

(Note: The following document was prepared in response to questions about Give Kids A Smile! programs that will screen children prior to Feb. 21, 2003 and deliver treatment on Feb. 21. This model will not apply to all access programs, although some of the suggestions offered should be helpful in other scenarios. Securing sound professional advice can help shape a successful program for all concerned. State law will play a key role.)

## Risk Management Suggestions for *Give Kids A Smile!* Day

The ADA's *Give Kids A Smile!* program is a wonderful opportunity for dentists to reach out and provide services to less fortunate individuals. Even with any charitable immunity protection, it is important to maintain good risk management practices for all levels of care provided. A few simple steps can ensure that the care you render is provided the same risk management principles you employ in your office.

### **Health History Information**

Whether a patient (or parent/guardian) has completed your health history form, a form used in another office or one provided by the ADA, it is important that you have the appropriate information necessary to carry out treatment. If screening is to be done by another dentist, check his/her health history form to be sure it has all the information you need to complete your care. If not, consider giving the dentist who is doing the pre-screenings blank copies of your form to use when pre-screening the patients you will provide treatment for.

### **Informed Consent**

Dentists may have some time constraints in regards to their informed consent discussions with patients or their parents/guardians at the pre-screening or on the day of the program. Informed consent forms must cover all necessary information. As with the health history form, it might be wise to give copies of informed consent forms for anticipated procedures to the offices that will be conducting pre-screenings and to the locations where the procedures will be performed.

If the parent/guardian who signs the informed consent form is unable to be present at the time of the procedure, it is important to obtain a contact number where they can be reached during that time. If any type of problem or complication occurs during the procedure, it will be important to be able to reach the parent/guardian to discuss the situation. It is also a good idea to ensure that the parent/guardian receives a copy of the informed consent form they have already signed.

## **Pre- and Post-Op Instructions**

Pre-screening by another professional does not give you the opportunity to provide patients with the pre-treatment protocol they will need in order to receive treatment. Similarly, post-op instructions are sometimes necessary to provide to patients ahead of time, so parents/guardians can anticipate how to best monitor a patient and to be aware of other related needs. Provide copies of these instructions with your health history and informed consent forms so pre-screeners can disseminate the appropriate information to the patients at the time of the pre-screening.

## **Maintain Copies of Procedure Records**

Even though you may be performing a procedure in someone else's office, you are still the doctor of record and must maintain a copy of all treatment records. It is not necessary to maintain a full chart on each patient you see, but it is recommended that you keep, at a minimum, a copy of the health history and procedure notes for each procedure you perform. You may need the record for any follow-up care or other reasons. It is recommended that dentists keep all records together in one "event" file for easy access.

## **Follow Up**

It is prudent to explain that the provision of limited care at a one-time event does *not* establish a doctor-patient relationship for other purposes beyond the timeframe of the event. However, be cognizant that you are the treating doctor for the care rendered on the day of the program, and are therefore responsible for follow-up treatment that may be necessary should something go wrong with any procedures you have performed.

We applaud dentists for taking part in ***Give Kids A Smile!*** It is an important program and one that provides necessary services to those children who currently lack access to dental care. We encourage you to use the same good risk management procedures you would ordinarily follow with your regular patients. Your efforts to do so will help to ensure the program has a positive result for all involved.