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## **\$3 MILLION ALLOCATED TO SUCCESSFUL CHILDREN’S DENTAL PROGRAM**

*Local Proposition 10 Commission approves three-year extension of children’s dental program with Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County*

**IRVINE, Calif. – (December 6, 2006)** – The Children and Families Commission of Orange County approved an additional \$3 million through 2010 to fund Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County. This makes for a total contribution exceeding \$6 million. The program provides pediatric dental prevention programs and services to children in Orange County. In addition to Commission funded services, Healthy Smiles is the host site for the new USC School of Dentistry’s pediatric dental residency program, which will train new dentists to serve young children.

The Commission is dedicated to the health and early education of young children and initiated the creation of Healthy Smiles for Kids of Orange County in 2004 to provide dental prevention and care services to address the affect of tooth decay on a child’s speech, nutritional health and early development. A countywide assessment of oral health needs in the 2004-2005 school year confirmed that 35 percent of kindergarteners required some type of dental care and that 33 percent of children have untreated tooth decay.

“The Proposition 10 funds are critical to providing dental services to young children and leadership on oral health education, referrals and training,” said Sally Snyder, Chair of the Children and Families Commission. “Children should not be subjected to chronic pain brought on by tooth decay which affects their performance in school and, simply put, -- hurts.” The program’s “Smile Line” was also created to help parents and caregivers find low or no cost dental providers and specialty dental care.

The Children and Families Commission of Orange County oversees the allocation of funds from Proposition 10 that adds a 50-cent sales tax on tobacco products sold in California to fund education, health and child development programs for children from the prenatal stage to age five and their families. The commission identified children’s health as a major funding priority and spends over \$20 million annually on programs to improve the health of young children so they can be healthy and ready to learn when they enter kindergarten.

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