What’s the Issue:
Poor dental health affects people of all ages. Tooth decay is the most common chronic illness among school-aged children. One in four children have untreated tooth decay, a condition that is twice as prevalent in low-income populations and completely preventable. Additionally, childhood tooth decay and poor oral health may lead to complex dental issues later in life and complicate other chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Several barriers exist for those trying to access dental care, including: affordability, lack of public awareness, geographic barriers, lack of transportation, and fear of a dental visit. For uninsured adults, these issues may be exacerbated by the cost of treatment without insurance coverage. Unfortunately, this lack of dental care results in many adults seeking help in an emergency room for avoidable dental issues.

What We Plan to Do:
Our approach for dental health is two-pronged and focused on children’s dental health through the St. David’s Mobile Dental Program, and adult dental health through Healthy Smiles Central Texas.

Our goal aimed at children’s dental health through St. David’s Mobile Dental Program is:
- Improve children’s dental health through school-based sealant and treatment programs in Hays, Travis, and Williamson counties
- Reduce the proportion of students with untreated decay on permanent teeth
- Increase the proportion of children with a long-term solution to dental care through effective patient navigation

Our goal aimed at adult dental health through Healthy Smiles Central Texas is:
- Increase the number of uninsured adults receiving affordable dental treatment in Central Texas by 70% by the year 2022
- Improve efficiency for larger clinics
- Sustain the overall capacity of participating organizations during this time of growth

Who We Will Serve:
Through St. David’s Mobile Dental Program, we will work with low-income children attending high needs elementary schools in Hays, Travis and Williamson counties.

Through Healthy Smiles Central Texas, we will work with targeted organizations who serve uninsured adults.

How We Will Do It:
Our approach for children’s dental health through St. David’s Mobile Dental Program will:
- Continue to improve children’s oral health through school-based dental screenings, prevention, restorative, and complex care
- Actively integrate oral health into other areas of focus including: Women’s Health, Strong Safety Net, and Insurance Enrollment and Use
- Create public awareness on the importance of oral health to overall health

Our approach for adult dental health through Healthy Smiles Central Texas will provide core components, including:
- Grants to help fund additional staff and equipment to increase the number of uninsured adults served at clinics
- A set of tools to build capacity and internal capabilities, such as evaluation and learning
- Technical assistance

For more information, contact Elizabeth Krause at ekrause@stdavidsfoundation.org