



Give Kids A Smile®
Program Planning
and Promotion Guide



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Welcome to Give Kids A Smile!

The American Dental Association is pleased to have you and your program as part of the Give Kids A Smile family! You are joining the nation's dental community in providing free oral health care services to thousands of underserved children across the country.

Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) is the centerpiece to National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM) and is recognized nationally every year on the first Friday in February. NCDHM focuses on providing oral health education to all children, while GKAS was designed to provide oral health education and free screening, treatment, preventive and restorative services to children in need.

In addition to helping underserved children, Give Kids A Smile's intent is to highlight for policy makers the ongoing challenges that disadvantaged children and children with disabilities face in accessing dental care. The over arching message of GKAS is that even the high level of charitable care delivered by dentists and dental team members every year will never solve the problem of untreated dental disease among the nation's children. So, a major purpose of the program is to influence government and society at large to work with dentistry to craft common-sense, market-based solutions to access disparities.

A Little Background Information . . .

The Give Kids A Smile name was first used by the Greater St. Louis Dental Society and a group of dentists who set up a temporary full-service clinic that treated nearly 400 children over two days in February 2002. The ADA's role in the national GKAS program is to function as an umbrella for the numerous charitable education, screening, prevention and comprehensive treatment programs already in existence, and to aggregate the results of these endeavors and effectively communicate them to policy makers. (This is why we ask you to report your actual data after the conclusion of your program.)

The ADA provides this Program Planning Guide and a full array of tools, many of them web-based, to support the GKAS program and to make it as easy as possible for volunteers to participate. The ADA is also working to ensure maximum positive coverage and perception by media, government and opinion leaders, and to assist volunteers in those efforts.

How to Use This Program Planning Guide

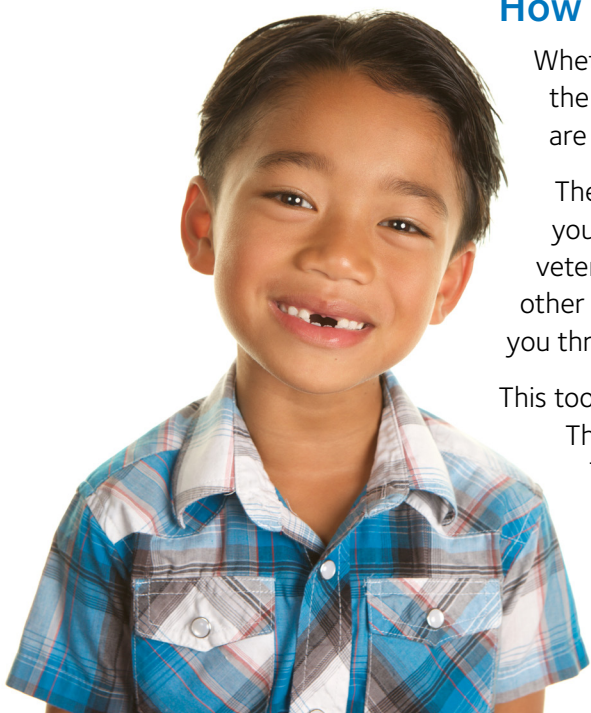
Whether conducting an access event is something you have done in the past, or whether it is a new activity for you, the keys to success are organization, planning, execution, publicity and evaluation.

The GKAS Program Planning Guide is an excellent resource to assist you in planning your event whether it is your first time or if you are a veteran program coordinator. The guides, sample forms, letters and other informative materials provide a step-by-step timetable to guide you through planning, implementing, and promoting your GKAS event.

This toolkit is highly customizable to your Give Kids A Smile program.

The materials included were developed with ease of use in mind.

They can be easily updated to reflect your unique approach and are formatted in a way that makes them ready for use with minimal adjustment.



How to Have a Successful Give Kids A Smile Event

Getting the most mileage for your Give Kids A Smile event will take planning and organizational skills. In the next few sections we will highlight eight steps to help make your Give Kids A Smile event a success.

Step 1: Selecting Your Steering Committee

One of the keys to your success is to build a committed, enthusiastic steering committee that will be responsible for overseeing program planning, budgeting, promotion, and evaluation. The steering committee should also help coordinate the efforts of your volunteers.

Consider inviting individuals from any of the following groups to participate on your steering committee:

- Dentists
- Dental Societies/Associations
- Dental Hygiene Associations
- Dental Hygienists
- Dental Assistants
- Members of the Alliance of the ADA (spouses of dentists)
- Dental and dental hygiene school faculty and students
- Dental officers from local military bases
- School nurses
- Parents
- Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs)
- Department of Social Services representative
- Public health representative
- Medical profession
- State Office of Oral Health representative

Try to reach beyond the immediate dental community and include business or civic leaders, elected officials, non-dental professionals, school officials, or the media. Even if their roles on the committee are mostly ceremonial, involving these people can help heighten your event's profile.

