



Jeb Bush
Governor

M. Rony François, M.D., M.S.P.H., Ph.D.
Secretary, Department of Health

PINELLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Free dental care for Medicaid-eligible children

Give Kids a Smile Day Set for February 2006

Pinellas County's fourth annual **Give Kids a Smile Day** will take place in **February 2006**. This year **the Pinellas County Dental Association** (PCDA) hopes to screen and treat more than 400 children in Pinellas County who otherwise would be unable to receive dental care.

In order to be eligible for the free dental care, the child must be Medicaid eligible, but without a dental provider. The parents or guardian must fill out the paperwork authorizing dental treatment and must transport the child to the nearest clinic for the appointment. Parents can call to ensure their children are eligible and can make an appointment by calling the Info-line at (727)219-0400.

Give Kids a Smile Day began in 2003. Nationally sponsored by the American Dental Association and the Florida Dental Association on the state level, PCDA joined this crusade to highlight the need for improved dental care for children of low-income families. Nationally, an estimated one million children were seen last year at more than 2,500 locations. On the local level, the event was sponsored by the PCDA and 188 children received \$50,340 in services ranging from exams, teeth cleaning, fluoride treatments, sealants, x-rays, fillings, extractions, and home care kits. Thirty-six dentists, 40 hygienists/student hygienists, and 40 assistants volunteered for last year's event.

The goal of this year's event is to see more than 400 children ages 3-18 at eight local clinics, with a goal of providing an estimated \$100,000 in dental services on the two days. On Friday, February 10, every child participating in the program will be seen for a screening, x-rays, a cleaning and sealants if needed. On the following Friday, February 17, any children needing treatment will return to the clinic for fillings and extractions. Eight clinics will be used throughout lower Pinellas:

- Pinellas County Health Department, St. Petersburg and Largo Centers;
- St. Pete College Dental Hygiene Clinic;
- PTEC South Dental Assisting Clinic;
- Johnnie Ruth Clark Clinic;
- UFCD Seminole Satellite Clinic, and
- Everybody's Tabernacle Clinic.

Most children will be assigned a clinic through a referral source, but parents of children not affiliated with these organizations can call the Give Kids a Smile Info-Line at (727)219-0400 for more information. The hours will be 9:00am to 4:00pm Monday through Thursday to reserve their child's spot for this great day. Appointments are extremely limited, so call today.

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The mission of the Pinellas County Health Department is to promote, protect and improve the health and safety of residents and visitors through public and private community efforts.
www.PinellasHealth.com