

Florida Department of Health Palm Beach County Partners With Local HIV Activist to Encourage Better Oral Health

By Communications Office
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Susan Mintz, a HIV and oral care advocate for more than 30 years, has teamed up with the Dental Division of the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County to help HIV patients take better care of their teeth. Susan's mission is to help, educate, and inform HIV patients about the importance of oral health. With the help of the health department, she has begun to distribute free powered toothbrushes to HIV patients in need.

The Department of Health in Palm Beach County dental program is always open to partnering with community organizations when that partnership can improve the oral health of groups of individuals in the community, especially if they are underserved. For this reason, DOH-Palm Beach welcomed working with Mintz.

"When Susan approached us with the offer to supply battery operated toothbrushes to our clients, it was a great opportunity to give them a tool to improve their home care and oral health, that we could not provide," says Dr. William Staten Senior Dentist at the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County.

"In the age of HAART (highly active anti-retroviral therapy), there has been a decrease in many of the commonly seen oral issues in HIV clients. But at the same time there has been an increase in periodontal problems in these clients. Improved oral home care is a foundation for addressing this issue and an electronic toothbrush can aid in home care, especially for people with dexterity issues," says Staten.



As a former student of dental hygiene Susan also knows the importance of effective toothbrushing, and hopes to find greater support for her mission. "If there is no good oral health, the rest of the body suffers," says Mintz. "People with HIV must be careful because of bleeding gums as it could become a breeding ground for bacteria. The movement of battery-operated toothbrushes gives health to everybody."

As of July 2019, free powered toothbrushes are being distributed to HIV dental patients on a first come first serve basis during their dental hygiene visit at the Department of Health's Northeast Health Center at 851 Avenue "P", Riviera Beach, FL 33404. For more information on Susan's mission, please visit susanmintz.com. For more information on HIV Prevention, please go to testpalmbeach.com.