To create a successful campaign, individual committee members often are designated to manage different aspects of the campaign. Depending on your needs, steering committee positions may include the following:

- *General Chairperson:* Oversees meetings, program development, budget, record keeping and reviews the state dental practice act.
- *Program Chairperson:* Oversees development and implementation of program activities.
- *Budget Chairperson:* Manages the promotion budget.
- *Arrangements Chairperson:* Secures space for the type of access event being planned, audiovisual equipment, microphones and refreshments.
- *Publicity Coordinator:* Arranges for media coverage of access-to-care events by writing and sending press releases and feature articles; secures media placements for the media spokesperson.
- *Media Spokesperson:* Provides interviews to local newspapers, television and radio stations about the promotion and the particular activities that your group is featuring.
- *Recruitment Chairperson:* Secures and organizes volunteer support.



Step 2: Consider Your Event Options — Education, Screening and/or Treatment Event

Programs come in all shapes and sizes, and the first task of your steering committee is to ask the questions below and to consider the following options.

- What is the intended purpose of the program (treatment, education, advocacy, etc.)?
- What size program would we like to do? (large, small, etc.)
- How many patients can the program realistically see in a day?
- How many volunteers will we need to conduct the program?
- Where will we conduct the event?



Educational Event

- Although oral health education can be part of GKAS, most classroom visits tend to fall under the umbrella of the ADA's National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM) program and can be made any day during the month of February (or indeed on any date convenient to the presenter). We suggest you visit ADA.org/NCDHM for more information. You may also want to contact your local or state dental society to join an existing program instead of planning your own.
- Offer presentations to schools where the majority of children are eligible for federally funded meal programs (Title 1 schools). Choose your target audience: preschool, grade school or teens. Contact the school nurse, health or physical education instructor, or the school administrator to make arrangements. Give a talk at a community center that serves low-income families.
- Focus your short presentation on daily oral hygiene, diet and dental health. Set up an educational display. Using mouth models, give demonstrations of brushing and flossing and have a question and answer session. Posters and handouts can help reinforce oral health messages. Visit MouthHealthy.org for presentation materials.



Screening Event

Screening events can take place in a variety of locations. For example, dentists may choose to go to a Title 1/reduced-cost lunch plan school and perform visual oral screenings on all third grade students. The most important thing to remember when conducting a "screening only" event is to distribute a list of participating dentists/clinics who will treat (at no cost or low cost) those found to have dental needs.



Treatment/Restorative Event

Organizing a large-scale Give Kids A Smile event that offers treatment/restorative care poses a number of challenges, but they are all surmountable, and the payoff in terms of exposure to the media and lawmakers can be significant.

Treatment/restorative events can take place in small or large settings. For example, individual dental offices and dental schools have both provided comprehensive treatment for GKAS participants.

Choosing a Site in Which to Deliver Clinical Care

Keep in mind that providing care for children at a Give Kids A Smile event involves exclusively pro bono (free) services. If your event will provide clinical restorative and/or surgical services, select a venue that can accommodate a medium or large size event, without billing you or any agency for the space or the services.

Some publicly supported clinics (e.g. Federally Qualified Health Centers, community health centers, state and local government clinics) operate on a revenue-neutral, non-profit basis. Those clinics may not be in a position to surrender a day of revenue from Medicaid reimbursement to be a Give Kids A Smile site, and this is understandable. There are usually a variety of sites available where you can hold clinical events. Ask volunteers, partner agencies and organizations for ideas.

Step 3: Plan Your Event

As you begin planning your event, think about these four questions:

1. What date should the event be scheduled?

Even though the national GKAS kickoff day is recognized annually on the first Friday of February, you can have your event any convenient day during the year.

2. How will you identify children for your event?

If you will be giving oral health presentations in a school, the task is a straightforward one of identifying a school in which children are eligible for reduced-cost or free school lunches (Title 1 school), for example. But for screening events and those during which restorative care will be given, the question is more complex.

One of your most important decisions is whether to pre-identify children for your event (either by screening children prior to the day or by seeking referrals from school or community service groups), or to open the event on a first-come, first-served basis. All of the planning and promotion, as well as the logistics, hinge on the answer to this question.

Pre-identifying Children

Advantages

- You can ensure that your physical facility can accommodate the children.
- You can line up enough volunteers.
- You can plan sufficient supplies and equipment to meet the dental needs of the children.

Challenges

- More administrative work ahead of time is necessary to identify the children.
- Even when children are scheduled, some may not show up for their appointment.

First-come, First-served Program

Advantages

- Allows you to triage on site, thereby affording more flexibility in treating the children.
- Patient expectations regarding how quickly they will be served may be more flexible.

Challenges

- To alert the public about your event, this method requires publicity efforts such as advertising in local newspapers and reaching out to local media.
- There may be more people lined up than you have the capacity to serve that day, resulting in disappointment for children and their parents. There may be very few children or no children that show up, resulting in disappointment to volunteers.
- There may be very few children or no children that show up, resulting in disappointment to volunteers.
- You may not know whether the children arriving for care are truly underserved.
- While in either approach you may have dental team members standing around with nothing to do if enough people do not show up, this is more likely a problem with the first-come, first-served approach.

In the vast majority of cases, pre-identifying children is the more manageable approach.

To get more information about identifying children for your program, download Community Coalition-Building and Identifying Qualified Children for Give Kids A Smile in the resource section to obtain more ideas about how to collaborate with other organizations.

