

Give Kids A Smile (GKAS)

Media Key Messages and Talking Points

Problem: **Nearly one in four children have untreated cavities.*

**Many underserved and uninsured children in Houston are not getting their dental needs met.*

Key Messages:

- 1. Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) Day, a national campaign of the ADA celebrating National Children's Dental Health Month, focuses on the epidemic of untreated oral disease among disadvantaged youth. GKAS is an American Dental Association (ADA) and the Greater Houston Dental Society (GHDS) annual event for the last 17 years.**
- 2. GKAS Program targets children and teens ages 5-18 years old.**
- 3. GKAS provides Free Dental services, including Exams, X-Ray, Cleanings, Fillings, and Extractions to a potential of up to 400 underserved and uninsured children in and around the Greater Houston area.**
- 4. GKAS program also raises awareness that our children in Greater Houston deserve a better health care system that addresses their oral health needs**
- 5. Greater Houston Dentists and Dental Team Members care about our children and realize more needs to be done.**
- 6. Several organizations around the Greater Houston area have registered with the ADA to participate in the 2020 GKAS project. The Greater Houston Dental Society is partnering with PIMA Medical Institute-Houston for a kick-off event in February to provide free dental services to children in local communities. A GKAS Houston event underwritten by Delta Dental Community Cares Foundation, will provide limited restorative and preventive dental services in March and is hosted by the UTHealth School of Dentistry with support from the Greater Houston Dental Society.**

The ADA launched GKAS program nationally in 2003 as a way for dentists and dental team members to join with others in the community to provide free dental services to underserved children. Each year, 350,000 to 400,000 children benefit from more than 1,500 events. Although, volunteerism and donated services from the dental community makes a difference, volunteerism alone cannot solve the problem. We advocate for more funding for children dental services and for community prevention efforts.