



University of Minnesota Program Combats A Silent Epidemic; Governor Dayton Declares February 12th Child Dental Health Awareness Day in Minnesota. News Conference at 2 pm on 2/12 Announcing Statewide Initiative to Crush Cavities in Collaboration With Minnesota Lions Clubs

(Minneapolis, Minnesota) A silent epidemic threatens the oral health of low-income children throughout Minnesota. Dental caries, the process that causes cavities in teeth, has a devastating impact on children who do not have access to quality dental care. Caregivers are often forced to bring these children into hospital emergency rooms for expensive and temporary treatment of the infection and pain that does not correct the underlying dental problem. But a simple, low-cost procedure can prevent caries and preempt oral health diseases that result in missed school days, severe discomfort, serious medical complications, and in rare cases, death.

"The application of fluoride varnish to an infant's or young child's teeth provides a protective barrier that effectively stops the caries process and the subsequent development of oral cavities," says Minnesota Oral Health Project Medical Director Dr. Amos Deinard, MD/MPH.

"This simple procedure can be performed in any physician's office by support staff," says Deinard. "It is a fast, painless preventative treatment that is highly effective."

Deinard founded the Minnesota Oral Health Project (MNOHP) in 2003 and has traveled the state training physicians on the efficacy of fluoride varnish treatments. His passion for childhood dental health led to a partnership with Minnesota Lions Clubs to promote this campaign in local communities.

A news conference on the MNOHP is scheduled for 2 pm on Monday, February 12th in the Ski-U-Mah Room at the McNamara Alumni Center on the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus. Directions are available at <https://mac-events.org/directions/>. Media may interview Deinard following a brief presentation.

For more on the MNOHP, please visit www.crushcavities.com. You can learn more about Deinard at <https://www.pediatrics.umn.edu/bio/pediatrics-a-z/amos-deinard>. A brief video featuring Deinard describes the caries process and how fluoride varnish treatments can prevent childhood cavities: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P6lVE5qTh90&feature=youtu.be>.

Media that are unable to attend the news conference may access an audio feed by calling ([866-767-9978](tel:866-767-9978), passcode 9931696#). Please mute your phone until the Q & A session begins.

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