3. Where will I conduct my event?

Possible program locations:

- Individual/multi dentist practice
- Dental school
- Dental hygiene school
- School gymnasium/auditorium (have a back-up plan in case of bad weather that may cause the school to close)
- Community health center
- Boys and Girls Club
- Shopping mall
- Church fellowship hall
- Hospital
- State capitol building
- Mobile dental van

4. Where can I secure dental equipment and supplies?

To receive donated dental supplies from the national GKAS program's generous sponsors, you must request them within the open sign-up period. Please check the current Important Dates flyer for dates and deadlines.

Please visit the following link for more information: [ADA.org/GKAS](https://www.ada.org/GKAS)

Each program is responsible for securing dental equipment and supplies for its own GKAS event. The ADA has secured a limited amount of donated dental supplies from our national sponsors. There is a selection process for these supplies and every program may not receive product. Even if you are selected to receive product, you may need additional supplies, and those should be lined up well in advance of your event.

Possible places to secure donations

- Dental sales representative from whom you purchase dental equipment and supplies
- Local dental suppliers
- For a list of manufacturers of toothpaste and toothbrushes, please see the ADA Seal of Acceptance listings at: [ADA.org/Seal](https://www.ada.org/Seal)

Out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with a dentist's volunteer work may be tax-deductible. Consult a tax advisor for further information.

Step 4: Recruiting Volunteers

Information courtesy of Ms. Laura Barnard, communications director, Indiana Dental Association

There are three basic components to securing GKAS volunteers:

1. Recruiting those interested in participating
2. Retaining those volunteers for future events
3. Researching the needs and wants of those who do and do not volunteer

Recruiting those interested in participating

When preparing GKAS volunteer recruitment materials, make sure to address the purpose of the program, the commitment needed, the benefits of volunteering (networking, advocacy, community involvement, etc ...), and don't forget to include quotes from current volunteers about their participation.

Offer various volunteer levels so even dental offices that are unavailable for GKAS can participate.

For example, an office could donate money to GKAS to purchase supplies for the patients and other volunteer offices. Some offices may be interested only in speaking to their local elementary schools, while others may choose to open their office and provide treatment for 30 underserved children.

Volunteers want the process to be as easy as possible, and through the help of a state/local dental association this can happen. A state organization can provide news articles, a volunteer application and a resource book for GKAS volunteers to follow.

Retaining those volunteers for future events

Once a program has volunteers, the key is to retain them for the next event. Remember to thank all volunteers who participate. Write a personal thank you note to each volunteer office letting them know how much you appreciate their dedication and commitment to the program. This tactic takes time, but a personal note of appreciation can go a long way in keeping volunteers for the future. Other ideas include listing all volunteers in a state newsletter and/or journal, giving each volunteer a certificate of participation and giving away a GKAS award to volunteers in recognition of their participation (5 years, 10 years, etc ...).



Researching the needs and wants of those who do and do not volunteer

This third point is extremely important to any GKAS program because coordinators need to understand what motivates people to volunteer for GKAS and why others are hesitant to participate. By addressing the concerns of those not participating, coordinators can build their program and encourage more volunteerism through the program's ongoing changes. Let the potential volunteers know you understand their concerns and are researching ways to address them.

This same concept is true for current volunteers. If regular volunteers have concerns about the program, ask for their suggestions on improvements; let them be part of the solution to constantly improve the program. People that feel their opinions are heard are more likely to participate in future events

Step 5: Promoting the Event

Media coverage of Give Kids A Smile events offers a wonderful opportunity to educate reporters about the need to improve access to oral health care for underserved children.

While it's true that Give Kids A Smile will provide some desperately needed oral health services to many children across the country, the real story to convey to the media is that this access to oral health care event will never be enough and that dentists alone can't solve the oral health access crisis. Improving kids' access to oral health care is everyone's business — not just dentists.

This section of the guide will help you promote your event to the media and provide you with key messages about WHY Give Kids A Smile was created and WHAT dentists across the country would like to see happen to improve access to oral health care.

Our overriding message is, "It is simply unacceptable that thousands upon thousands of children in 21st century America suffer needlessly from untreated dental disease."

Be sure to check out our media promotion appendices on [page 15](#).



Step 6: Conducting Your Event

Sound planning will help ensure that your event runs smoothly. While some logistical issues may be similar to other events you have conducted, the nature of a screening or direct care event presents some particular challenges. Here are a few tips:

- To avoid no-shows and underutilization of volunteers, consider over-booking. It can be very discouraging for volunteers to be ready to help and have no opportunity to do so.
- If you are providing cleanings/prophylaxes and restorative care, possibly assign a layperson to accompany each child for the entire time the child is in your facility. Many children from low-income families have very limited experience with dental care, and having a caring, attentive adult nearby can help put them at ease.
- If space permits, have a craft and coloring table with materials related to oral health. It will help keep children occupied while they are waiting to be seen. Check the [Resources](#) section of this planning guide for activity and coloring sheets that can be reproduced for this purpose.
- Have staff dress up as a tooth fairy or clown to create an enjoyable atmosphere and keep the children occupied while they wait.
- If the facility in which you are delivering care is large, be sure that your volunteers who are coordinating care have cell phones with them or rent a walkie-talkie system to avoid wasting time looking for someone.
- Conduct a survey to get feedback (dentists, teachers, parents).

