FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Special Olympics athletes to receive free dental care at WDA Mission of Mercy

WEST ALLIS, WIS., June 9, 2014 – The Wisconsin Dental Association and WDA Foundation are teaming up for the fourth year in a row with Special Olympics Wisconsin to identify 50 athletes who will receive needed oral health care at the sixth Mission of Mercy being held June 27 and 28 in Green Bay.

A team of dentists, dental hygienists and assistants have again volunteered to treat the Special Olympics athletes, many of whom have additional medical considerations. The athletes are 12 - 60 years old. They were screened for urgent dental needs at recent Special Olympics competitions held across the Badger State.

Special Olympics Wisconsin offers Healthy Athletes® at its tournaments -- a program which provides health care screenings and testing to athletes at no cost. One of the Healthy Athletes® disciplines, Special Olympics Special Smiles® gives oral health screenings to athletes several times a year. However, obtaining follow-up dental treatment can be difficult for these individuals.

The WDA is the only state dental association nationwide that provides care to Special Olympics athletes at its Mission of Mercy events. Since 2011, an estimated $43,500 in restorative and preventive dental care has been provided to 85 special athletes at no cost to them, their families or SOWI.

“We are pleased to again partner with the WDA on this charitable care outreach,” Special Olympics Wisconsin Director of Athlete Wellness Initiatives Melissa Schoenbrodt said. “Our athletes’ oral health is critical to their success both on and off the playing field.”

The 2014 WDA Mission of Mercy will be held at the KI Center, 333 Main St. Doors to this large-scale, charitable, dental clinic open at 5:30 a.m. both days. Individuals seeking dental care should look for the "Patient Entrance" sign near the door immediately west of the Hyatt hotel on Main Street.

There are no appointments. Care is provided on a first-come, first-served basis to about 1,000 patients daily. Early arrival is encouraged, because available patient slots typically fill by 10 a.m.

Individuals of all ages are welcome. Children under 18 must be accompanied by a parent or guardian.

There is no photo identification, Social Security number or other personal documentation required. Note medically-compromising conditions, such as extremely high blood pressure or severe disabilities may prohibit an individual from receiving care.

An estimated $1 million in cleanings, fillings, extractions, limited treatment partials and personal oral hygiene education will be provided through 2,000 or more patient encounters. The free care will be delivered
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by more than 1,000 volunteers, including dentists, dental hygienists and assistants, Marquette University School of Dentistry students and community members.

Major financial and in-kind support is provided by Cornerstone Foundation, Delta Dental of Wisconsin Charitable Fund, Henry Schein Dental and Walmart Foundation. Delta Dental, Henry Schein and Kwik Trip have supported all six WDA MOM programs.

More than 50 organizations and individuals have made tax-deductible financial and in-kind donations to help cover $183,000 in costs for equipment and facility rental, supplies, pharmaceuticals and food for this major charitable dental care event which includes one day each for set up and clean up.

WDA dentists and other MOM volunteers donate $6 - $8 in care for every dollar received. More than 11,300 children and adults have received $5.8 million in care at WDA Missions of Mercy since 2009.

“As doctors of oral health, dentists have the training and education to relieve pain and make people well — but we can’t solve the state’s dental access problems alone,” WDA Mission of Mercy State Chair Dr. Tom Raimann, a general dentist with a private practice in Hales Corners, Wisconsin, said.

“The WDA Mission of Mercy is a dentist-led, community-based approach that provides care now to people suffering from untreated dental disease, strengthens and expands the public/private safety net and brings disease prevention and education into communities,” Raimann added.

The Wisconsin Dental Association was established in 1870. With more than 3,000 members statewide, the WDA represents some 79 percent of all licensed dentists and a growing number of dental hygienists in Wisconsin. WDA members are committed to promoting professional excellence and quality oral health care. The WDA is headquartered in West Allis and has a legislative office in Madison. It is one of 53 constituent (state-territorial) dental societies of the American Dental Association - the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. For more information on the WDA, call 414-276-4520, visit our WDA.org website and find us on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Flickr, YouTube, Instagram and LinkedIn.

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