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Dentists Do Serve (DDS) & Dentists Make a Difference (DMD) in Wisconsin! July 2008

This is a sample of WDA members' charitable dental care efforts, demonstrating that "Dentists Do Serve (DDS)" their communities and "Dentists Make a Difference (DMD)" for underserved children and adults. Charitable care is wonderful, but it is not a viable system for delivering dental care to the state's estimated 875,000 Medicaid and BadgerCare patients. Many of these individuals have serious treatment needs and struggle to find a dental home. Patients suffer when lawmakers promise care, but fail to provide sufficient funding to ensure access.

Charitable Dentistry – Volunteer data submissions by WDA members show **235 dentists** provided more than **\$2.9 million in free treatment** to **15,742** low-income patients in **2007**. Data from a recent two-year period shows **individual dentists donate \$10,000 - \$12,000 worth of charitable care annually** through their private dental practices. This charitable dental care is **in addition to** uncollected accounts receivable, non-reimbursed medical assistance care, Give Kids A Smile, WDA Foundation's Donated Dental Services, Head Start screening projects and community clinic volunteering.

Donated Dental Services – Affiliated with the WDA Foundation, Donated Dental Services was initiated in 1998. DDS helps provide comprehensive dental care to adults who cannot work due to a permanent disability, chronic illness or advanced age and public aid programs such as Medicaid and Medicare do not meet their oral health needs. As of June 30, 2008, **1,726 disabled, elderly and medically-compromised people** had received **more than \$4.25 million in free, comprehensive treatment** through DDS. A dedicated team of **517 Wisconsin dentists** and 115 dental labs throughout the Midwest have donated their professional services to DDS. Some state funds for administrative and lab costs are provided through the Department of Health Services. WDA Insurance Programs Inc. and Delta Dental of Wisconsin provide invaluable additional financial support. For every one dollar in state funding, participating dentists on average donate more than nine dollars in services and materials. Dental labs have donated over \$342,000 in supplies and services.

Give Kids A Smile 2008 – Despite harsh winter conditions and a recurring no-show problem in several areas, more than **300 dentists** with help from nearly 700 dental hygienists and assistants, dental and dental hygiene students and instructors and local volunteers, donated more than **\$730,000** in oral health education, exams and treatment to **5,540** of Wisconsin's low-income children in recognition of the sixth annual Give Kids A Smile national dental access day. Wisconsin GKAS events have provided **\$2.75 million** in donated dental care to **13,250 low-income children** since 2003.

Community Volunteer Dental Clinics – Volunteer dentists play an important role in providing services to patients at more than 40 free or low-cost clinics statewide. Examples include Madre Angela Dental Clinic in Milwaukee, Tri-County Community Dental Clinic in Appleton, Healthcare Network in Racine and St. Joseph's Medical and Dental Clinic in Waukesha.

Dentistry IS Improving Americans' Oral Health – In April 2007, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued "Trends in Oral Health Status – United States, 1988-1994 and 1999-2004". Improvements in the oral health of Americans of all ages are noted: seven percent more seniors still have some of their natural teeth; moderate and severe gum disease is down 50 percent among adults ages 20 – 64; and tooth decay in the permanent teeth of school-age children has declined. The Kaiser Family Foundation "State Health Facts" Web site also shows good news for Wisconsin residents' oral health with 76 percent of residents having had their teeth cleaned by a dental professional in the last year compared to a national average of 70 percent. Nationwide, 19 percent of adults have had all of their natural teeth extracted compared to just 17 percent of Wisconsin adults.