Step 7: Evaluate Your Event

Knowing how well you met your program goals and objectives this year will be of great help for future planning. Unfortunately, this important step often is overlooked. Consider a brief post-survey to your volunteers and attendees.

Step 8: Thank Everyone!

Last but not least, remember to THANK all who contributed their time and/or resources toward this year's program. Recognizing those special people will not only make them feel appreciated but will encourage them to participate again next year. A personal letter of thanks from the steering committee chairperson is a nice way to recognize the contributions of your committee. A page in the local/state dental journal with a list of participants and sponsors would also be a nice way to thank those who graciously contributed their time and/or resources.



Program Planning and Promotion Timetable

Getting the most mileage from your Give Kids A Smile event takes planning and good organizational skills. This checklist will help you to effectively manage time and resources. **Consult the current GKAS Important Dates flyer for updated deadline information.** Items that will help plan your promotion campaign for your program are in blue below. Be sure to visit the GKAS website frequently at ADA.org/GKAS for updates on the program.

5 Months Prior to Your Event

- Designate a chairperson, possibly a dentist or dental office staffer with prior program planning experience.
- Appoint a steering committee. The most efficient size for this type of committee is 5-9 persons.

4 Months Prior to Your Event

- Supplement supplies and materials by contacting various dental companies, local businesses, etc., for donations.

3 Months Prior to Your Event

- Establish subcommittees if necessary. Each planned activity should include a coordinator from the steering committee and an appropriate number of subcommittee members.
- Consider your options and select one or more activities suitable for your group.
- Decide whether you will pre-identify children for your event or whether it will be first come, first served.
- Review your financial resources and determine your budget. Solicit funding if applicable.
- Request product supplies online at ADA.org/GKAS.
- NOTE THE DEADLINE:** Check the deadline on the current Important Dates flyer to request dental supplies! You can also download coloring and activity sheets by visiting the following link: ADA.org/NCDHM.
- Communicate your activities to dentists in your area through your state and local dental publications and online resources. Encourage community support for the GKAS event.
- Remember: If you have not already done so, sign-up your Give Kids A Smile event by going to the GKAS website: ADA.org/GKAS
- Identify one or more spokespeople for your event and begin working to get them comfortable talking about access problems and solutions in your area.
- Invite elected officials to attend your GKAS event. (See sample letters in the Resource Section at ADA.org/GKAS.)

2 Months Prior to Your Event

- Finalize budget and timetables.
- Recruit volunteers from dental specialty groups, related dental organizations, dental and dental hygiene schools and community organizations.

- If you are pre-identifying children for your event, contact local organizations or schools for assistance in locating children from low-income families. Provide them with a photo release form that names your organization, the ADA as a permitted user of the photos (use the release form in the Toolbox).
- Reserve any needed space, equipment or other materials.
- Finalize details for each activity and event.
- Schedule speaking engagements with community groups.
- Enlist support from elected officials by obtaining their commitment to attend your event, issuance of a proclamation acknowledging the event, or asking a prominent individual (such as the governor's spouse or other dignitary) to serve as honorary program chair.
- Secure any other vendors you may need for the event (food, caterer, sound system, balloons).
- Prepare your Give Kids A Smile press materials (e.g., press release, media alert, public service announcements, etc.). See the sample materials on the website. It is critical that you tailor the materials to fit your local event. Journalists are more likely to ignore generic press materials that are not relevant to the communities they cover.
- Check to see if any families of children who will receive oral health services in your upcoming Give Kids A Smile event would be willing to share their story with reporters. A moving story of a child helps to bring the issue to life for reporters and the public.
- Make sure your spokespeople are familiar with the points you want them to make, as well as some stories about local children who lack access to care, state or local statistics related to access to oral health care and whether an elected official will be attending your event.
- Choose and script the three key points that you want to get across in interviews or in discussions with elected officials and other influential persons, so your program presents a unified vision of what you are trying to accomplish concerning access to care in your area. For example, The [NAME OF YOUR PROGRAM] strongly believes that [STATE] needs to revamp our dental Medicaid program in three ways. First, we need to [BRIEFLY DESCRIBE GOAL #1]. We also must [BRIEFLY DESCRIBE GOAL #2] and lastly, we should [BRIEFLY DESCRIBE GOAL #3]."
- Follow up with the press officer for each elected official you invited to your Give Kids A Smile event to see if they will attend event. (Note: Many elected officials will not confirm until immediately prior to your event.)

1 Month Prior to Event

- Decide on three key points that you want to make in media interviews or discussions with policy makers about how to improve dental access for children from low-income families in your area. Brief your media representative on topics about which he or she may be interviewed.
- Follow up with phone calls to invite media to cover your Give Kids A Smile event.
- Distribute your press materials.
- During the second week of the month, follow up by calling reporters to make sure they received the materials and to talk about why this is an important story for your community. For example, while you have the reporter on the phone, share some patient stories (without mentioning specific names) and offer to put the reporter in touch with families who have agreed to speak with the media about how the lack of access to oral health care has affected their children. A personal story about a child without access to care is a powerful way to convince a reporter why dentists are trying to raise awareness of this issue.

