

It is an honor for me to represent Dr. Carlos Filloy, Dean of the School of Dentistry, University of Costa Rica and in turn the University as well, and be able to be here, in this great event for the community of Tirrases, in the start of what will be a Community Dental Clinic.

In part of its mission, the School of Dentistry of the University of Costa Rica says that " - it will be the leader in the formation of undergraduate, postgraduate and continuing education, with the highest academic excellence and integral development; with humanistic, innovative and entrepreneurial training, social action and research; for the promotion and protection of health and prevention of oral and maxillofacial diseases."

Oral health affects all aspects of our lives, but often it is not given the adequate importance. Our mouth is a window of health in our body. It may show signs of nutritional deficiencies or general infection. Systemic diseases, those that affect the whole body, can manifest first in the mouth due to injuries or other oral problems. If you are either 70 or 7 years old, oral health is important. In the last decades advances in diagnosis and dental treatment have made more people keep their natural teeth during all their life; however, despite the fact that regular dental examinations and good oral hygiene can prevent most dental diseases, tooth decay is still the most frequent chronic disease in children, and gum disease the main reason in our country for tooth loss. Many people believe that they need to see a dentist only if they feel pain or when something is wrong, but regular dental visits can contribute to a life of good oral health. Research carried out in recent years shows that a poorly attended or neglected mouth, especially due to gum problems, can significantly increase the risks of health problems such as cardio or cerebro vascular accidents, poorly controlled diabetes, oral cancer and preterm labor.

As Costa Ricans, we are proud of our social security system and, in particular, our general health indicators. However, as a country, there is a lot more to improve, and in the field of oral health, we have a significant gap in coverage. It is for this reason that the School of Dentistry of the University of Costa Rica, following its mission of academic excellence and research, is pleased to be part of this wonderful project for the community of Tirrases through its social action program. The commendable work of Rotary International through its Rotary Clubs throughout the world must be recognized. By bringing together community, business and professional leaders in order to provide humanitarian services, encourage high ethical values in all vocations and promote good will and peace in the world, not only motivates, but gives us an inspiring example of how to face the challenges of needy communities in our country. We are certain that this project, by joining forces between the community of Tirrases, the Rotary Clubs and the School of Dentistry of the University of Costa Rica, among others, will create a true synergy that will improve overall health, self-esteem and quality of life of many people in need.