



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Boston-Based Nonprofit Partnering with Lebanese University Faculty of Dental Medicine to Advance the Delivery of Oral Healthcare for Cleft Patients

Boston, MA – [Global Smile Foundation](#) (GSF) announced today that it has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Lebanese University Faculty of Dental Medicine in Beirut, Lebanon to provide dental, orthodontic, and oral healthcare for patients born with cleft lip and/or palate. Dr. Usama Hamdan, President and Co-Founder of GSF, Professor Bassam Badran, President of the Lebanese University, and Dr. Georges Aoun, Dean of the Faculty of Dental Medicine, signed the agreement at a ceremony in Beirut during GSF's April outreach program.

GSF is a Massachusetts-based nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian cleft care around the world and conducts two annual outreach programs in Lebanon. The first of this year took place last week, where a team of volunteer medical professionals provided comprehensive cleft care for underserved patients born with cleft lip/palate. The GSF team was able to perform 44 reconstructive surgical procedures for 24 patients, most of whom are under 2 years of age. In addition, the team provided 24 feeding/nutrition consults, 40 speech and language sessions, and 60 oral hygiene consults.

The partnership with the Lebanese University will expand dental and orthodontic services for GSF patients in the region. Professor Aoun and Dr. Balsam Soubra, Head of Pediatric Dentistry, will coordinate the partnership with GSF. At the ceremony, Dr. Zeinab Hijazi, a member of the Faculty of Dental Medicine, underscored how the partnership with GSF will help change the lives of many underserved children born with cleft.

GSF established their first program in Beirut, Lebanon in 2012, although their founding members have been involved in global humanitarian cleft care programs for 36 years. The incidence of cleft in the Levant region is higher than the world average, and the availability of specialized cleft care has been severely limited by the political and economic crises in Lebanon. GSF patients come from underserved communities, including the large population of refugees from neighboring countries.

During the ceremony, Dr. Hamdan spoke about the need for cleft care in the region. “We have grown our programs here over the past decade because there are so many patients in the region who need cleft care. We also provide training and education for cleft providers here so that they will develop their own capacity in the future,” he said.

About Global Smile Foundation

Our vision is a world where all children born with cleft lip/palate receive the highest quality comprehensive and long-term care so that they and their families can live healthy and productive lives. We are guided by an integrated approach for two main goals. First, build sustainable global capacity for cleft care through educational initiatives and knowledge sharing. Second, provide humanitarian cleft care services to children from birth to adulthood by combining our outreach programs, led by highly qualified teams of volunteer cleft specialists, with the development of on-site cleft centers at program locations. For more information, please visit <https://gsmile.org/>.

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