2-3 Weeks Prior to Your Event

- Give your cell phone number to reporters so they can reach you the day of the event. Some reporters may not decide until the last minute whether they want to cover your story, so it's imperative they can reach you on the day of the event.
- If an elected official will be attending your event, contact his or her office and ask if they will be notifying political/public affairs reporters about it. You should follow up with these reporters, too, because it gives you the opportunity to give them the details about your event as well as explain to them the larger issue of access to oral health care.
- If children from a local school or club will be receiving treatment at your event, check to see if there is a blanket photo release that allows for photographs of children at such events and get a copy of that release before your event (see Photo Release Form at [ADA.org/GKAS](https://ada.org/GKAS))

On Site at Your Event

- Conduct your Give Kids A Smile Event in February or whatever month works best for you!
- Have several sets of press materials available on site. Though you've already sent these to media outlets, the reporters or photographers assigned to the story may not have received them, and they would likely appreciate having the background information.
- Greet reporters who cover your event, and show them around. As you walk with them, be sure to talk about the need for access to oral health care and that dentists want to be part of the solution (see the Talking Points for Give Kids A Smile on page 21).
- Ensure that all photo release forms are collected and matched with images for submission to the ADA Foundation for use in GKAS promotions.
- Do not take photographs of a child undergoing treatment for your group's newsletter or website without first obtaining a signed photo release form from the parent or guardian (download the [Photo Release Form](#)). You do not need to concern yourself with media photographers. They will handle photo releases on behalf of their media outlets.
- Give reporters and photographers your cell phone number and your business card in case they have any follow up questions.

After Your Event

- Watch for media coverage of your event.
- Keep a list of media outlets and the reporters who covered your event so you can approach them to cover Give Kids A Smile next year.
- GKAS programs are invited to send photographs from local events to the ADA after their event. Photos will be used for archival purposes and some may appear in the *ADA News*, online on [ADA.org](https://ada.org) or in other ADA publications. Digital photos are preferred.

Email photos to the following:

gkas@ada.org (GKAS program)

Files should be 300 dpi, with no single email larger than 9 MB.

Please include completed photo release forms.

Identify the individuals in the photo and indicate where and when it was taken.

adanews@ada.org (*ADA News*)

Files should be 300 dpi, with no single email larger than 9 MB. Identify the individuals in the photo and indicate where and when it was taken.

(Photo release forms are not required for *ADA News*.)

1 Month after Your Event

- Acknowledge everyone who assisted with your event with a letter of thanks or certificate of appreciation.
- Review your event and related activities. Prepare a summary report of activities, expenses and other meaningful data including recommendations for next year.
- Report the actual post-event results by going to [ADA.org/GKAS](https://ada.org/GKAS) and click “Sign Up or Enter Event Data to [log in](#)”. Visit the resources in that section for the GKAS Data Collection Form.

WHY REPORTING YOUR POST-EVENT DATA FOR YOUR GKAS EVENT IS IMPORTANT

A key objective of the Give Kids A Smile program is to incorporate new measures to track and evaluate the effectiveness of the program at the national level, and to ultimately create an evidence-based approach to eliminating cavities among children. We understand that no amount of charity care can solve the problem, so our key goal is to help the ADA raise awareness among the public and policy makers that access to dental care is a serious problem for many in this country, and to advocate for increased attention and action on the issue. You can help us by taking the time to report your actual post-event data once you have completed your Give Kids A Smile event. By reporting your actual event data, you help to ensure accurate reporting nationally as the ADA works to drive awareness of this issue. Additionally, your efforts help the ADA promote needed policy changes that can improve oral health literacy and provide continuity of care for underserved children.

Give Kids A Smile Resources

Understanding the Media and Selecting a Spokesperson

Give Kids A Smile Talking Points

GKAS Q & A

Social Media Post

Understanding the Media and Selecting a Spokesperson

Categorizing the News

News stories fall into two basic categories: hard and soft news.

- Hard news is time sensitive and reports on serious topics like politics, business, local and national security, etc.
- Soft or feature news generally is not as time sensitive and often deals with human interest stories, with topics spanning health and wellness, lifestyle, entertainment and more.

Most journalists will view Give Kids A Smile® as soft news, and your success in generating coverage will hinge heavily on the amount and type of hard news occurring that day and week.

Building Connections with Media

Reporters are under constant deadline pressure, so when contacting them about your event, keep the five W's in mind: who, what, when, where and why. It's helpful to distribute a media alert, typically via email, about your event before you call reporters.

Reporters can't devote hours to researching every story they cover. Often they are not healthcare or public policy experts. In fact, that is exactly why they need to interview your spokespeople — to get the most pertinent details and memorable quotes for the story.

Spokespeople should view any media interview as a chance to shape a story. Don't just answer a reporter's questions about your event; use the interview to make key points about how to improve access to oral healthcare for children from underserved families in your area.

