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## **STAKEHOLDERS GATHER ON CAPITOL HILL TO PROMOTE HEALTHY MOUTHS FOR LIFE**

*Event Recognizes 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health*

WASHINGTON, DC, October 1, 2010—Almost 110 oral health supporters convened for an event on Capitol Hill on September 29 to recognize the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Surgeon General's *Report on Oral Health in America* and to acknowledge the leaders, policies, and public-private partnerships that are working to address the significant unmet need that many rural and inner-city communities face in access to dental care and education.

"The Surgeon General's report focused our attention on the burden that oral disease places on health and quality life," said Rear Admiral Dr. William Bailey, Assistant Surgeon General and Chief Dental Officer of the U.S. Public Health Service. "We have made some progress but there is much more work to be done—together."

The Capitol Hill event was co-hosted by Oral Health America (OHA) and the Dental Trade Alliance (DTA), who are collaborating on Fall for Smiles, a promotion urging families to include dental care in back-to-school and Fall routines. A public opinion survey commissioned by OHA for Fall for Smiles and sponsored by Oral Healthcare Can't Wait and Plackers found that two-thirds (65%) of parents are looking to schools to help reinforce the importance of oral health, saying it is extremely or very important for schools to teach children about taking care of their teeth.

"In 2000, the Surgeon General referred to oral disease as a silent epidemic," said Congressman Elijah Cummings. "That silence still permeates through too many of our communities. If our vision is that all children would be able to go to school free of dental pain and suffering, we must collectively act on that vision to make it a reality."

At the event, OHA presented the Marvin Goldstein Outstanding Volunteer Award to Dr. George Blue Spruce, Jr., the first American Indian dentist on record, and founder of the Society of American Indian Dentists, for his significant work in caring for American Indian communities through his career in the Indian Health Service, and for his significant mentorship of young American Indian dental professionals at Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health. The boards of directors of OHA and the DTA presented an award to U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman for his longstanding support of oral health, which helped ensure that oral health provisions are included in health reform. The event was sponsored by DentaQuest.

"Oral health starts at home, and we have to give families the tools and knowledge they need to keep their mouths healthy," said Gary Price, CEO, DTA. "All of us who

understand oral health's importance to overall health have an obligation to make sure that our communities, business leaders, policy makers, health care providers, schools, and neighbors understand and are committed to supporting the nation's oral health as well."

Oral Health America is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to changing lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to dental care, education and advocacy. More information about Fall for Smiles:

[www.oralhealthamerica.org/participate/fall-for-smiles](http://www.oralhealthamerica.org/participate/fall-for-smiles). More information about Oral Healthcare Can't Wait, an initiative of the Dental Trade Alliance:  
[www.oralhealthcarecantwait.com](http://www.oralhealthcarecantwait.com).

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