**Dental Department Strategic Plan.**

 On Monday, March 16th2020, American Dental Association (ADA) came out with guidelines for the Dental Professionals to mitigate their part in controlling the spread of COVID-19. The guidelines recommended postponing all elective and non-urgent dental procedures by three weeks and focusing on attending to emergency patients only. This would alleviate the burden that dental emergencies would place on the emergency departments. This will indirectly help ER’s to focus on seeing patients suffering from COVID -19.

 We decided to contact the ER’s and urgent cares in the vicinity of our clinical sites. There were approximately sixteen emergency rooms and urgent cares which we had not looked into before this time.

We utilized some of our staff (Registered Dental Assistants and Registered Dental Hygienist) to reach out to the Managers at ER’s and urgent cares to request them to divert patients with dental emergencies to our dental clinics. It reduced unnecessary exposure of patients with dental pain to COVID 19 at the ER and helped ER physicians and staff to attend to COVID 19 patients the much needed care. Due to this diversion of patients in dental pain, our providers helped anywhere between 5-9 patients a day played their part during this Pandemic.

We called the ER’s and urgent cares in the vicinity of our clinical sites and introduced them to our oral health program at the health center. We followed up with this plan by emails and mailed out letters to ER managers along with referral forms. This created an ER Diversion program that will hopefully continue to stay beyond the Pandemic.

 Additionally, Dental Services were consolidated from 7 sites to 4 sites. We kept a basic skeleton staff consisting of 1 DDS, 1 RDA, 1 RDH in the role of an RDA and 1 Front desk. Rest of the staff were re-designated to different roles in call centers and medical clinics as patient screeners.

 This was done to optimize PPE, reduce exposure to COVID 19, help patients in pain and keep staff safe.

Re-opening was also done in phases with staff safety and case numbers in mind.

During this entire time ‘Team Wellness’ and ‘Resiliency Building’ was continuously performed in the background.

Stress management support group

Meditation and mindfulness exercises.

Participation of Behavioral Health Consultants was invaluable both for patients and staff.