For example, if a reporter asks, "How many children will receive dental treatment at your event?" your spokesperson could say:

"Nearly [NUMBER OF] children will receive free dental services ranging from screenings to cleanings up to fillings and more." [then expand the answer by saying ...] "But I worry about the thousands of children who need dental care who aren't here today — the ones who continue to have trouble eating, sleeping and paying attention in class because their teeth are in such bad shape. Dentists want to be part of the solution, but can't solve access to care on their own. An event like Give Kids A Smile isn't a cure-all, it's a wake-up call. It's time for politicians, parents and people who care to [STATE YOUR PROGRAM/ORGANIZATION GOAL]. Our children deserve a better healthcare system that addresses their dental needs."

The entire quote would probably never make it into the story — it's too long — but this type of quote gives reporters a lot of sound bites to choose from to edit into their stories. Perhaps a reporter would use:

"I worry about the thousands of children who aren't here today — the ones who continue to have trouble eating, sleeping and paying attention in class because their teeth are in such bad shape. Our children deserve a better health care system that addresses their dental needs."

Identifying Local Spokespeople

Spokespeople help to humanize a cause like Give Kids A Smile® by giving faces and voices to the issue at hand. Ideally, your event should have a few people on hand to act as spokespersons. These people should be volunteers who have some experience with media interviews and/or have been media trained so they can make the most of the media interview opportunity.

Choose spokespersons with warm personalities and the ability to speak in easy-to-understand terms. A good voice is a plus for any spokesperson, especially for radio or television interviews.

Spokespeople should never be identified as ADA spokespersons. Instead, the people could be identified as “a spokesperson/organizer/dedicated volunteer/chair (etc.) for the local event ...”

How to do Media Interviews

Brief and clear are the most important things to remember when doing a media interview. Your spokesperson must make a couple of important points very clear for reporters in a few, extremely brief sentences:

- what Give Kids A Smile is; and
- how your local Give Kids A Smile event can help, but not solve the overall problem of access to oral health care for children from low-income families.

Remember, presentation skills are very important. In television especially, audiences tend to pay more attention to how you look and say something more than what you actually say. The [Talking Points](#) section next should be helpful, but we also encourage Give Kids A Smile spokespersons to put things in their own words. Discuss the issues in ways that are relevant to the local situation.

Tips to Keep in Mind:

- Speak in a conversational tone. Imagine the reporter is a neighbor or patient and you’re explaining Give Kids A Smile and access to oral healthcare. Convey interest, concern and confidence.
- Be concise, stating the most important points first; then provide background information.
- Print reporters will want more depth than broadcast journalists because they have more space to run stories.
- Don’t use technical jargon. For instance, instead of “restorations,” say “fillings and crowns.”
- Most broadcast interviews will be taped and edited before airing. The reporter will probably pull out a ten to fifteen second sound bite from your interview and summarize the rest of the information you provide.
- The reporter wants your voice on tape, so avoid simply answering “yes” or “no” to questions. Always provide details that help tell the story. A brief story of a child in dire need of access to oral healthcare is a much more memorable interview than a lot of statistics, which the reporter can gather from your press materials. Describe in general terms one of the worst pediatric cases you’ve seen due to lack of access to oral healthcare, then bridge to what your volunteers would like to see happen to improve access in your state.
- For television interviews, always look at the interviewer, not the camera. The cameraperson will find you.
- Remember that anything you say to a reporter before, during and after the interview can be used in the story. There is no such thing as “off the record,” so if you don’t want your comment to appear in the story, don’t say it.

Please feel free to contact the ADA Media Relations line at 800.621.8099, x2806 for additional advice on media interviews.

Give Kids A Smile Talking Points

Feel free to tailor these talking points and create some of your own. It's important to do more than just talk about your Give Kids A Smile® event — use the media interview as an opportunity to give reporters the “big picture” on the critical need for access to oral health care among underserved children in your state.

Reporters want brief, memorable quotes to make their stories interesting. The lay public tends to remember stories, not statistics, so try to bring the story to life by talking about some of the children you've helped with Give Kids A Smile. Then talk about what your volunteers would like to see happen to improve access to oral healthcare in your state and what dentists are doing through Action for Dental Health.

Local- and State-Specific Talking Points

- Today, number of children in the City/State area will receive free dental screenings and dental care as part of the Give Kids A Smile® program, an ADA program that brings dentists and other volunteers together to provide screenings, treatments and education to underserved children throughout the United States.
- Give Kids A Smile has two purposes — helping children get the dental care they so desperately need and raising awareness that our children deserve a better health care system that addresses their dental health.
 - The program initially began as a one-day event each February but has since grown to local and national events year-round, serving approximately 350,000 to 400,000 children each year.
 - Across the nation this year there will be an estimated 1,500 events where nearly 40,000 dentists, dental team members and other volunteers come together for Give Kids A Smile.
- It's exciting to see children getting desperately needed care to improve their health but heartbreaking that they aren't able to receive dental care without charity. Sadly, this isn't the only community or age group where individuals face barriers to care – this is a larger issue that both children and adults in State and beyond face.
 - The causes of this dental crisis are varied and complex and will only get worse without a complete set of solutions.
 - For example, [SPECIFY WITH LOCAL DETAILS OR USE SIMILAR EXAMPLE] the Medicaid system that serves many of State's citizens is underfunded and needs to be addressed and too many people seek out treatment for dental pain in the emergency room instead of a dentist's chair. These are problems we can address now.
- Our state lawmakers have an opportunity to work alongside State dentists to advance solutions that will help ensure all [STATE-ANS] are able to get the dental care they need when they need it. State Association is currently advocating for [INSERT SOLUTIONS-BASED/ACTION FOR DENTAL HEALTH PROPOSAL].
 - The ADA's Action for Dental Health is a nationwide, community based movement designed to address the dental health crisis we are facing by providing care now, strengthening the safety net and bringing disease prevention and education into communities.

