Planning, implementing and reporting a successful Give Kids a Smile Ohio program

Background
Ohio dentists have strongly supported Give Kids a Smile since the program started in 2003. The reported value of free services given by Ohio dental volunteers in its first 11years is in excess of **$10,000,000!**

Statement of Need
A report of the Ohio Dept. of Health, "Oral Health and Access to Dental Care for Ohioans, 2010," cites that "dental care remains the top unmet healthcare need for children and low-income adults," and states that the proportion of third grade children with untreated cavities was unchanged between 1998-99 and 2004-05. Those most likely to have untreated cavities and toothaches are children from low-income families or those who live in Appalachian counties.

How to hold a GKAS event in your dental office or community
The American Dental Association and Ohio Dental Association provide resources, services and guidance to help dentists plan and implement a GKAS program.

Information and forms are available from the ODA department of Public Service; posted online at http://oda.org/community-involvement/give-kids-a-smile/ and ADA materials and information is available online at www.ada.org.

Give Kids a Smile programs range from basic screening and preventive care to full restorative and anything in between.

You determine the scope, site and level of your event, the numbers of children you want to see, and the date(s). Although the official date is always the first Friday of February, GKAS is often scheduled on other dates as well, and has evolved to a multiple-day, even a year-round event for many.

Some dentists who see children in their own office choose to do all that is needed on the one day, while others offer the exam and preventive care that day, and then schedule children back for needed care on later dates.

> **Note:** it is important to remember that the value of services reported to the ODA and "counted" under the umbrella of GKAS are only those that are free **(see Reporting Form for more information)**.

The following information and steps can help you plan and organize a successful event for 5, 50 or 500 children.

1. Determine the following:
- date and time of your event
- location of your event
- number of children you want to see
- age range of children
- services you are willing to provide for free
- If you will provide free follow-up care if more is needed than can be done on one day.

2. Register your event online at www.ada.org/givekidsasmile
The ADA has an on-line registration process in which you provide information such as your name, where the event will be held, numbers of children you expect to see, the type of services you want to provide, the date, the estimated number of volunteers, a description of your program, and the anticipated dollar value of your event.

This information is your best guess at the time of registration and can be updated and changed at any time. Actual numbers and dollar values are adjusted accordingly by the ODA once the event is held. **We are happy to help register your event online. Please call the ODA department of public service for this assistance.**

There are two very important reasons to register your event:

- Only those registered for GKAS events will be eligible for sponsor products to help with your event; these include screening materials (usually from Henry Schein) and/or toothbrush/toothpaste donations from Colgate.

- ODA staff review the registrations daily to see where events are scheduled in Ohio – and we contact the dentist to see if assistance is needed. This assistance could be simply by providing free materials that the ODA may have available (booklets, additional toothbrush/toothpaste, posters) – or it could be helping to coordinate the event, find a population of children to see, offer suggestions and information, brainstorm, or other.

Registration begins on **October 1, 2013,** and continues into 2014. However, the deadline for registration in order to be eligible for product donations is **November 8, 2013.**

> **Note:** the ADA and sponsors review all requests and demand is always higher than product availability. Thus, it is important that your program description be compelling and indicates the need you are serving with your event. Products will most likely not be given for education and oral hygiene only events any longer; the demand is simply too high.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE IN REGISTERING YOUR EVENT ONLINE, CONTACT KATHY AT THE OHIO DENTAL ASSOCIATION AT (614) 486-2700. THIS CAN BE DONE TOGETHER WHILE ON THE PHONE AND TAKES ONLY ABOUT 10 MINUTES.

3. Finding children to see
The most important thing to remember is that those seen on behalf of GKAS should be children that do not have access to dental care. Children whose families have private dental insurance or the means to afford dental care should not be seen under GKAS. There are plenty of children whose families cannot afford dental care or who fall between the cracks that need to be seen. Some good sources for qualified children are:

- Children eligible for the school lunch program
- HeadStart children
- Children eligible for Medicaid*
- School nurses – they know the children who present to their office for dental pain or look as if they should be in pain
- Local ODJFS program – especially if they have a dental coordinator serving the county
- Your own patient base, for instance, a family you know has fallen on difficult times

> ***Note:** GKAS is about helping children in need. Even if a child is Medicaid-eligible, any care provided under GKAS should NEVER be billed or reimbursed.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR NEED ASSISTANCE IN FINDING A GROUP OF CHILDREN TO SEE, CONTACT KATHY AT THE OHIO DENTAL ASSOCIATION AT (614) 486-2700.

4. Health history & consent form
No child should ever be seen under GKAS without a signed health history and consent form. A sample form is posted on http://www.oda.org/gendeninfo/GKAS.cfm that can be downloaded, tailored to your particular event and copied for distribution.

