

Terra Ziolkowski Highlights Oral Health Gaps Affecting Miami Residents

Miami-based dental assistant Terra Ziolkowski shares how everyday dental access and education challenges impact individuals across South Florida.



Miami, Florida Jan 26, 2026 ([IssueWire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Oral health is often treated as a personal issue, but in South Florida, it reflects a broader local challenge tied to access, education, and prevention. Terra Ziolkowski, a dental assistant based in Miami, is speaking out about how gaps in understanding and routine care affect individuals and families across the region.

“Dental anxiety affects nearly one in three adults,” Ziolkowski notes. “I see every day how fear and confusion stop people from getting the care they need.” In Miami-Dade County, where more than 40% of residents speak English as a second language, communication barriers can make routine dental visits feel overwhelming.

Florida ranks below the national average for preventative dental visits, with an estimated 28% of adults skipping annual checkups. In Miami-Dade, emergency room visits for preventable dental issues are higher than in many other urban counties in the state. “People often wait until pain forces action,” Ziolkowski says. “By then, the problem is bigger.”

Education plays a major role. “Prevention starts with understanding,” she explains. Yet local surveys

show that nearly 1 in 4 Florida children have untreated tooth decay, often linked to limited access to early dental education. “If you teach early, you make a long-term impact,” Ziolkowski adds.

She also points to workflow pressures in local practices. “Productivity starts with preparation,” she says. In fast-growing areas like Miami, where patient volume continues to rise, clear systems and communication help reduce delays and stress. Studies show that prepared dental teams can cut appointment delays by up to 20%, improving patient trust and follow-through.

Ziolkowski believes small, local actions can make a real difference. “Explaining things slowly saves time,” she says. “People relax when they know what to expect.”

Local Action List: 10 Steps You Can Take This Week

- Schedule or confirm a routine dental checkup.
- Ask your provider to explain one procedure in plain language.
- Share a basic oral hygiene tip with a child or family member.
- Look up free or low-cost dental clinics in Miami-Dade County.
- Replace your toothbrush if it's older than three months.
- Reduce sugary drinks by one serving per day.
- Encourage a friend to address dental pain early.
- Volunteer or donate to a local health outreach program.
- Write down questions before your next dental visit.
- Take five minutes to learn about preventative dental care online.

How to Find Trustworthy Local Resources

Look for clinics affiliated with local hospitals, universities, or public health departments. Miami-Dade County Health Department listings, federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), and nonprofit community clinics are reliable starting points. Check for licensed providers and up-to-date contact information.

Call to Action

Oral health starts locally. Take one small step today—schedule a visit, ask a question, or share

knowledge—and help build a healthier Miami community.

About Terra Ziolkowski

Terra Ziolkowski is a dental assistant based in Miami, Florida. She focuses on patient comfort, preventative education, and clear communication, helping individuals feel informed and confident about their oral health while supporting stronger local care systems.

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