Prevention Talking Points

- If we urge our parents and caregivers to get serious about helping their children avoid cavities at an early age, we are setting the stage to help wipe out dental disease in this country.
- Oral health is integral to overall health. Untreated dental disease is painful and affects a child's physical, emotional and social development. Kids with untreated dental decay can't eat or sleep properly; they can't concentrate in school, not to mention how it affects them emotionally.
- While many children are enrolled in Medicaid and visiting the dentist at increasing rates, there are still many children who do not see a dentist at all.
- When state revenues begin to decline, dental care is often the first thing cut from state Medicaid budgets. Restoring the lost revenue has proven to be a difficult and slow task.
- Dentists want to be part of the solution, but we can't solve the crisis of access to care on our own. We seek to build public and private partnerships at the state and local levels to come up with common-sense solutions to help improve access to oral health. This is why the ADA developed Action for Dental Health: Dentists Making a Difference.
- Dental disease is preventable and it starts with access and education. Ultimately, the money spent on the prevention of dental disease saves a lot more money down the road in dental treatment.

GKAS Q & A

General Questions *(please personalize answers to your local events)*

- **What is Give Kids A Smile?**

Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) is an event focused on bringing preventive education and dental services to underserved children with local events executed all across the country — including education, screening, preventive and restorative treatment.

- **What kids qualify to receive treatment?**

[INSERT QUALIFICATION INFORMATION.] All minors must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

- **Is an appointment necessary?**

[INSERT INFORMATION ON PRE-SCREENING (IF APPLICABLE) AND ATTENDING]

- **Can my child get care year round?**

This GKAS event is [INSERT X NUMBER OF DAYS] day(s) of action focused on providing screenings and treatments to children in need and to provide valuable preventive care information. To assure that all patients have follow-up care if post treatment problems arise, we have made arrangements with local dentists, clinics and/or dental schools to care for those individuals to complete the prescribed treatment plan. An important aspect of GKAS is providing continuity of care for every child. Assistance will be provided to find a dental home for every child that visits the GKAS program.

- **Can you estimate the dollar amount of donated care and services offered through Give Kids A Smile?**

Each year, approximately 400,000 children benefit from more than 1,500 events nationwide, all because of the efforts of 40,000 or more annual volunteers. [INSERT LOCAL AMOUNT IF AVAILABLE.]

- **What is the cost of providing care through Give Kids A Smile?**

LOCAL ASSOCIATION TO PROVIDE ANSWER

- **Can I donate to Give Kids A Smile?**

Yes, you can donate to the INSERT STATE Give Kids A Smile event at [INSERT WEBSITE INFORMATION]. Donations can also be given to the national program through the ADA accessible at ADA.org/GKAS.

Charity Care/State Funding Questions

- **Why aren't people who qualify for government assistance programs able to receive adequate dental healthcare? What about dental care for citizens who don't qualify for government assistance but have difficulty affording any type of medical care, including dental?**

The high volume of patients participating in events such as Mission of Mercy and Give Kids A Smile highlights a clear gap between those with and without good dental health. Government assistance programs that exist to help those in need are not adequately serving the population. Even with supplementary support from outside resources, many individuals must often go without preventive care, which often leads to a need for more costly emergency treatment.

- State Dental Association/Society dentists have been hard at work for years to advocate for increase funding for dental care, to simplify Medicaid administration, and launching community prevention efforts, including [INSERT DETAIL ON LOCAL PREVENTION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS].

- **I've read/heard that most dentists don't accept Medicaid. So even if Medicaid covered dental care for adults, won't it be difficult for patients to find a dentist to serve them?**

[UPDATE THIS ANSWER BASED ON LOCAL INFORMATION:] The Medicaid program reimburses at a rate of about [XX] percent of a dentist's costs, far below the usual and customary rate. Most dental

offices are small, independent businesses and the current reimbursement rate does event allow them to break even. A 2008 [California HealthCare Foundation study](#) examined six states with increases to Medicaid reimbursement rates. In these states, provider participation increased by at least one-third, and sometime more than doubled, following rate increases. Not only did the number of enrolled providers rise, so did the number of patients treated. Patients' access to care, as measured by the number of beneficiaries using dental services, also increased after the rates rose.

