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ORAL HEALTH AMERICA PROVIDES YEAR-ROUND SUPPORT TO GIVE KIDS A SMILE® EVENTS

July 23, 2010, Chicago, IL—Oral Health America (OHA) is participating in Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) events this year across the country by providing product donations, effectively helping to leverage resources and increase the number of children served at each event. A two-year recipient of GKAS Program Growth Grants, OHA and 14 of its Smiles Across America® program partners participated this week in the GKAS Promising Practices Symposium hosted by the Dental Trade Alliance Foundation, the American Dental Association (ADA) and the ADA Foundation at the ADA headquarters in Chicago.

OHA promotes GKAS's focus on continuity of care by supporting the expansion of school-based and school-linked services associated with "dental homes." OHA's GKAS Program Growth Grants are expanding Smiles Across America® projects with the Santa Barbara/Ventura County Dental Care Foundation and Children's Dental Services in Minnesota.

In April, OHA donated sealants to the Arizona Dental Foundation and the A.T. Still University Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health's (ASDOH) fifth annual GKAS event.

"Our GKAS model requires a healthy relationship with the hygiene schools throughout the state to clean and screen children prior to restorative events or office referral. We could not accomplish this without OHA's generous product contributions," said Ginger Froncek, Executive Director of the Arizona Dental Foundation. "We often joke about Santa arriving in January when we receive and re-bundle supplies to share with our partner organizations."

At the event, 313 children were treated and 320 sealants were placed. Children at the event also received free restorative care when needed from 31 volunteer dentists.

OHA also responded to a request from the Western Technology Center in Oklahoma, who celebrated GKAS in February by offering oral health screenings and activities to second and third-graders at Weatherford East Elementary School. Students who were determined to need sealants were then invited back in April to have the sealants, which were donated by Oral Health America, applied. Dental hygiene students from the University of Oklahoma helped screen 259 students at the GKAS event.

In Texas, OHA donated 1,000 sealants to the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District for GKAS events that also overlapped with a year-round sealant program for elementary students in 15 school districts in Bear County. The health district visited schools with 85 percent or higher participation in the free lunch program and referred students who needed additional care to private dentists or gave them gift certificates to a Federally Qualified Health Care Center, depending on access in the area.

Oral Health America's mission is to change lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to oral health care, education and advocacy for all Americans, especially those most vulnerable. OHA's Smiles Across America® (SAA) program supports oral disease prevention services in school-based or school-linked settings for children who are uninsured and underserved due to issues of poverty – lack of resources, transportation barriers, low literacy, and language diversity. For more information, visit www.oralhealthamerica.org.

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