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### ***Southeast Region***

Washington Ozaukee Dental Society • Waukesha County Dental Society • Burlington Dental Association  
Racine Dental Association • Kenosha County Dental Society • Rock County Dental Society

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### **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

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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 seven-county WDA Southeast Region will feature GKAS events in several communities (activities scheduled for Feb. 1 unless otherwise noted):

- **Brookfield** – The sister-brother dental team of Drs. Mary Eileen and Terence Geary will help with GKAS events at Marquette University School of Dentistry and Madre Angela Dental Clinic, while their dental team members visit a local school and present an oral hygiene education program to 156 children ages four to six-years-old.
  - Drs. James Rollefson and Edward Trochlell and staff are visiting local schools during January and February to present oral health information and toothbrushes to approximately 600 pre-school and elementary students.
- **Janesville** – Several Rock County Dental Society members, in cooperation with Health Net of Janesville and the local Boys & Girls Club, will provide basic exams, preventive and restorative care to 25 young people in need.
- **Kenosha** – Local dentists and Gateway Technical College dental assisting students will join forces to examine 100 Boys & Girls Club members and instruct them in proper oral hygiene and healthy lifestyle practices. Parent education and treatment referrals will also be provided.
- **Kewaskum** – Dr. Stephen Van Ess and staff will provide dental exams, cleanings, and basic preventive and restorative treatment to 20 low-income children.
- **Racine County** – Four Racine County Dental Society dentists and volunteer allied dental personnel will again partner with the non-profit Health Care Network of Racine to examine 50 needy youngsters.
- **Waukesha** – Dr. Susann Norwick and her Waukesha Pediatric Dental Care staff will welcome 45 youngsters to their office for basic exams, preventive care, restorative treatment and personal oral hygiene instruction.
- Dr. Jeff Moos, president and CEO, reports Midwest Dental offices in **Pewaukee** and **Union Grove** 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

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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, 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](http://www.wda.org).*

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***February is National Children’s Dental Health Month***