



www.wda.org

Northwest Region

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

CONTACT: Carol S. Weber, APR, Director of Public Relations
PHONE: 414-755-4108 (direct)
E-MAIL: cweber@wda.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Photo Opportunities!

Wisconsin dentists to donate more than \$763,000 in care to 5,433 poor children for Give Kids A Smile sixth anniversary

WEST ALLIS, WIS., Jan. 25, 2008 – Some 318 Wisconsin dentists, with help from 760 dental hygienists and assistants, dental and hygiene students and their instructors and community volunteers, will donate an estimated \$763,350 in oral health care and education to 5,433 of the state's low-income children Friday, Feb. 1 and during upcoming weeks in recognition of the sixth annual Give Kids A Smile national children's dental access day.

Wisconsin GKAS events have provided some \$2.1 million in donated dental care to 12,500 low-income children since the program was introduced.

The Wisconsin Dental Association and member dentists work with the state's Department of Health and Family 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. Please note Wisconsin GKAS events generally are not open to the public.

Nationwide, the American Dental Association expects an estimated 51,000 dental professionals will provide free services to more than 500,000 children at 2,000 sites as part of GKAS 2008. Events range from large-scale dental clinics providing free fillings, cleanings and fluoride treatments to groups of dentists delivering restorative care to underserved children in their private practices to individual dentists offering screenings and educational programs in various locations.

GKAS, a centerpiece of February's National Children's Dental Health Month, was initiated in 2003 by the ADA and state and local dental societies to combat what the U.S. Surgeon General called "a silent epidemic" of dental disease and to encourage parents, health professionals, policy-makers and everyone who cares about children to address this important health issue.

"We appreciate the efforts of those legislators working to improve dental access for low-income patients with a financial investment by state and federal governments. We welcome the opportunity to partner with the state in implementing a long-term, viable solution that takes advantage of the more than 2,000 private dental practices across Wisconsin already 'open for business,'" says WDA President Dr. Monica Hebl of Milwaukee.

GKAS 2008 activities are supported by significant corporate donations from the Colgate-Palmolive

DENTISTS DONATING CARE TO NEEDY KIDS FOR SIXTH YEAR – 2

Company, DEXIS Digital X-ray and Henry Schein Dental. The Dental Record – A Division of WDA Professional Services Inc. also is making children's dental record forms available to Wisconsin GKAS events.

The 27-county WDA Northwest Region will feature GKAS events in the following communities (activities scheduled for Feb. 1 unless otherwise noted):

- **Abbotsford** – Drs. Christina and Troy Rens and their First City Dental Clinic staff will provide dental exams and sealants to 100 Abbotsford and Colby public school second graders. A Clark County public health nurse will provide oral health education at the office and schedule follow-up care for children with moderate to severe decay. Every child will receive a dental goody bag.
- **Amery** – Drs. David Doroff, Robert Johansen, James Lampi and Tom VanSomeren with help from others on the Dental Arts team will open their offices on **Saturday, Feb. 2** to 100 local elementary students for necessary preventive and restorative services.
- **Antigo** – The father-daughter dental team of Drs. Timothy and Meghan O'Brien and six staff will welcome 50 – 80 youngsters for basic exams, sealants, fluoride treatment and oral hygiene instruction.
- **Chippewa Falls** – Christman Dental is teaming up with Chippewa Valley Technical College hygiene and assisting students and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire pre-dental students to provide basic oral hygiene instruction, preventive care and needed treatment to 50 area low-income children.
- **Eau Claire** – Chippewa Valley Technical College Health Education Center will again host a GKAS event. Twelve Northwest District Dental Society members, along with dental office staff and dental hygiene and assisting students will provide preventive services and minor restorative care to 100 children. Dr. Tom Breneman is event coordinator.
- **Hudson** – Dr. Julie Leshner will provide preventive services to 30 children.
- **Hurley** – Dr. Paul Hagemann and staff, in cooperation with the Iron County Health Department and Hurley School District, will conduct dental exams and apply fluoride varnish for 60 Head Start and Hurley Elementary School students.
- **Marshfield** – Drs. Gary and Tony Martin with help from six staff will provide cleanings, exams and necessary restorative care to eight low-income children age seven to 12.
- **Menomonie** – Dr. Gregory Green and staff will team up with other dental offices to provide basic oral hygiene education and preventive services to 18 low-income youngsters.
 - Dr. Lisa Joyce and her Gentle Dental Care team will provide preventive and restorative dental care to about 20 children, ages three to 18, at her Wilson Street practice. Cooperating in this dental care outreach are Red Cedar Medical Center, Dunn County Dental Coalition, Ted's Pizza and Market Place Foods.
 - Dr. Todd Leipnitz and team members will offer dental hygiene and restorative care to 25 children. Lending support to this GKAS event are Market Place Foods, Menomonie Head Start

