

Program Helps Tennessee Take Lead in Providing Dental Care to Head Start Children

Dental Initiative for Head Start Children Nabs National Award for America's Pediatric Dentists

TENNESSEE -- June 30, 2010 — The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) has been named the recipient of an American Society of Association Executives (ASAE) Award of Excellence for its innovative efforts to provide a dental home to one million high-risk children all across America enrolled annually in Head Start. In Tennessee, one of the first six states in the nation to participate in the cooperative program, nearly 20,000 low-income children now have routine access to regular dental care as a result of the award-winning program.

AAPD received the award for its *AAPD-Head Start Dental Home Initiative*. This program is now in the running to receive a Summit Award, ASAE & The Center for Association Leadership's top recognition for association programs, to be presented in ceremonies at ASAE's 11th Annual Summit Awards Dinner at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., on September 29, 2010. AAPD, the recognized leader in children's dental and oral health, is one of only 21 organizations nationally to receive the Award of Excellence.

AAPD and Head Start are partnering at national, regional, state and local levels to develop a national network of dentists to link Head Start children with dental homes. A dental home means that each child's oral health care is delivered in a comprehensive, ongoing, accessible, coordinated, family-centered way by a dentist.

This AAPD Head Start partnership also provides parents, caregivers and Head Start staff with the latest evidence-based information on how they can help prevent tooth decay and establish a foundation for a lifetime of oral health.

The Tennessee AAPD Head Start Dental Home Initiative, now in its third year of operations, will establish dental homes for the approximately 20,000 children enrolled annually in Tennessee's Head Start programs. The five-year plan relies on five key components:

- Providing project leadership, administration and organizational support;
- Providing oral health expertise and technical assistance;
- Developing networks of dentists to provide access to dental homes;
- Training dentists to enhance their capability to meet the oral health needs of young children and their understanding of HS programs; and
- Enhancing HS oral health staff training and parent education programs.

"As a member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the State Leader for the AAPD-Head Start Dental Home Initiative, I am pleased that the Academy is being recognized as a candidate for this prestigious award," stated Dr. Pitts Hinson. Hinson went on to say, "this initiative has been very successful in Tennessee and, although, the Academy is being recognized for its role in this program, this award makes a huge statement about all the dentists in Tennessee who have joined with local Head Start programs to open their offices and become Dental Homes for Head Start children. With the combined efforts of the TN Head Start State Collaboration Office, under the leadership of Janet Coscarelli, the Directors of all of Tennessee's Head Start programs, and the dentists of Tennessee, this program has had an immediate impact that will last a lifetime for the children of Head Start."

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

Founded in 1947, the AAPD is a not-for-profit membership organization representing the specialty of pediatric dentistry. AAPD's 7,700 members are predominately pediatric dentists and primary care providers who deliver comprehensive specialty treatments for infants, children, adolescents and individuals with special health care needs. As advocates for children's oral health, the AAPD aims to promote the use of evidence-based policies and guidelines, foster research concerning pediatric oral health, and educate health care providers and the public to improve children's oral health. For further information, please visit the AAPD website at www.aapd.org.