Let’s Get Dental Care Back on the Road for Disadvantaged Children in California

BLOOMFIELD, Conn. & FRESNO, Calif., 13 July, 2016 - The Cigna Foundation and the Healthy Smiles Foundation hope to get a broken mobile clinic back on the road in time for the upcoming school year in Central Valley, California, where only one in five children receive dental care. Today, to meet their goal, they launched a crowdfunding website on crowdrise to raise money from individual donors and donor teams on the internet.

Over the past 22 years, the Healthy Smiles Mobile Dental Foundation has provided ongoing oral health care to approximately 50,000 underserved children at school sites. But with one of their mobile clinics out of operation, Healthy Smiles feared it would have to put the brakes on delivering dental care to parts of Central Valley this fall.

“Healthy Smiles asks your help to raise these funds over the next few months so that we can repair the mobile clinic for the upcoming school year. We’re honored to have the Cigna Foundation provide a challenge grant, dollar-for-dollar match of up to $75,000, in support of our fundraising efforts. Together, we can help thousands of students in need receive preventive and restorative dental care,” said Dr. Michael Alijani, chief dental director, Healthy Smiles Mobile Dental Foundation.

In Central Valley, tooth decay is the number one chronic illness in children, five times more common than asthma and seven times more prevalent than allergies. Left untreated, tooth decay can affect eating, speech, learning, self-esteem and overall health and quality of life. Regular checkups are important, as tooth decay is preventable.

“When we heard that the Healthy Smiles mobile clinic was no longer able to serve children in California, we asked how we could help,” said David Figliuzzi, executive director of the Cigna Foundation. “This crowdfunding campaign is an example of the organization’s innovative thinking to raise critical funds. We’re excited to partner in helping to meet the $150,000 goal.”

The Cigna Foundation is a proud supporter of the Healthy Smiles Mobile Dental Foundation through its World of Difference grant program, and last year provided a $103,000 grant to help provide ongoing oral health services to more than 2,500 underserved children in Fresno, Kings, Madera and Merced Counties in California.

To help repair the Healthy Smiles mobile clinic and bring dental care to California children this fall, donate through the Healthy Smiles crowdrise website. Follow the success of the crowdfunding project at #SupportHealthySmiles on Twitter and Facebook, and click to learn more about Healthy Smiles.

About the Cigna Foundation

The Cigna Foundation, founded in 1962, is a private foundation funded by contributions from Cigna Corporation (NYSE: CI) 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.

About Cigna
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