5. Venues for your event
There are a number of different venues for Give Kids A Smile programs in Ohio, such as:

- The private dental office (small office or together with another dentist that has a large office)
- Participating with the local component dental society at a large scale event at an area auxiliary program clinic (there are several in Ohio that hold GKAS events in partnership with the local dental society)
- Doing visual screening in area schools and providing vouchers for free follow-up care back in the dental office to students in need
- Working with an area safety net dental clinic – there are many in Ohio that close their doors to all but GKAS children to provide the free care

6. Use outside resources

- Ask your dental suppliers for donations of supplies and materials such as fluoride varnish, sealants, and other products you would use.
- Approach local merchants for goodies that you can give the children; pencils, water bottles, baseball caps, healthy foods coupons, movie coupons, and so on.
- If holding a larger event, approach local merchants or your own business suppliers for donations or sponsorship to cover the cost of T-shirts, healthy snacks or box lunches, or fun giveaways for children.
- Find local fun activities for the children; e.g., any collegiate or minor league athletes and mascots; a Tooth Fairy, amateur magician and such.

7. ODA resources and free materials
The ODA department of public service, through its budget, grants and other donations, is generally able to provide some free materials to members for use with their GKAS events. These have in the past included Toothprints, educational booklets on oral health and the dental home, two-sided age-appropriate posters from the ADA, large GKAS posters to hang at your event (good visuals and fun for the children to sign), and additional toothbrushes and toothpaste, if available. Information on what is available each year is included in ODA Today, and also posted on www.oda.org.

8. Media and legislators
Educate the media and get them involved at your event. Get in touch with the local daily or weekly community newspaper, and local TV stations and invite them to learn firsthand about access to dental care and dentistry's responsiveness to those less fortunate.

Similarly, if you have a state legislator who is a patient or that you have a relationship with (or would like to establish one), invite that individual to your event.

> **Note:** the ODA can help you coordinate this type of activity – you should begin coordinating this a month before your event.

9. Tracking and reporting your event numbers
The ODA follows up with all registered events after they have been held and collects the final numbers and dollar values of each event. A reporting form, also available on www.oda.org, is sent to each event coordinator, and we ask that it be filled out with collective totals rather than individual reports. Once the information is back at the ODA, we update the preliminary estimates from the ADA online registration process.

This information is important for a number of reasons – it helps the ODA in legislative and advocacy efforts where we can clearly state how responsive Ohio dentists are to children in need and cite the amount of free services that are given to the total number of children in a given year. The ADA also uses this information collectively with all states and sites in the country, again in legislative and advocacy efforts. Local dental societies also find this information helpful and are able to acknowledge the total value of services provided by dentists within their society.

We gather the reporting figures for informational only purposes.

10. Other considerations
Following are other issues to consider in planning your event. Again, working with the ODA department of public service, these issues can be addressed and resolved.

- *Who gets the children to your office?*
  We have learned that usually you cannot rely on the parent to get the child to your office or the site. This is a national problem, and due primarily to parent apathy and not understanding the importance of their child seeing a dentist. In their minds, if the child is not complaining of dental pain, there is no need.

  The best solution is finding an individual involved, either an employee or volunteer, with the entity that is finding you the children to see. For instance, if it is a school, work with the school nurse and ask her to help coordinate transportation and ensure you get the health history and consent form to the parents, that it is signed and returned to bring to the event. To reduce the likelihood of no shows, do not rely on parents.

- *Scheduling children at specific times or an open call for anyone to show up?*
  It is not recommended that you have an open call for anyone to come to your office on that day – you run the risk of no one showing, or too many at the same time, and this can create problems. Also, you want to be sure that the children seen in your office are truly in need of dental care, not those whose parents are looking for something free that they can afford. Again, set parameters of seeing children who are eligible for school lunch programs or come from programs that you know serve at-risk children.

12. Volunteer CE Credit
Dentists and dental hygienists who provide clinical care wholly as a volunteer can be eligible for up to four hours of Volunteer CE credit per biennium, by rule as established by the Ohio State Dental Board in 2008. Dentists and dental hygienists can earn one hour of CE credit for every four hours of free care per biennium (excluding educational and OHI programs which are not considered clinical in nature). Also the planning and any administrative aspect of GKAS is NOT clinical and thus those hours are not eligible for CE under this rule. This CE form is provided by the ODA to the coordinators of GKAS programs and dentists must sign the CE verification for any hygienist requesting CE credit. The hygienist must do GKAS solely as a volunteer, not as paid staff or with any other form of remuneration.