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PRESS RELEASE

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**TEENY TEETH PROGRAM ADDRESSES THE “SILENT AND
NEGLECTED” EPIDEMIC AFFECTING CHILDREN IN PASADENA**

**The USC School of Dentistry and Young and Healthy Will Team up to
Offer At Risk Children Free Oral Screenings—To Coincide With the Day
Leaders in the House and Senate Decide the Fate of The State Children’s
Health Insurance Program**

(Pasadena, CA)- The USC School of Dentistry's Teeny Teeth Program teams up with Young and Healthy to provide low-income children with a safety net against the silent epidemic targeting children. Meanwhile, leaders in Congress are expected to vote on the fate of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) which President Bush has vowed to veto.

Nationally, tooth decay remains the most prevalent childhood disease. It is five times more common than asthma, and can be just as debilitating and even fatal. In LA County, cavities and oral infection are the number one reason children are missing school. According to Dean Harold Slavkin, USC School of Dentistry, "We must break the cycle of this disease that is robbing our children not only of a beautiful smile but a healthy body."

On Monday, September 24, 2007, The USC School of Dentistry offered free dental exams for children at the Pasadena Health Department. For many of these children, it was their first contact with a health professional. According to Slavkin, the threat of a veto from President Bush profoundly compromises California's poorest children, the most vulnerable group in our communities. About 91 percent of the children who are insured by SCHIP are in families with income below 200 percent of the federal poverty level of \$41,300 for a family of four in 2007.

The greatest obstacle to health care services in Pasadena is not the availability, but the affordability and accessibility. The greatest obstacle to good health is poverty. Nearly a third of the children living in Pasadena have no form of insurance, including access to Medi-Cal.

The Teeny Teeth Program is offered as part of the USC School of Dentistry's Community

Health Programs. Through a partnership between USCSD and Young and Healthy, the First Smiles training curriculum is utilized to provide training specifically for school nurses. The goals of the trainings are to provide the nurses with an understanding of the science behind the caries process. In addition to understanding the importance of dental care and screening for children.

Young & Healthy is a Pasadena based non-profit that was established in 1990 to provide comprehensive health care to low income school children throughout greater Pasadena who lack or have inadequate health insurance. In collaboration with the USC School of Dentistry, Young & Healthy sponsors an annual Mobile Dental Clinic, treating more than 100 children.

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