- **Will events like Mission of Mercy/Give Kids A Smile provide the dental care needed for those individuals who depend on assistance programs for other needs?**

- Many State Dental Association/Society members provide charity care and education in their communities through volunteer programs such as Mission of Mercy, Give Kids A Smile and Donated Dental Services, but it isn't enough. No matter how much free care dentists give, volunteerism alone won't solve the problem because a charity care system is not a healthcare system.

- **What solutions do you support for this dental crisis?**

State dentists have been hard at work for years to advocate for increased funding for dental care and for community prevention efforts. Most recently, we joined the American Dental Association's Action for Dental Health, a nationwide community-based movement to take on the dental health crisis facing us today in three key ways:

- Providing care now to those suffering with untreated disease. We're doing that through events like Mission of Mercy and Give Kids A Smile.
- Strengthening and expanding the safety net to provide more care to more patients in need. [INSERT INFORMATION ON CURRENT LEGISLATION OR OTHER ACTION FOR DENTAL HEALTH EFFORTS TO REPAIR MEDICAID OR OTHER SAFETY NET PROGRAMS]
- Bringing dental health education and disease prevention into local communities. [INSERT DETAIL ON LOCAL EDUCATION/PREVENTION INITIATIVES.]

Affordable Care Act/Medicaid Expansion

- **Doesn't the Affordable Care Act provide solutions for people who need dental treatment?**

Under the ACA, dental coverage is mandatory for children. In total, approximately 8.7 million children across the country could gain extensive dental coverage through the ACA by 2018. But for states that choose not to expand Medicaid, the health law has almost no dental provisions to help low-income adults. State Dental Association/Society dentists are fighting for increased dental health protections under Medicaid. As it stands, the current state budget contains no comprehensive funding for adult dental services and the Medicaid system that provides for children in need is underfunded.

- **So what is State's solution to the dental crisis?**

The causes of this dental crisis are varied and complex, and it will only get worse without a comprehensive set of solutions. Dentists are working with stakeholders to achieve significant progress by examining the most challenging obstacles to oral health in each area of the state, identifying the major underserved populations and determining solutions that best overcome the barriers that face those populations.

- [STATE DENTAL ASSOCIATION/SOCIETY] recently joined the American Dental Association's Action for Dental Health, a nationwide community-based movement to take on the dental health crisis facing us today in three key ways: Providing care now to people suffering with untreated dental disease; Strengthening and expanding the public/private safety net. State Dental Association/Society is advocating for passage of legislation would allow adults to receive dental care through the state's Medicaid program. [UPDATE/REVISE WITH STATE SPECIFIC DETAILS ON RELEVANT LEGISLATION]
- Bringing dental health education and disease prevention into communities.

- **What can be done to help these people receive care on an ongoing basis?**

Without regular cleanings and early detection of potential problems, more serious health complications will require more expensive treatment. Restoring government assistance programs created to help those in need would be a good place to start.

- [INSERT BULLETS ON LOCAL ACTION FOR DENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES AND SOLUTIONS AS EXAMPLES].

Social Media Posts

Social media can drive awareness of your Give Kids A Smile event to both local and national audiences. If you have a Facebook page, Twitter account or another type of social media channel for your society, consider using them to promote your events and to share why these efforts are important for the dental health of the community.

Due to its real time nature, social media may helpful to for the following:

- Recruiting volunteers
- Promoting media coverage of the event
- Driving public attendance (if attendance is unexpectedly low)
- Communicating a last minute detail (such as a location change or inclement weather)

Below are sample Facebook posts and tweets for your use. Feel free to tailor them to meet your needs and to use them as you see fit. Generally, social media posts are more engaging, meaning that they are more likely to be shared and seen by a larger audience, when a photo or link for more information is included. If you choose to include photos, confirm you have signed consent waivers for everyone pictured prior to posting. As a good rule of thumb, children included in posts should only be referred to by their first name, and photo waivers must be signed by a parent or guardian.

Sample Tweets

- Thx to all our [INSERT EVENT NAME] volunteers who spent [#] hours providing free dental services 2day! #GKAS (*Tweet with or without volunteer photo*)
- Smiles were plentiful today at the [insert event name] GKAS day. #GKAS (*tweet with photo*)
- Great story from @ [INSERT LOCAL TV STATION OR NEWSPAPER HANDLE] about [INSERT EVENT NAME]. [INSERT LINK TO STORY] #GKAS

Sample Facebook posts

Post during an event to attract attendees if needed.

- Today from [INSERT EVENT HOURS], local dental professionals are volunteering to provide dental health services free of charge at [INSERT EVENT NAME, LOCATION] to those in need. Please note, this is a first-come, first-served program. Pending the volume of patients, there is a possibility that you will not be seen.

Post with a photo of a volunteer and person who received care, either during or after the event (make sure to have signed photo release waivers).

- [INSERT CHILD/ADULT FIRST NAME], age [X], and Dr. [insert name], a GKAS volunteer from the [INSERT PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATION], share a big smile at the GKAS dental care event in [INSERT CITY].

Post with a photo of event volunteers, after the event has ended.

- Thank you to all of the volunteers and sponsors who made the [INSERT THE OFFICIAL GKAS EVENT NAME] a great day for dental health. Your collective efforts provided free dental care to more than [INSERT NUMBER] children in our community.

