



**Northwest Region**

Central Wisconsin Dental Society • Northern Wisconsin Dental Society  
Northwest District Dental Society

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**Wisconsin dentists donating \$719,000 in care to 6,250 children for Give Kids A Smile®**

WEST ALLIS, WIS., Feb. 2, 2010 – An estimated 350 Wisconsin dentists will volunteer their time and skills, along with 934 dental team members, dental, hygiene and assisting students, faculty and community advocates, to donate more than \$719,000 in oral health care and education to 6,253 of the state's low-income children **this Friday, Feb. 5** and during upcoming weeks as part of the eighth annual [Give Kids A Smile®](#) children's dental access program.

Statewide, \$3.4 million has been provided in charitable dental care to 23,000 low-income children since 2003 when the [Wisconsin Dental Association](#) joined with the [American Dental Association](#) in launching GKAS during February's [National Children's Dental Health Month](#).

GKAS 2010 will be marked nationwide by 12,780 dentists joining with 36,490 other volunteers to provide care to 322,885 children at 1,983 events. These outreach projects vary from large-scale dental clinics delivering exams, cleanings and fluoride treatments to individual dentists providing fillings, extractions and crowns to underserved children in their private practices to dental professionals offering screenings and educational programs in various locations.

In Wisconsin, the WDA and member dentists work with the [state's Department of Health Services](#), local government agencies, public schools, Head Start, Boys & Girls Clubs and other youth and community organizations to identify low-income children with the greatest need for dental treatment.

GKAS activities are supported by significant corporate donations from Colgate-Palmolive Company, DEXIS® Digital X-ray and Henry Schein Dental. WDA Professional Services Division's The Dental Record makes children's dental record forms available to Wisconsin GKAS events.

The 27-county WDA Northwest Region will feature GKAS events in several communities this Friday. Activities scheduled for other dates or with available patient slots are specifically noted.

**Abbotsford** – Drs. Christina and Troy Rens and their dental clinic team will provide free dental exams and sealants to all second graders enrolled in Abbotsford and Colby public schools. A Clark County public health nurse will present dental health information and schedule follow-up care for children as needed. Dental goody bags are made available by the Abbotsford Lions Club.

**Amery** – Four dentists and staff at Dental Arts will welcome 100 local children for necessary preventive

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and restorative services. Children and parents will learn about the importance of good dental health.

**Antigo** – The father-daughter dental team of Drs. Timothy and Meghan O'Brien and staff will welcome 50 youngsters for exams, teeth cleaning, preventive care and oral hygiene education.

**Baldwin** – Dr. Orth Sisombath and his team at Midwest Dental will provide preventive and restorative dental care to 10 children.

**Black River Falls** – The Community Dental team, in cooperation with the Jackson County Health Department and Black River School District, provided dental screenings for approximately 90 children on Jan. 7 at Third Street Elementary School. They will provide necessary in-office follow-up care on Feb. 3.

**Chetek** – Dr. William Shea and his team at Midwest Dental will provide preventive and restorative dental care to 16 children.

**Durand** – For the 17<sup>th</sup> year, Dr. David Reiland is organizing “Dentist with a Heart Day” to provide preventive and restorative dental care to underserved children at no cost.

### **Eau Claire**

- Nearly a dozen local dentists and 30 Chippewa Valley Technical College dental hygiene and assisting students are teaming up for the fourth year to provide preventive and restorative care and dental education to 100 children.

- The Eau Claire Oakwood Midwest Dental office has scheduled appointments for 25 children to receive sealants, fluoride treatment, teeth cleanings and other restorative dental care.

- The Eau Claire South Midwest Dental office also will provide preventive and restorative dental services to 24 children.

**Forest, Oneida and Vilas Counties** – Through the Northwoods Dental Project, a public-private oral health program in the rural and predominately non-fluoridated communities of Forest, Oneida and Vilas counties, more than 1,500 children in 24 school districts will receive oral health education and about 900 of those will also receive preventive dental services.

**Holcombe** – The Shining Smiles Oral Health Program is giving 835 children oral health education, screening and fluoride treatment. Necessary follow-up treatment will be provided by local dentists.

### **Hudson**

- Dr. Julie Leshner and her Dentistry on the Vine team will provide preventive and restorative dental care to 20 children on Feb. 2 and 5.

- Drs. Douglas Weiher and Ryan Tietz and their Oakwood Dental team will provide oral hygiene education and preventive dental services to 10 children.

**Hurley** – Dr. Paul Hagemann and his dental team, working with the Iron County Health Department, Hurley School District and Head Start, is working throughout the year to provide screenings and fluoride varnishes to 35 elementary students.

**Marshfield** – Drs. Gary and Tony Martin and staff will welcome 10 youngsters for basic preventive services and treatment. The children and their parents will also receive instruction in healthy dietary habits and

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daily oral hygiene.

**Medford** – Third graders are the focus of Dr. Daniel Miskulin’s GKAS outreach. Four staffers will assist him at a prescreening event and in providing follow-up care to children with urgent dental health problems.

**Menomonie** – The Lakeside Dental team will provide free services to an estimated 18 children who have limited access to dental care, including oral health education, preventive screening and treatment.

