

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For Information Contact:

(Your Name)

(Your Phone Number)

**February is Children's Dental Health Month**

YOURTOWN, MD (February XX, 2014)- February marks the celebration of Valentine's Day and a month long focus on Children's Dental Health. It is a perfect opportunity to use a new educational bulletin board titled "Love That Smile" downloadable from the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Office of Oral Health website <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/oralhealth>. The free bulletin board highlights proven ways to prevent tooth decay including proper brushing and flossing, oral injury prevention, nutrition, and the importance of fluoride and sealants.

A healthy mouth is important for overall health. Poor oral health in childhood can cause problems with eating, speaking, and learning. Cavities can cause children pain and serious health problems. Each year, more than 51 million school hours are missed due to dental problems. "Tooth decay is five times more common than asthma in children. Fortunately, it's preventable!" said \_\_\_\_\_ (insert name of local health department official).

The Maryland Office of Oral Health website <http://phpa.dhmh.maryland.gov/oralhealth> allows visitors to test their dental knowledge by playing the "Million Dollar Smile" and "Dental Jeopardy, Elementary and Advanced Edition" games. The website provide links to additional health education materials including a request form to order bulk quantities of free oral health materials; assistance in obtaining children's Medicaid dental health insurance (Maryland Healthy Smiles Dental program); and finding public dental services.

Children's Dental Health Month is celebrated nationally. For additional tips and resources visit the following websites.

[www.healthyteethhealthykids.org/](http://www.healthyteethhealthykids.org/) – Maryland Dental Action Coalition

[www.mouthhealthykids.org](http://www.mouthhealthykids.org) – American Dental Association

[www.mouthhealthy.org](http://www.mouthhealthy.org) – American Dental Association

[www.mchoralhealth.org](http://www.mchoralhealth.org) – Maternal & Child Health Oral Health Resource Center

### **Tips for Preventing Tooth Decay in Children**

- ✓ Schedule a child's first dental visit when his or her first tooth appears, or by the first birthday.
- ✓ Provide children with healthy snacks such as fruits and vegetables, and avoid sugary foods and drinks. Give them water to drink between meals.
- ✓ Brush your child's teeth with toothpaste that has fluoride at least twice a day for two minutes. The amount of toothpaste that goes on the toothbrush depends on the child's age. Children need brushing supervision until seven to eight years of age.
- ✓ Ask your child's dentist about the need for fluoride treatment.
- ✓ Check with your local health department or water board to have your water tested to determine the amount of fluoride in your water. If it is too low to prevent tooth decay, ask your dentist or physician about fluoride tablets or drops.
- ✓ Ask about dental sealants when your child's back permanent teeth first come in.

###