

Sample News Release

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CAVITY FREE AT THREE EMBARKS ON THREE YEAR CAMPAIGN TO ENSURE THAT ALL COLORADO CHILDREN HAVE ACCESS TO DENTAL CARE

DENVER- June 6, 2012- Today, Cavity Free at Three (CF3), a statewide program that was first launched in 2007 in response to growing rates of oral disease in Colorado's children, embarked on a three year campaign with the goal of ensuring that all Colorado's children have access to dental care making it possible for all kids to achieve good oral health.

Governor John Hickenlooper named oral health as one of the top three winnable battles in health for Colorado during the next five years. To help win this battle, CF3 aims to increase the number of Colorado children who have an age one dental visit from three percent to 10 percent and to increase the proportion of children on Medicaid who have an annual dental exam by 20 percent – from 45 percent to 65 percent.

To achieve its campaign goals, CF3 will encourage a dental home for all Colorado children starting at age one; work to increase access to preventive dental care for children who are most at risk for dental disease; engage primary care physicians and public health practitioners to work to prevent oral disease in children; and increase parental knowledge about the importance of oral health for their children.

“The leading chronic disease for children in Colorado is dental disease. Twenty-eight percent of Colorado children between the ages of two and five have already experienced tooth decay and by age 11 that number reaches 49 percent,” explained Katya Mauritson, DMD, state dental director of the Colorado Department of Public Health. “Parents need to fully understand the importance of oral health as it relates to overall health. All medical and dental providers who serve children need to join forces to work toward significantly improving children's oral health outcomes.”

To improve access to dental care for at-risk children, CF3 will work with Colorado's dentists to increase the number of those dentists who will provide care to children insured by Medicaid and CHP+. According to the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing, twenty-one percent of dentists in Colorado currently accept Medicaid patients and of those providers, only 16 percent accept new patients. Less than 10 percent of Colorado dentists see a significant number (at least 100 visits) of Medicaid children annually. CF3 hopes to improve upon these numbers by working collaboratively with dentists to successfully incorporate Medicaid into their practices by assisting them with business planning and providing a Medicaid calculator to show dentists the financial impact of seeing children covered by Medicaid.

“Forty-three of Colorado's 64 counties have been designated as Dental Health Professional Shortage areas with nine counties not having a dentist and 20 counties without a dentist serving Medicaid patients,” said Karen Savoie, director of Cavity Free at Three. “Dentists play a critical role in

assuring a healthy start for all of Colorado's children. Through our collective efforts we can prevent dental disease and assure that Colorado children grow up healthy."

This CF3 campaign is funded collaboratively by Caring for Colorado Foundation, the Colorado Health Foundation, The Colorado Trust, Delta Dental Foundation of Colorado, Kaiser Permanente and Rose Community Foundation.

CF3 is managed by the Colorado Area Health Education System Office at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Department of Family Medicine and is being implemented in collaboration with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing and the University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine.

For more information about CF3, visit <http://www.cavityfreeatthree.org/> or call 303-724-4750.