

The heart of our community. Ahead of the curve.

Oral health has a major impact on overall health. For children, good oral health care can mean the difference between success or failure in school.

Lynn Community Health Center Mission Spotlight



Juan's Story

Juan arrived at the Ingalls school with a fever yet again—the third time in a month. His teachers were worried because he had missed many school days this semester, so they brought him to the Lynn Community Health Center School-Based Health Center located inside the school.

This time Juan also complained of mouth pain. Nurse Practitioner Lorraine Murphy took a look and noticed what she suspected could be an abscess under one of his teeth. “So many children have severe oral health issues that have been untreated for so long, they don’t remember what it is like not to hurt,” she explained. “It can be hard for them to articulate what is wrong.”

After examining him, Lorraine immediately called Juan’s parents and made an appointment for him to be seen at the LCHC Dental Clinic that same day. “It is important to get them seen right away, and having the Health Center Dental Clinic as a resource is amazing,” she said.

Pediatric Dentist Herlivi Linares confirmed and treated Juan’s abscess, and diagnosed several oral health issues as the underlying cause of his recurring fevers and pain. In addition she addressed severe tooth decay and taught him preventative care to eliminate future complications and pain.

Low-grade pain and fevers had likely been impacting Juan’s ability to perform in school for some time. He is now back in school on a regular basis, feeling good, and has shown significant improvement. No longer distracted by pain, he is able to focus in class and on his homework. An added benefit to Juan's improved oral health is his ability to eat better and healthier foods, such as apples and carrots, because his teeth no longer hurt.

Juan’s improvement has extended to his entire family. Dr. Linares taught everyone the importance of oral hygiene and regular cleanings. “I love working with families before problems arise,” she says. “I know that for this family the benefits of good oral health will extend far beyond the mouth and into their everyday lives.”