Cigna Celebrates a Child's One-Of-A-Kind Smile During National Children's Dental Health Month

PHILADELPHIA, February 09, 2012 - Cigna (NYSE: CI) is encouraging parents to get at the root of childhood tooth decay and be a positive role model for good oral health during National Children's Dental Health Month in February.

According to the Surgeon General, tooth decay is the single most common chronic childhood disease, affecting one-fourth of children between the ages of two and five years. There's also a larger oral health disparity for children and adolescents in some racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic statuses, especially Mexican American and non-Hispanic black children aged two to four and six to eight, and among lower-income families. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports about half of all children and two-thirds of adolescents between the ages of 12 and 19 years from lower-income families have had tooth decay.

To help combat childhood tooth decay, the Cigna Foundation is making a $20,000 grant to the American Dental Association (ADA) Foundation's Give Kids A Smile® (GKAS) Fund. In addition, for each person who commits to good oral health during February on Cigna's Facebook page, the Cigna Foundation will donate $5 to the ADA Foundation, up to a total of $5,000. The ADA Foundation raises funds for GKAS and makes grants to support GKAS charitable endeavors. Through GKAS events, volunteer dentists and other team members provide free dental services to underserved children across the country.

"A daily commitment to good oral health is a crucial part of being truly healthy," said Miles Hall, D.D.S., chief clinical dental director for Cigna. "Starting and maintaining good oral health practices with children, even with their first tooth, is important to preventing tooth decay and keeping a healthy smile throughout adolescence and adulthood. Encouragement from parents or caregivers can make a big difference in a child's oral health care routine."

Throughout the month of February, Cigna is providing tips, online toolkits, podcasts and resources for individuals to better understand and practice good oral health through Facebook and the #ChildrensDentalHealth Twitter hash tag. To connect parents with dental experts, Cigna is hosting two online dental health chats with Dr. Norman Nagel, an orthodontist and Dr. Thomas Floyd, a pediatric dentist, both members of Cigna Dental's Clinical Advisory Panel. Cigna's Mobile Learning Lab, an 18-wheeler interactive health awareness lab, is also stopping at school districts, client offices and other locations throughout California during a week-long tour.

"Tooth decay is as bad as it sounds. After eating and drinking, bacteria in plaque form on the teeth, and then the bacteria convert sugars into acid, which eats away at the tooth structure," said Dr. Hall. "While cavities are a common problem, they are also preventable. It's our goal to help educate parents and children that good oral health can result in a one-of-a-kind smile that lasts a lifetime."

About Cigna
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About the Cigna Foundation

The Cigna Foundation is a private foundation funded by contributions from Cigna Corporation and its subsidiaries. The Cigna Foundation supports organizations sharing its commitment to enhancing the health of individuals and families, and the well-being of their communities, with a special focus on those communities where Cigna employees live and work.