- more -

DENTISTS DONATING CARE TO NEEDY KIDS FOR SIXTH YEAR – 3

Program, Rural Health Dental Clinic and Werth Medical Center.

- **Northwoods Dental Project** will deliver in-school oral health services, including dental sealants, fluoride varnish and oral health education to 1,100 children in 14 **Oneida** and **Vilas** county school districts throughout **February**.
- **Portage County** – Area volunteer dentists, dental team members and dental hygiene students are teaming up with Healthy Smiles for Portage County’s school-based dental sealant program. They’ll examine 300 children and provide follow-up care as needed.
- **Siren** – Thirty children will receive preventive and restorative services from Dr. Sheldon Olesen and his Siren Dental Clinic staff.
- **Wisconsin Rapids** – Drs. Edward and Robert McGrath have scheduled 12 children through the Wood County Dental Health Department and Wood County West Center and Vesper Head Start programs for dental exams and preventive services.
- Dr. Jeff Moos, president and CEO, reports Midwest Dental offices in **Plover, River Falls** and **Wausau** will provide a variety of dental services in those communities as part of a \$70,000 system-wide GKAS effort reaching about 210 children.

The U.S. Surgeon General recognizes oral health as an integral part of a person’s total health, with the dentist being the primary oral health care provider and reports tooth decay is the most common chronic disease affecting American children, five times more common than asthma. Recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention data shows tooth decay is on the rise among preschoolers, reversing a half-century of progress.

Untreated oral disease has been linked to childhood infections and more catastrophic illnesses such as the abscess that led to the death of a 12-year-old Maryland boy, Deamonte Driver in 2007. More commonly, moderate tooth decay restricts children’s daily activities and results in the loss of many millions of hours of classroom time each year.

The ADA recommends children see a dentist within six months of their first tooth erupting or by age one. However, studies reveal only three out of five children have done so by the time they enter kindergarten. This inattention and other barriers to oral care, means that for the first time in 20 years an increasing number (52 percent) of children ages six to eight have tooth decay according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in its Healthy People 2010 oral health update.

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. However, Wisconsin and federal governments together spend only about \$38 million, *or less than one percent*, of the total \$4.4 billion annual state Medicaid budget on dental programs for adults *and* children. Four out of every five states spend a higher percentage of MA dollars on dental care for residents of all ages than Wisconsin, according to ADA data.

“Volunteer data collection shows individual WDA dentists donate, on average, \$10,000 - \$12,000 worth of care each year through their private practices, in addition to the free services they provide through GKAS,

DENTISTS DONATING CARE TO NEEDY KIDS FOR SIXTH YEAR – 4

MA, Donated Dental Services, community clinics and other charitable programs. But charitable care cannot fulfill the oral health care needs of the estimated 864,000 people who seek dental treatment through the state's MA program annually," emphasizes Hebl.

Established in 1870, the WDA is headquartered in West Allis. With more than 2,900 members statewide, the WDA represents the vast majority of practicing dentists in Wisconsin. Members are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. For more information call 414-276-4520 or visit www.wda.org.

– end –

February is National Children's Dental Health Month