



## Do You Suffer from 'Can't-afford-the-co-pay-itis'?

*A satisfied patient describes her Mexican dental experience*

When I was growing up I was often told that I had great teeth. But like many young people, I took my teeth for granted. When I was 16 I was cheering through a megaphone which accidentally hit my top front tooth resulting in a large, noticeable chip.

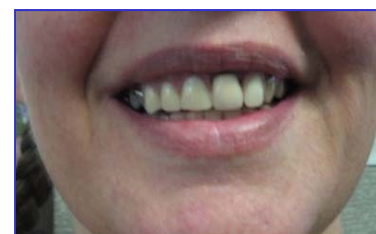
I went to the dentist, who made my teeth look great again. But the crown was larger in the back than my normal tooth, and I would absent mindedly grind my bottom incisor against it, so over time it began to file down. This was the beginning of my dental problems.

As an adult I rarely went to the dentist, only visiting when I was in pain. At one point, my teeth had gotten so bad that I needed 8 root canals and crowns. My dentist knew I couldn't afford the crowns, but he went ahead with the root canals anyway.

To make a long story short, all those teeth rotted out over the next couple of years and I had to have them pulled. So by 1996 I had no teeth on the bottom right side, and no teeth on the top left side. I couldn't chew. The teeth I did have were used improperly and did not allow me to chew properly. By the time I returned from teaching in India in 2000, my remaining teeth were beginning to rot.



**Patient before her dental work in Tijuana**



**A brand new smile, courtesy of Dental Tijuana**

\$17,000 in co-payments would give me a Julia Roberts smile. \$5,000 in co-payments would get out the rot and enable chewing again. But even \$5,000 seemed like a million to me!

Then one day, I read about dentists in Mexico that take United States dental insurance. Their pictures were shown over captions explaining that they studied dentistry in the USA. I mentioned the story to a friend who works for Health Travel Guides in the office next door to mine. You can visit them at [www.healthtravelguides.com](http://www.healthtravelguides.com) and for more information about products and services you can email [jeff@helathtravleguides.com](mailto:jeff@helathtravleguides.com) or call toll free 1-866-978-2573.

Health Travel Guides has a credentialed, accredited network of surgeons and dentists throughout Mexico, and quickly arranged for me to talk with one of their providers in Tijuana. Within a day, I had my appointment in an office which was clean and cheerful. I was greeted by an English-speaking assistant, and my two dentists also both speak English. Dr. Angel Serrano Sr., and Dr. Angel Serrano, Jr. are my 'two Angels in Mexico'!

The doctor took my x-rays using technology that I had never seen before. The x-rays were instantly transported to computer. The doctor examined my mouth and gave me three options. I chose the least expensive option of \$1,245, with my insurance covering \$1000. To my surprise, Dr. Serrano said 'shall we get started right now?' The doctor took an impression of my mouth for my partials and then his son extracted three teeth, then I headed home.

The next week Al and I returned to Tijuana, this time walking across the border to enjoy the beautiful day. It was delightful and relaxing. Mariachis serenaded people enjoying Saturday brunch. Fifteen minutes later we were at the Dental Tijuana office.

The dentist extracted 4 more teeth, and after biting cotton for a half hour, I was presented with my new teeth. We chatted and joked as he perfected the occlusion. The first time he told me to bite down, he asked me how it felt.

Foreign! I hadn't had teeth for so long, I forgot what it felt like to bite down. A few minutes later, he was polishing up my teeth, and it was time to go. I then did something I never thought I would do – I hugged my dentist in tears of joy. I then took a \$5 air conditioned bus across the border into the U.S. At Customs, I told the officer why I'd been in Mexico, smiling proudly to show off my new teeth. The officer asked me how I knew who to trust and I told him about Health Travel Guides.

In January, my PPO will give another \$1000. That is just in time for me to go back and have my partials realigned – a necessary procedure after the swelling goes down. That will leave plenty of money for the dentist to fix my crown. It shows some silver at the top. It's grown old with age. It's the original crown from the megaphone accident 34 years ago.

I'm completely satisfied with my Mexican dentists. I will continue to tell everyone about it!