**Merrill** – Drs. Jeff Nielsen and Jessica Kiecker and their Midwest Dental team will provide oral hygiene education, sealants, fluoride and restorative dental services to 15 children.

**Mondovi** – Drs. David Young and Jeremy Vogel and their Midwest Dental team will provide preventive and restorative dental services to 15 children.

**New Richmond** – An estimated 10 children will receive teeth cleanings and fluoride treatment free of charge at Midwest Dental.

**River Falls** – Dr. Katrina Leano and her Midwest Dental team are planning to provide oral hygiene education, teeth cleanings, fluoride treatments and sealants to 12 children.

**Siren** – Drs. Sheldon Olesen and Timothy Johnson and their Siren Dental Clinic team plan to provide oral hygiene education and preventive and restorative dental care to 30 youth.

**Spring Valley** – Dr. Dan Connors’ Spring Valley Dentistry will open its doors to 15 elementary students to provide them with needed preventive and restorative dental services at no charge and teach them about good oral hygiene.

### **Stevens Point**

- Healthy Smiles for Portage County is working with 10 dentists and 100 additional volunteer dental professionals to provide 875 area second graders with sealants and personal oral hygiene education.
- Dr. Michael Schmidt and four other Midwest Dental team members will provide teeth cleanings, sealants and fluoride treatment to six youngsters.

**Wausau** – Drs. Caroline May and Jeremy Hoffman and their Midwest Dental team will provide 20 children with teeth cleanings, sealants and fluoride treatment.

**Weston** – This Midwest Dental clinic will teach 10 local children about good oral hygiene and provide them with needed preventive and restorative dental care.

**Wisconsin Rapids** – Dr. William Sheker and three other Midwest Dental team members will provide preventive dental care to six youth.

Tooth decay is the most common chronic disease affecting American children – five times more common than asthma. The [National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research](#) reports 80 percent of tooth decay is found in just 25 percent of children, the majority of whom are in low-income families.

Moderate tooth decay during childhood restricts physical development, decreases the ability to learn and requires frequent emergency room visits and hospitalization. In some cases, untreated oral disease has been linked to more catastrophic illness, such as an abscess that led to a 12-year-old Maryland boy’s death in 2007.

The WDA, ADA and [American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry](#) recommend children be examined by a

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dentist within six months of the eruption of the first tooth and no later than age 1.

According to a February 2005 [Children's Dental Health Project](#) report, low-income children who have first dental exam by age 1 are less likely to visit emergency rooms for oral health problems or require restorative care. In addition, 5-year-olds who had their first dental visit at age 1 have incurred oral health-related costs at a rate about one-half that of their peers who don't see a dentist until age 5.

The [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) (physicians) calls for 20 percent of all health care funds spent on children to be directed at improving and maintaining their oral health.

In Wisconsin, about 1 million low-income children and adults, or 20 percent of state residents, are beneficiaries of Medicaid, BadgerCare and BadgerCare Plus programs at some point during a given year. State fee-for-service data for fiscal year 2006 (most recent available) shows that while medical assistance patients received \$74 million in dental care, the state and federal governments paid just \$32 million or 44 percent of those charges. This means dentists donated the remaining \$42 million in care to MA patients or more than the Wisconsin and U.S. governments combined paid for.

"GKAS and nonreimbursed MA care are just two examples of how [Wisconsin dentists do serve](#) their communities and make a difference for underserved children and adults through charitable care in their private practices and by volunteering at [community dental clinics](#), the [WDA Mission of Mercy](#) and other outreach programs," explains [WDA President Dr. Kent Vandehaar](#) of Chippewa Falls, Wis.

"However, charity alone is not a sufficient oral health care delivery system," Vandehaar points out. "Low-income patients suffer for various reasons: failure to care for their own oral health; inability to find a dental office for routine care, because small businesses can't absorb too much income loss; and, lawmakers' failure to sufficiently fund the dental care they have promised."

Despite access-to-care concerns for the underserved and medical assistance population, the [Kaiser Family Foundation "State Health Facts" Web site](#) shows 73.2 percent of Wisconsin residents had their teeth cleaned by a dental professional in 2008 compared to 71.3 percent nationally.

A [March 2009 USA Today article](#) ranks Wisconsin seventh in the nation in percentage of residents who have seen a dentist in the last 12 months.

*The Wisconsin Dental Association was established in 1870. With more than 2,900 members statewide, the WDA represents 83 percent of all licensed, practicing dentists in Wisconsin. WDA members are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. The Northwest Region serves the counties of Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Chippewa, Clark, Douglas, Dunn, Eau Claire, Florence, Forest, Iron, Langlade, Lincoln, Marathon, Oneida, Pierce, Polk, Portage, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, St. Croix, Taylor, Vilas, Washburn and Wood. The WDA is headquartered in West Allis and has a legislative office in Madison. It is one of 53 constituent (state-territorial) dental societies of the American Dental Association - the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. For more information on the WDA, call 414-276-4520, visit our [WDA.org](#) Web site and find us on [Facebook](#).*

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**February is National Children's Dental Health Month**