charity day with us. Our experience shows that most local vendors are very generous because of the relationship built with an office over time. Most dental supply reps have stashes of supplies to give away for events like this.

Two to Three Months Before

- Contact local charitable organizations, churches and pastors.
- Offer community businesses an opportunity to participate by sending them letters about sponsorship, i.e., furnishing lunch, T-shirts, etc.
- Order T-shirts and additional dental supplies.
- Hire a volunteer photographer to upkeep social media outlets.

One Month Before

- Order food, if applicable.
- Confirm Porta-Potty, if needed.
- Contact radio and TV stations; send news releases to local newspapers.
- Print patient “tickets” if doing first-come, first-served event.
- Have a team meeting to review the day's logistics.
- Write up an instruction manual, including job descriptions, for volunteers.
- Touch base with donors.

One Week Before

- Confirm all orders.
- Confirm all volunteers and review duties and job descriptions.

Author's Bio

Dr. Rick Hammel and Nancy Hammel have built Clay Center Family Dental Care in Clay Center in Kansas. They have hosted two successful charitable dental days. They can be contacted at: hammel@kansas.net