



## **Connecticut State Dental Association**

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### ***CT'S DENTAL COMMUNITY PROVIDES MORE THAN \$300,000 IN FREE DENTAL CARE TO 2,090 CONNECTICUT CHILDREN STATE DENTAL ASSOC. RELEASES REPORT ON "GIVE KIDS A SMILE 2009"***

**SOUTHINGTON, CT** – 2,090 Connecticut children have received free dental care from state dental professionals since February 6, 2009 – the kick off of the Give Kids A Smile 2009 program – according to a report released today by the Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA). The free dental services provided to these underserved children, ranging from cleanings, screenings and x-rays to fillings, baby tooth root canals (pulpotomies) and tooth extractions, is valued at \$339,663.

“It is heartbreaking to think that in the wealthiest state in the country, thousands of Connecticut children are unable to sleep, eat, pay attention in school and generally enjoy their youth because of untreated tooth pain,” said Dr. Elise Cozzi, CSDA’s Give Kids A Smile Chairwoman. “The CSDA is proud to sponsor programs like Give Kids A Smile that provide underserved children with the dental care they need, free of charge. And, we’re even more proud that more than 500 Connecticut dental professionals throughout the state, including dentists, hygienists, dental assistants, and support staff, have volunteered their time and services to help these children.”

Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) is a national program sponsored by the American Dental Association. Since its inception in 2002, GKAS volunteers have treated millions of underserved children throughout the country. According to the ADA, 23 million American children do not have dental insurance, and nearly half of all tooth decay in children ages 2-9 goes untreated, oftentimes leading to costly hospital visits for emergency dental treatments.

“It is imperative that our federal and state leaders enact real healthcare reform that provides health and dental coverage for all children and adults. CSDA will continue to work toward those reforms with our state legislature and Governor,” said Dr. Bruce Tandy, CSDA President. “Until dental coverage for all becomes a reality, Connecticut’s dental community will continue to support Give Kids A Smile and other volunteer, free dental clinics to provide as many underserved Connecticut residents as possible the dental care they need.”

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Traditionally, GKAS is held during the month of February, to coincide with National Children's Dental Health Month. This year, the ADA and CSDA decided that because of the overwhelming need for children's dental services, GKAS would become a year-round volunteer program. The free care detailed in the CSDA's GKAS 2009 report was provided from February 6<sup>th</sup> through June 12<sup>th</sup>.

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The Connecticut State Dental Association (CSDA) has 2,700 members including dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants. As the trusted leader and voice for oral health care in CT, the CSDA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1864. For more information about the CSDA, visit the Association's Web site at [www.csda.com](http://www.csda.com).