



THE BRIGHTER WAY UNITED HEALTHCARE

ToothBus

A Mobile Dental Center
Transforming More
Than Smiles

THE STORY OF TOOTH BUS

Generously donated by United HealthCare in 2018, Brighter Way's mobile dental center remotely expands community access to oral health care addressing the needs of patients in underserved areas. Through a naming contest in 2022, young patients named the mobile center, Tooth Bus.

A new partnership with Isaac School District was initiated in 2024 to reach low-income children in Title I schools. This expansion is supported through a multi-year grant from United HealthCare. A collaboration with Advance facilitates oral hygiene and nutrition education to empower children to take responsibility and improve their own oral health.

Through Tooth Bus, oral health professionals are able to assess dental issues and provide an easy way for patients to make follow-up appointments at one of the Brighter Way dental centers.



Working together to build healthier communities

At UnitedHealthcare® Community Plan, we're dedicated to the communities we serve. We believe nothing should stand in the way of quality, affordable health care.

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WELCOME TO TOOTH BUS



THERE'S NO REST FOR TOOTH BUS

Welcome to Tooth Bus – the key to Brighter Way's outreach expansion program as we increase remote access to patients in the community who have barriers to oral health care. Thanks to United Healthcare's multi-year operational support, Tooth Bus proudly 'goes to the patient.' Over seven years, Tooth Bus has served close to 14,000 patients who are experiencing poverty and homelessness.

Poverty and homelessness top the list as primary drivers of poor oral health for underserved individuals in our community. Tooth Bus provides a fully contained, highly efficient, and comprehensive remote delivery-system, greatly expanding partnerships and impacting the overall level of the community's oral health.

- **Children & Families** – Tooth Bus attends community health fairs serving children and families across Maricopa County.
- **Vulnerable Children** – 64% of Arizona's children in 3rd Grade are at risk for dental disease; 74% need sealants. Tooth Bus visits children attending Title I schools in Isaac School District, and Boys & Girls Clubs.
- **Youth & Young Adults** – Through a collaboration with one.n.ten, Tooth Bus provides oral health services to LGBTQ+ youth & young adults who otherwise do not have access to oral health services. Disproportionately, LGBTQ youth represent 8% of all youth but make up close to 45% of homeless youth.
- **Veterans & Homeless Individuals** – Through special Vanguard funding, Tooth Bus visits homeless encampments to address complex oral health needs of chronically homeless individuals, providing no-charge treatment at The Diane & Bruce Halle Brighter Way Dental Center.
- **Special Needs Children** – The Bob & Renee Parsons Center for Pediatric Dentistry has specialized resources to treat children with special needs.

A TRANSFORMATIONAL MISSION

Celebrating over 23 years of service, Brighter Way provides comprehensive oral health care for vulnerable adults, children, veterans, those experiencing homelessness, and individuals with special needs. We deliver services through two unique dental centers and remote access through the Brighter Way United HealthCare Mobile Dental Center - Tooth Bus.

ONE, TWO, THREE.... TOOTH BUS



Kris Volcheck
Founding CEO
Brighter Way Institute



Jean Kalbacher
BWI Board Member
CEO, United Healthcare
Community Plan

STEP ONE: GO TO THE PATIENT

Tooth Bus travels to remote Medically Underserved Areas, Title I schools, Boys & Girls Clubs, and attends community health fairs to provide comprehensive oral health assessments. Tooth Bus is staffed by one dentist and one dental hygienist. A Report Card helps parents make follow-up appointments, establish a regular check-up schedule, receive treatment as needed, and get age-appropriate dental sealants.

STEP TWO: EDUCATE

Tooth Bus assessments include nutritional education provided by our partner, Advance to help children and families understand the link between refined sugar and dental caries. Oral hygiene education empowers each child to learn good brushing and flossing techniques and develop regular dental habits. A Smile Bag with each child's own toothbrush, toothpaste and floss are provided to each patient.

STEP THREE: A DENTAL HOME FOR ALL

Children's referrals are made to The Bob & Renee Parsons Center for Pediatric Dentistry. Adults go to The Diane & Bruce Halle Brighter Way Dental Center. The "Dental Home" concept promotes patient's long-term oral health by providing consistent and reliable access to services. With regular care, children and adults enjoy better nutrition, improved self-esteem, an improved quality of life, and relief from pain and infection.

As we look forward to our 25th Anniversary in 2026, please join me and our Board Member, Jean Kalbacher as we celebrate the many successes of Tooth Bus.