



Stop Caries NOW for a Cavity-Free Future

DENTAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH LEADERS FROM CANADA AND THE UNITED STATES TARGET A CAVITY-FREE FUTURE FOR CHILDREN BORN IN 2026 AND BEYOND

*Cavities are the number one chronic disease, despite being preventable
and, in the early stages, reversible*

CHICAGO, NOVEMBER 3, 2015 – This weekend at the American Public Health Association meeting, leaders in dentistry and public health joined together to launch the Canada-United States Chapter of the *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future* (the *Alliance*). The *Alliance* aims to facilitate collaboration among the various professional groups who impact oral health with a specific focus on children under the age of six.

Worldwide, 60–90% of school children and nearly 100% of adults have tooth decay.ⁱ In fact, dental caries (which includes all stages of tooth decay) is the most common, yet preventable, chronic disease on the planet. The impact of this disease has a profound impact on children in North America. In Canada, an estimated 2.26 million school days are missed each year due to dental related illness.ⁱⁱ In the United States, a child is five times more likely to seek emergency room treatment for dental problems than for asthma, often because they can't see a dentist, are uninsured or can't afford routine dental care.ⁱⁱⁱ

There are multiple steps in the formation of a cavity. First, bacteria that develop on the teeth between twice-daily brushing break down sugars in all the foods we eat and drink. These bacteria produce acid, which can attack and dissolve tooth enamel. Ultimately, calcium is lost from the enamel, resulting in a weak spot, the first stage of cavity development. If left unchecked or untreated, tooth decay continues and a cavity develops. With proper management and intervention, early forms of tooth decay – known as caries – can actually be stopped and reversed.

“Too often, we accept the occurrence of cavities as the status quo,” said Margherita Fontana, DDS, PhD, Professor, University of Michigan School of Dentistry and Chapter co-chair. “We know caries management is achievable by utilizing evidence-based approaches to reverse, stop and prevent tooth decay, and by establishing inter-professional partnerships that can help reduce disparities in certain populations of children.”

National Declaration to Elevate New Way of Looking at Caries

As part of the launch event, national leaders signed a declaration committing to the goals of the *Alliance*. As an initial goal, the ACFF Canada-US Chapter will aim to facilitate inter-professional collaboration for caries prevention and management, by increasing the number of medical offices that routinely recommend brushing a child's teeth with fluoridated toothpaste, a healthy diet and the use of fluoride varnish.

“Collaboration is essential for comprehensive prevention and management of caries in both Canada and the U.S.,” said Alyssa Hayes, BDent(Hons), MSc, FRCD(C), Assistant Professor, University of Saskatchewan, and Chapter co-chair. “We need to commit to developing systems at various jurisdictional levels which encourage the policy makers and **all** health professionals to work together in



Stop Caries NOW for a Cavity-Free Future

addressing this disease. Collectively we can educate the public and encourage leaders in health care to take action.”

About The Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future (ACFF)

The *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future*, a non-profitable charitable organization, is a group of worldwide leading dental experts who have joined forces to help implement changes to dental health practices across the globe. The aim of the *Alliance* is to promote initiatives to stop the development and progression of tooth decay in order to move towards a Cavity-Free Future for everyone. To achieve this goal, the *Alliance* believes that collaborative action is required to raise awareness of dental caries (tooth decay) and positively influence people’s dental health habits.

The *Alliance for a Cavity-Free Future* is supported by Colgate Palmolive Company; the company supports improved oral health through its partnerships with the dental profession and government and public health agencies.

###

References:

- i. World Health Organization, Report on Oral Health, 2003. Available at: http://www.who.int/oral_health/media/en/orh_report03_en.pdf. Accessed October 29, 2015.
- ii. National Children’s Oral Health Foundation. Facts about decay. Available at: <http://www.ncohf.org/resources/tooth-decay-facts>. Accessed October 29, 2015.
- iii. National Maternal and Child Oral Health Policy Center. Key Oral Health Messages. Available at: <http://nmcohpc.net/2011/key-oral-health-messages>. Accessed October 29, 2015.

Media Contact:

Rebecca M. Farrell
Burson-Marsteller Public Relations
+1 (917) 715-7840 / Rebecca.farrell@bm.com