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Howard University College of Dentistry Partners with the D.C. Dental Society to “Give Kids A Smile”

National Community Outreach Program Assists Children in Underserved Areas

Washington, D.C., February 4, 2008 – Nearly 150 elementary school students from Powell and Truesdell Elementary Schools received dental services at the Howard University College of Dentistry (HUCD) on Feb. 1 during national “Give Kids a Smile Day.” In conjunction with the District of Columbia Dental Society (DCDS) and the American Dental Association and with assistance and support from the District of Columbia Public School System and the D.C. Department of Health, the HUCD provided free dental services ranging from education, treatment and follow-up care for children who may not otherwise have adequate access to oral health care.

According to a recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention survey, nearly half of U.S. children, two to nine years of age, suffer from untreated tooth decay. As evidenced by the death of Maryland youth Deamonte Driver last year, untreated oral problems may foster fatal consequences. Driver died shortly after an untreated tooth abscess spread to his brain. His family did not have dental insurance; a timely \$80 tooth extraction could have saved his life.

“The oral health care needs of the underserved are not someone else’s problems but rather they are our collective problem and concern,” said Dean Leo E. Rouse, D.D.S., F.A.C.D., as he paused to remember Driver. “The Howard University College of Dentistry through the Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) project clearly demonstrates that as part of its mission, dental professionals have a responsibility to contribute to the elimination of oral health disparities, especially in children.”

HUCD students, faculty and staff, practicing dentists, DCDS officials and members of the Links, Inc., Washington, D.C. Chapter, were present to provide much-needed services and to facilitate a pleasant experience for the children. Also in attendance during the sixth GKAS community service program were D.C. Council members Muriel Bowser (D-Ward 4), local honorary “Give Kids A Smile” chair and David Catania (I-At Large), chair, Committee on Health.

During Catania’s remarks, he encouraged the dental students to establish offices in the District, reminding them of the loan repayment program granted to dentists who practice in underserved areas.

Howard University is a private, research university that is comprised of 12 schools and colleges. Founded in 1867, students pursue studies in more than 120 areas leading to undergraduate, graduate and professional degrees. Since 1998, the University has produced two Rhodes Scholars, a Truman Scholar, a Marshall Scholar, 19 Fulbright Scholars and 11 Pickering Fellows. Howard also produces more on-campus African-American Ph.D. recipients than any other university in the United States. For more information on Howard University, call 202-238-2330, or visit the University’s Web site at www.Howard.edu.