



Southwest Region

La Crosse District Dental Society • Tri-County Dental Society
Sauk Juneau Adams County Dental Society • Columbia Dodge Marquette County Dental Society
Dane County Dental Society • Jefferson County Dental Society
Southwestern District Dental Society • Green County 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 21-county WDA Southwest Region will feature GKAS events in several communities this Friday. Activities scheduled for other dates or with available patients slots are specifically noted.

Cassville – This marks the 27th year Dr. Tom Hughes will visit kindergarten, third and fourth grade classrooms in the Cassville, Potosi and River Ridge School Districts during National Children’s Dental Health Month to present age-appropriate oral hygiene education information. Each of the 225 children will also take

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home a toothbrush, toothpaste and dental health education materials.

Fort Atkinson – Dr. Leslie Showalter and the Rock River Dental team will again welcome 16 youngsters between the ages of 5 and 16 to their Commerce Parkway office for exams, preventive treatment and necessary restorative care.

Holmen – Dr. Jennifer Lesneski and her Midwest Dental office staff worked with the local YMCA and Women, Infant and Children program to identify 25 children between the ages of 3 and 15 in need of preventive care and restorative treatment.

La Crosse

- Dr. Kurt Hulse is again coordinating a multiple-site GKAS effort involving 25 La Crosse District Dental Society members and 100 allied dental personnel. The 150 children scheduled to receive preventive and restorative care were identified in cooperation with local government, school and youth groups.
- The Midwest Dental clinic has scheduled 50 children, ages 3 to 15, for appointments that will include exams, preventive treatments such as sealants, fluoride rinse or varnish and restorative care.

Madison

- Working in cooperation with the Dane County Dental Society, Midwest Dental's Madison East and Madison University clinics will see a combined 19 patients throughout February for needed care identified during a pre-screening day in January.
- The Midwest Dental – Madison West clinic has five young patients scheduled for oral health services this Friday.

Middleton – Dr. Chris Kammer's dental team is participating in GKAS in 2010.

Prairie du Chien – McKeever Dental celebrated GKAS day on Jan. 29 by providing preventive and restorative care and oral hygiene instruction to 12 Head Start children. A pre-screening even was held in December 2009.

Reedsburg – Midwest Dental's Dr. Elizabeth Birr and a volunteer staffer will welcome eight young patients to the clinic. They worked with the Reedsburg School District to identify children in immediate need of dental treatment.

Tomah – Drs. Mark Mueller and the Deer Creek Dental Clinic team are gearing up to provide dental exams and basic oral health care to 25 pediatric patients.

Viroqua – Dr. Steve Solverson and his Midwest Dental staff will provide charitable care to nine low-income youngsters referred by Vernon County Human Services.

Wisconsin Dells – Drs. David Clemens, Nicole Clemens and Jeremy Gross and their Dells Dental team worked with county health and social service departments and local school nurses to identify 34 young people in need of preventive and restorative dental care.

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.

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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 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 their 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 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. The Southwest Region serves the counties of Adams, Buffalo, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Grant, Green, Iowa, Jackson,

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Jefferson, Juneau, La Crosse, Lafayette, Marquette, Monroe, Pepin, Richland, Sauk, Trempeleau and Vernon. The WDA is one of 53 constituent (state-territorial) dental societies of the ADA - 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