

ARLINGTON thrive

Arlington Thrive provides same-day, emergency financial assistance to residents in crisis. Most clients are the working poor, elderly and disabled people on fixed incomes, and homeless/formerly homeless individuals who need Thrive's funds as a "safety net" until they can get back on firmer financial footing. Arlington Thrive has been an essential community partner to AFC for years, but since the start of the pandemic our relationship has been more important than ever.

Four years ago, Arlington Thrive established a fund to provide \$1,000 per month to subsidize AFC patients' dental costs. Our dental program is only six years old and doesn't yet have enough volunteers to allow us to provide *completely* free dental care (over the course of 27 years, our now 150-providers-strong volunteer medical team provides free care). We charge \$50 per dental visit, a very affordable amount compared to the private market, but many of our patients require services beyond basic cleanings and fillings – and crowns, partials, and dentures involve very costly lab fees. Our dental clinic provides thousands of dollars' worth of advanced dentistry at cost, but when patients cannot afford it, the Thrive Patient Dental Fund is a valuable resource that we can draw on.

Beyond Thrive's important investments in oral health at AFC, the Arlington Emergency Relief Fund (AERF) has come to be an important lifeline for patients – especially over the past year and a half. At the start of the pandemic, so many of our patients working in the service sector lost their jobs and incomes overnight. Referrals to our Social Services Case Manager, who helps ensure patients' needs beyond the exam room are getting met, tripled. Patients needing help with rent or phone bills can find relief through Thrive's AERF Fund, which disburses up to \$1,000 per day to individuals via local safety-net partners like AFC. But it's the flexibility and responsiveness of this remarkable resource that makes it invaluable: near the end of his life, one of our very sick patients shared with his nurse that his greatest concern was over his family going into debt due to his funeral expenses. Through Thrive, we were able to alleviate his fears and support his grieving family in a very important, tangible way.