

Calif. State Leaders and Dental Plans Join Forces with the Center for Oral Health to Kick Off 'Early Smiles'

SACRAMENTO, Calif., June 29, 2016 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – In an unprecedented effort to address oral health disparities in the Sacramento region, the Center for Oral Health (COH), in partnership LIBERTY Dental Plan, Health Net and Access Dental plans, will kick off “Early Smiles” – a collaborative and innovative School Based Oral Health Program – today, at the State Capitol. The initiative has a goal of serving 12,000 children in Sacramento-area elementary schools in its first year.



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The need for – and the benefit of – this initiative is tremendous: California children with dental pain miss 874,000 school days annually which costs school districts \$29 million in attendance fees.

“Dental disease is the number one reason kids miss school and it disproportionately affects children in low-income communities,” said Dr. Conrado Barzaga, Executive Director for COH. “The Dental Plans that are supporting this initiative are true leaders by providing for a proven, proactive, preventive-care approach.”

COH has partnered with the plans to increase access to preventive dental care and navigation services, starting this summer. Early Smiles will provide

checkups and preventive treatments for children that might otherwise not receive services.

The network of dental providers from LIBERTY Dental Plan, Health Net and Access Dental, will serve as the dental home for children in need of restorative dental care, offer case management and ensure their members get the dental care they need.

“This is exactly the type of initiative that reflects our core values,” said Dr. Amir Neshat, President and CEO of LIBERTY Dental Plan. “It helps the most vulnerable in our communities, it helps in better educational achievement, and it helps drive sustainable improvements to the oral health system. We are all proud to work with the Center for Oral Health on this endeavor.”

There is unprecedented support for the program, with the following stakeholder groups either speaking or attending the launch with COH and the Dental Plans:

- California Department of Health Care Services
- California Primary Care Association
- Children Now
- First 5 Sacramento
- Latino Coalition for a Healthy California
- Medi-Cal Dental Advisory Committee (MCDAC)
- Sacramento Covered
- Sacramento District Dental Society
- Sacramento County Public Health
- San Jose Unified School District.

More information: <http://www.centerfororalhealth.org/>.

*IMAGE for media: Send2Press.com/wire/images/16-0629-coh-smiles-300dpi.jpg

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