

From the University of Mississippi Medical Center Division of Public Affairs

## ELEMENTARY STUDENTS TO RECEIVE FREE CHECK-UP FOR GIVE KIDS A SMILE DAY

For more information contact Matt Westerfield at 601-984-1104 or [mwesterfield@pubaffairs.umsmed.edu](mailto:mwesterfield@pubaffairs.umsmed.edu).

JACKSON, Miss. – For the ninth year in a row, the University of Mississippi Medical Center's School of Dentistry will offer free dental exams to local elementary school students on Feb. 12 as part of the national Give Kids a Smile Day, an annual event sponsored by the American Dental Association.

The event is a collaboration between the dental school, the School of Health Related Professions' Dental Hygiene and Physical Therapy programs, the MDA, Jackson Medical Mall Foundation, Hinds Community College and Mississippi State Department of Health.

An estimated 800 students from Johnson and Galloway Elementary schools in Jackson as well as George Oliver Elementary School in Clarksdale will receive the exams. The event, which is held every February nationwide as part of National Children's Dental Health Month, aims to provide oral health education as well as preventative care to low-income children with little access to care.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in four children between 2 and 11 years old have untreated cavities.

UMMC's School of Dentistry has participated every year since the ADA founded the program in 2002. Last year, more than 46,000 dental team members and other volunteers nationwide participated in events for Give Kids a Smile Day.

"Since 2002, the School of Dentistry, partnering organizations and corporate benefactors have provided compassionate treatment, essential oral health education and invaluable access to some of the most vulnerable children of Mississippi," said Dr. Neva Eklund, department chair of Pediatric Dentistry and Community Oral Health.

Eklund, who is coordinating the event, said the day ties into the school's latest project, the Service Learning Curriculum, an initiative to train students to become socially conscious, community minded dentists. "This event is as important to our students' education as it is to the children we serve," she said.

The event will last from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Dr. Buford Gilbert, interim dean of the School of Dentistry, said the collaboration also receives support from UMMC's Department of Medicine, the division of Oral Oncology and Biobehavioral Medicine, community colleges and public health agencies, private dentists, community and corporate partners including Henry Schein, P&G Professional Oral Health, Colgate Oral Pharmaceuticals, Johnson & Johnson Healthcare, Whip Mix Corporation, Sherman Specialty Company, 3M ESPE Dental Products, Robert Ellis & Associates, Patterson Dental, Practicon, Premier Dental, University Dentists, Owens & Minor, Cellular South, Sunbelt Construction and SOD SmilePlus.

####

2/10/2010

Please forward this message to colleagues who might be interested. If you wish to be removed from this list or know of a colleague to add, send an e-mail message to: [LAGriffin@pubaffairs.umsmed.edu](mailto:LAGriffin@pubaffairs.umsmed.edu).

The University of Mississippi Medical Center, located in Jackson, is the state's only academic medical center. University of Mississippi Health Care represents the clinical programs of the Medical Center and includes University Hospitals and Health System and University Physicians, the faculty group practice. UMMC encompasses five health science schools, including medicine, nursing, health related professions, dentistry and graduate studies, as well as the site where University of Mississippi pharmacy students do their clinical training. The Medical Center's threefold mission is to educate tomorrow's health-care professionals, conduct innovative research to improve human health, and to provide the highest quality care available to the state's citizens. A major goal of the Medical Center is the improvement of the health of Mississippians and the elimination of health disparities. For more information, contact the Division of Public Affairs at 601-984-1100 or visit us on the Web at <http://info.umc.edu/>.