For Immediate Release

**MCHD Dentistry will “Give Kids a Smile” as part of free dental care event**

MORGANTOWN, WV (Jan. 14, 2019) — On Friday, Feb. 1, children without dental insurance will have something to smile about.

That’s when Give Kids a Smile will be held at MCHD Dentistry, which is participating in the American Dental Association (ADA) event for the ninth year in a row.

“It’s an initiative by the ADA that encourages dentists to open up their offices to children the first Friday in February to provide dental care to children who don’t have dental insurance,” said Dr. Dan Carrier, director of MCHD Dentistry, Monongalia County Health Department’s full-service dental office.

“It’s to help those kids with treatment and get the care they need and it also raises awareness for the need for oral health in children.”

Appointments can be made for children up to the age of 18 who do not have dental insurance. During a 30- to 40-minute appointment, children will receive a dental checkup, a cleaning and a fluoride treatment with a dental hygienist, and will be seen by Dr. Carrier.

The ADA launched Give Kids a Sile Day in 2003 as a way for dental care providers to join with others in their communities to offer free dental services to underserved children.

Each year, about 350,000 to 400,000 children nationally benefit from more than 1,500 events, thanks to the efforts of about 10,000 dentists and 30,000 other dental team members. More than 6,000 dentists across the United States are conducting Give Kids a Smile! events in 2019.
About 20 children participated in MCHD Dentistry’s inaugural event in 2011, Dr. Carrier said. Last year, 64 children were seen during Give Kids a Smile!

Good oral health is vital for good overall health. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov), cavities are one of the most common chronic diseases of childhood in the U.S. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing and learning.

Also, the CDC reports, about 1 in 5 children ages 5 to 11 years of age have at least one untreated decayed tooth. About 1 in 7 adolescents ages 12 to 19 years old have at least one untreated decayed tooth. And, at 25 percent, children ages 5 to 19 years of age from low-income families are twice as likely to have cavities than children from higher-income households. That figure is 11 percent.

In addition to the checkup, children and their parents participating in Give Kids a Smile! will also receive oral health education materials.

“We’ll have balloons and toothbrushes to give away,” Dr. Carrier said. “We do everything we can to make it a positive, fun day for the kids.”

Parents and guardians who plan to bring their children to Give Kids a Smile! should remember:

- The event is only for children up to age 18 without dental insurance.
- The child must have an appointment.
- Appointments are limited and are expected to fill up quickly.

To make an appointment for Give Kids a Smile!, call 304-598-5108. Directions to MCHD Dentistry can be found on our website at monchd.org/dentistry.

For more information on MCHD, check out monchd.org and follow us on Facebook and Twitter @WVMCHD for up-to-date information on health and safety.

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