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San Joaquin County Public Health Services

National Children's Dental Health Month to Focus on Proactive Dental Routine Education

The Local Oral Health Program (LOHP) at San Joaquin County Public Health Services (PHS) will celebrate the National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM) with the theme "Brush, Floss, Smile!" in February. The theme this year is reflective of what a healthy dental routine is and helping children and families feel confident with their dental hygiene.

"Untreated tooth decay can lead to pain and infections, which can affect a child's ability to speak, eat, play and learn," said Betsey Baumann-Smeenge, D.D.S. and a member of the American Dental Association (ADA). "Fortunately, early intervention and proactive education can help parents and caregivers give their children bright smiles and a healthy future."

To kickoff NCDHM, the San Joaquin Dental Society (SJDS) Foundation will be hosting a local event called "Give Kids A Smile" Day on Saturday, February 11, 2023, at St. Mary's Dining Hall, located at 545 West Sonora Street, Stockton, from 8 AM-2 PM. At the event, free preventative and restorative dental care for children up to age 17 will be provided. Additionally, there will be fun games and activities, dental kits, face painting and more. No appointment or identification is required and services will be provided on a first come, first served basis. Any questions about this event can be directed to executive@sjds.org.

Additionally, the San Joaquin Treatment + Education on Teeth + Health (SJ TEETH) Collaborative and SJDS Foundation present the 2023 San Joaquin County Kids Art Competition for the month of February. This fun competition is available to San Joaquin County students K-6th grade. Students will need to create a poster displaying the best dental care routines. For details on how to submit artwork, see flyer attached. Submissions are due by Tuesday, February 28, 2023. There are exciting prizes that will be given to the most creative ones chosen. Questions about the art competition can be directed to SJTEETH@sjcphs.org.

During NCDHM, awareness is brought to the importance of dental care for children. Dental disease is the most common chronic childhood disease, but is 100 percent preventable with daily oral hygiene, regular dental visits, and the use of preventative methods, such as fluoride applications and sealants, as well as limiting sugary foods and beverages. Poor oral health can contribute to children's low self-esteem and gaps in achievements.

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About 54 percent of children in California start school with dental decay. Daily toothbrushing with fluoridated toothpaste combined with a low-sugar diet and flossing can help reduce the risk of developing tooth decay for your children and maintain strong, healthy teeth.

Parents and caregivers of children with special health care needs face a unique challenge as their children are at a higher risk of developing early dental caries. On average, special needs patients represent 12-25 percent of the caseload of a pediatric dental practice. According to a study, 81 percent of children with special healthcare needs require specific preventive dental care, with dental care remaining their most frequently unmet health need.

For more information about the NCDHM and LOHP, please visit www.sjteeth.org or contact Breanna Williams, Public Health Educator and LOHP Program Coordinator at bwilliams2@sjcphs.org or (209) 468-0354.

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