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Media Contact:

Diana Torralvo
Allison & Partners
310.496.4439
215.469.0649 (day of the event)

Lynne Randolph
Department of Managed Health Care
916.445.7442
916.396.4100 (day of the event)

Public Education Campaign Targets High Price of Dental Coverage

Program begins with a focus on affordable dental care for California children

SAN DIEGO, Calif. – December 5, 2007 – The California Department of Managed Health Care (DMHC) announced today that it has joined First Dental Health in a public health education campaign designed to address the availability and need for accessible dental care for the nearly 15 million dentally uninsured Californians. The campaign will focus on families and seniors.

The effort officially kicked off at Sandburg Elementary School in San Diego today where kindergartners were given free oral health assessments. More than 51 million school hours are lost a year because of dental-related illness.

Campaign efforts will include similar visits throughout the State including Los Angeles, the Inland Empire and the Bay Area to provide free oral health assessments to elementary school students, participate in community events and work with other health-related organizations to raise awareness of the correlation between oral health and overall health. Education materials will be distributed through partnership programs with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, the California State PTA and the California School Nurses Organization.

“Every family in California should have an equal opportunity to receive the best dental care needed to remain healthy and productive,” said Michael S. Grossman, D.D.S., founder and CEO of San Diego-based First Dental Health, one of California’s largest dental network management companies and the only licensed discount dental plan in the state. “People don’t realize the magnitude that oral health plays in their overall health and the treatment and management of other diseases. Our public education campaign begins with our children because establishing proper oral health habits now will help them for a lifetime.”

“California’s new law, A.B. 1433, requiring children to receive dental checkups in their first year of public school is an important first step in highlighting the importance of oral health and making it a part of a comprehensive public health care program,” said Cindy Ehnes, director of the Department of Managed Health Care. “We also want families to know that California is now licensing discount medical and dental plans so that parents have affordable, dependable options to get their families the health care they need. Licensure ensures that plans are available with access to the same high quality dental and medical care as traditional insurance plans.”

First Dental Health’s discount dental plan New Dental Choice is currently accepted by more than 7,500 dentists in 13,700 locations throughout California. Members simply show their membership card to receive discounts of 25 to 60 percent on more than 300 procedures including regular checkups, orthodontics, crowns, teeth whitening and dental implants.

Licensing ensures that members are protected by measures that no other discount plan in the state can offer including a quality assurance program featuring credentialed dentists, true and verifiable discounts, truth in advertising and a dispute-resolution process.

“Most parents don’t realize the impact that oral health can have on their children’s overall health and happiness,” said Laurie Hinzman, principal of Sandburg Elementary School. “Oral health assessments will enable us to identify those students who are at a high risk of suffering from dental-related illness.”

About First Dental Health and New Dental Choice

First Dental Health, one of California’s largest dental network management companies with national capabilities, has provided convenient access to affordable dental care from credentialed dentists for more than 10 years to more than 600,000 insured and uninsured Californians through its programs. First Dental Health’s New Dental Choice plan is the first and only discount dental plan licensed by the State of California providing individuals with convenient access to high-quality dental care at significant savings. First Dental Health is a proud sponsor of the California State PTA and Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. For more information, please visit www.firstdentalhealth.com or www.newdentalchoice.com.

About the Department of Managed Health Care

The California Department of Managed Health Care is the only stand-alone watchdog agency in the nation, touching the lives of more than 21 million enrollees. The DMHC has assisted more than 633,000 Californians through its 24-hour Help Center to resolve their HMO problems, educate consumers on health care rights and responsibilities, and work closely with HMO plans to ensure a solvent and stable managed health care system.