

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**CONTACT**

Melissa Hoebbel (312) 836-9900  
Melissa@oralhealthamerica.org

Nancy Freeman (239) 776-6809  
[NFreeman@Collier.org](mailto:NFreeman@Collier.org)

**SMILES ACROSS AMERICA® TEAMS UP WITH CHS HEALTHCARE TO HELP  
PROMOTE HEALTHY MOUTHS FOR COLLIER COUNTY CHILDREN**

*A \$20,000 Grant from Oral Health America Connects CHS Healthcare to the Smiles Across America® Family*

Naples, FL– September 13, 2011 – Tooth decay is the most common, chronic, childhood disease in America, and according to a recent survey, 17 percent of parents reported that they had a child who missed at least one day of school due to dental related pain or illness.<sup>1</sup> Oral Health America, a national non-profit organization, is committed to helping to keep children healthy and in school. Today, Oral Health America awarded a \$20,000 Smiles Across America® grant to CHS Healthcare in Collier County, FL, for an elementary school-based dental sealant program.

“We are very excited to welcome CHS Healthcare into the Smiles Across America family of care providers,” said Beth Truett, President & CEO, Oral Health America. “By working in collaboration with CHS Healthcare and its community partners we can raise public awareness about the importance of healthy mouths for healthy lives, and address the unmet dental needs of underserved children.”

Oral Health America’s grant award in Collier County is made possible through funding from the Patterson Foundation and Plackers®, a leading brand of consumer oral care products. CHS Healthcare’s sealant program is also supported by Naples Children and Education Foundation and the University of Florida College of Dentistry. The Walmart Foundation is doubling the impact of Oral Health America’s gift with a matching grant.

“Patterson Foundation is pleased to support the start-up school-based oral health preventive care for Collier County children who have not been afforded this care,” said Gary Johnson, President, Patterson Foundation. “We are grateful to Oral Health America, CHS Healthcare, and others, whose efforts have made this new program possible.”

Oral Health America’s Smiles Across America program supports dental services to more than 350,000 children annually in 37 states nationwide. Thanks to contributions from supporters like the Patterson Foundation and Plackers, Smiles Across America provides funding, technical assistance, and donated

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<sup>1</sup> Oral Health America Survey sponsored by Dental Trade Alliance & Plackers® dental flossers, 2011

dental product to school-based or school-linked dental care programs reaching children who lack resources, insurance, and transportation, or experience low literacy and language barriers.

### **About Smiles Across America® (SAA)**

SAA is a signature program created by Oral Health America, a national non-profit organization dedicated to changing lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to care, education and advocacy. SAA improves the health of elementary school students by supporting oral disease prevention services in school-based and school-linked settings, and demonstrating to communities that healthy mouths are integral to overall health. For more information, visit [www.oralhealthamerica.org](http://www.oralhealthamerica.org)

### **About CHS Healthcare**

CHS Healthcare is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), a "safety net" primary health care organization. CHS provides primary medical and dental care services to over 48,000 patients in our community each year. For information on all of our locations, visit our website at [www.collier.org](http://www.collier.org)

### **About Patterson Foundation**

Patterson Foundation is a private grant making foundation committed to investing in programs that strengthen communities by helping those most in need live healthy lives. The Foundation focuses its grants on human services and education programs related to oral health, animal health, and occupational and physical rehabilitation.

### **About Plackers**

Plackers, a leading brand of consumer oral care products and proud sponsor of Oral Health America's Smiles Across America and Fall for Smiles programs, is a pioneer in dental flossers and other consumer oral care products. Having patented the first disposable dental flosser, Plackers is committed to developing high quality, affordable oral care products with innovative features that include a comprehensive line of dental flossers, dental accessories, and dental night protectors including the Grind No More Dental Night Protector. Plackers holds over 20 patents and is sold in major retailers worldwide. For more information, visit [www.plackers.com](http://www.plackers.com)

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