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News

## **New Britain mayor set to kick off Give Kids a Smile Day**

Monday, January 28, 2013 9:29 PM EST

Staff Report

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NEW BRITAIN — The 11th annual Give Kids a Smile Day will kick off Friday with a proclamation from Mayor Timothy O'Brien's office and continue that day and into February with free dental services for children in need.

For the 10th year, the Community Health Center, Inc., one of the leading health care providers in the state since 1972, will participate with eight local private-practice dentists in the program to provide dental services to underserved children.

On Friday, Dr. W. Fred Thal, a collaborating New Britain dentist, will accept the proclamation of the national day of awareness from O'Brien in his office as the kick-off to the program that will offer an assortment of free cleanings, exams, sealants, fillings, fluoride treatments and dental education to children with HUSKY insurance or no dental insurance Friday and Feb. 5, 15 and 22.

Give Kids A Smile activities raises awareness for policy makers about the ongoing challenges that low-income families face in finding dental care.

The Community Health Center, Inc. of New Britain dental office is located at 85 Lafayette St. and New Britain High School. Participating private dental practices include Design Dentistry and Smile, 485 Willard #3a Ave., Newington; Gladstein Dental Center, 70 Vine St., New Britain; Lexington Dental Associates, 49 Lexington Ave., New Britain; Pediatric Dentistry, P.C., 1 Kale St., Suite 203, New Britain; Plainville Dental Group, 92 East St., Plainville; Dr. Michael Tosatti, 1067 Farmington Ave., Kensington; and Dr. Edward Truscinski, 25 Clinton St., New Britain.

The event is free and open to the general public and not limited to current CHC patients. For more information or to schedule a dental appointment, call Kiran Narain at (860) 224-3642, ext. 5111.

The American Dental Association began the Give Kids A Smile program in 2003 as a way for ADA members to join with others in the community to provide dental services targeted the underserved populations.

In 2008, the need for pediatric dental care was at an all-time high which lead to Medicare being accepted by private dental providers. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, early childhood cavities are the most common chronic condition in children. Although significant improvements have been made in the past decade, oral health significance is still being overlooked. One major goal of the program has been to promote and implement effective and efficient models that increase access to quality oral health services. One major way this is accomplished is through the mobile dental program which brings dental services directly to 171 state schools.

"CHC's goal for Give Kids a Smile day is to provide access to the full scope of dental services and connect children and

families to a regular dental provider to set them on their way to a healthy smile for a lifetime.” According to CHC’s Chief Dental Officer, Margaret Drozdowski Maule, DMD, MBA. “The establishment of regular dental care as early as the age of one is an important aspect of our comprehensive primary health care”, stated Dr. Drozdowski Maule, “Give Kids a Smile Day is a wonderful opportunity to highlight the importance of oral health and regular dental care, as well as the delivery of the services to the children who need them.”

Since 1972, Community Health Center, Inc. has been one of the leading health care providers in the state of Connecticut, building a world-class primary health care system committed to caring for uninsured and underserved populations. CHC is focused on improving health outcomes for its more than 130,000 patients as well as building healthy communities. Recognized as both a Level 3 Patient-Centered Medical Home by the National Committee for Quality Assurance and a Primary Care Medical Home by The Joint Commission, CHC delivers service in more than 200 locations statewide, offering primary care in medical, dental and behavioral health services. For more information, visit [www.chc1.com](http://www.chc1.com).

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