

COVID-19 August Clinic Update 6/24/20

The COVID-19 pandemic appears to follow a pattern of infection and illness that has been closely observed, and we have learned a great deal over the last 6 months. Fortunately, Southern California and Northern Baja have posted their public health data, and we have not seen the kind of severe disease as in places like New York and Italy. As expected, we are experiencing problems in more densely populated areas that have inadequate social distancing and limited medical resources. In northern Baja, notably in the cities of Tijuana and Mexicali, there continues to be a large number of residents who carry the infection, and some percentage of them becoming very ill or dying.

Unfortunately, the testing in Mexico is more difficult to obtain than in California. As a result, it is not possible to identify patients who might not feel ill, yet still be able to pass the infection on to others in the clinic or operating rooms. The safety of not only the patients and volunteers, but also the extended families and contacts of those who attend clinic and return home must be considered as we make plans for future clinics. **As a result, we will not be able to have a “typical” August clinic. Please do not sign up, or make plans to attend, unless you are contacted by someone from the board of directors.**

Our board has researched and discussed how best to proceed with our clinic using the guidelines of the CDC, California Department of Public Health, and input from our doctors, dentists, and nurses. In all available guidelines, the most urgent and necessary health care is allowed. The protocols to minimize the risk of spread are well established, and we are in the process of strictly applying them to our clinic environment. For the majority of our patients, a delay in dental care, surgical follow up, and most of the other services we provide can be delayed. However, we have a small number of patients, in which a prolonged delay in care will result in worsening nutrition, increased exposure to infection, continued loss of hearing, and impair the normal acquisition of speech. A committed group of doctors and volunteers have decided to proceed with a limited clinic in August, so that we can examine, evaluate and treat (or develop a treatment plan), for these selected patients.

As we mentioned in the prior update, the impact to our patients and the vulnerable population of Ensenada and surrounding communities is not only medical. The economic disruption, and lack of necessary services, has been life-threatening to many. We have combined our resources with 5 local Rotary clubs in Ensenada and have distributed food and other supplies directly to those in need. Thank you for your fantastic support! Through the generosity of our donors we have raised and distributed \$14,647 in necessary food and supplies.

The Board of Directors, Thousand Smiles Foundation

Michael Nussbaum, President