



## **2011 – Give Kids A Smile Talking Points**

### **Local Give Kids A Smile events highlight disadvantaged children's need for dental care.**

- More than 5,150 low-income Wisconsin children will receive an estimated \$740,000 in donated dental care on Friday, Feb. 4 and during upcoming weeks, as part of the ninth annual Give Kids A Smile® children's dental access day.
- 360-plus Wisconsin dentists, along with 950 dental team members, dental, hygiene and assisting students, faculty and community advocates are volunteering their time and skills to get underserved children out of pain and treat dental disease with fillings, extractions and crowns.
- Treatment occurs statewide in private dental practices and large-scale dental clinics. Other dental professionals conduct screenings and provide oral hygiene education at schools.
- Since 2003, Wisconsin GKAS events have provided \$4.1 million in donated dental care to 29,250 low-income children.

### **The American Dental Association and Wisconsin Dental Association launched Give Kids A Smile Children's Dental Access Program in February 2003 during National Children's Dental Health Month to:**

- Help children get the dental care they so desperately need.
- Show elected officials and policymakers that our nation's children deserve a better health care system that addresses their dental health.

### **Oral health is critical to overall well-being.**

- Studies show poor oral health may be linked to other health conditions, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, pre-term childbirth and oral cancer.
- Ensuring residents have good oral health saves patients from dental pain and infection and is economically and socially important to our state.
- Cavities are a chronic disease that is five times more common than asthma among our nation's children according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Baby tooth decay is a serious, infectious and transmissible disease that can spread quickly and lead to infection without proper precautions. Early childhood cavities are preventable.

### **Primary or baby teeth are very important to a child's early physical, social and emotional development. "Baby Teeth Matter" because healthy baby teeth...**

- Foster good nutrition through proper chewing.
- Aid in speech development.
- Build self-esteem by providing a beautiful smile.
- Enable a child to pay attention and learn in school without the distraction of dental pain.
- Save space in the jaw that is needed for proper development of adult (permanent) teeth.

### **The WDA recommends everyone have a dental home where comprehensive oral health care is provided in a continuously accessible, coordinated and family-centered way by a doctor of oral health.**

- Dental disease is most effectively diagnosed and treated by a licensed dentist assisted by a qualified dental staff.
- Good personal daily oral hygiene (brush, floss and healthy diet), fluoride, sealants, routine professional dental exams and early restorative care help prevent dental disease and pain, while reducing demand for more advanced and expensive treatment.
- 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.
- Barriers to dental care can be reduced when policymakers and dentists work together on positive, viable "Healthy Choices" for all state residents.

**Wisconsin dentists make a difference for underserved children and adults through charitable care in their private practices and by volunteering at GKAS events, community dental clinics, the WDA Mission of Mercy and other outreach programs. Charity is not a sufficient oral health care delivery system.**