



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Oral Health Advocates March Into May Jubilant**

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**Annapolis, Maryland.** (May 22, 2012) – Advocates continue to be jubilant because of the oral health progress made during March and into May. These achievements in Maryland, which focus on improving the oral health knowledge, clearly speaks to the resolve advocates possess to go the distance for the sake children and families in their state. On March 22<sup>nd</sup> the Oral Health Literacy Campaign was introduced and today the *Oral Health Education - Certification and Monitoring* bill was signed into law. Under the new law, Maryland public schools are to provide a report to the Governor each year which confirms oral health education is being taught. The Oral Health Literacy Campaign provides extensive information and tips to drive awareness for critical stages of pediatric oral health care.

The Oral Health Education - Certification and Monitoring law was established because of the commitment of many stakeholders, including the Maryland State Board of Education. The tenacity and testimony of congressman, senators, delegates, dentists, educators and physician, afforded the legislation additional momentum. Testimony was heard from Congressman Elijah Cummings, Owings Mills based pediatrician, Dr. Joseph Berk, Advocates for Children and Youth, The Baltimore Teacher's Union, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Maryland State Board of Dental Examiners, Maryland Dental Society, Maryland State Dental Association, National Alliance of Black School Educators, National Dental Association (NDA), Prince George's Health Department and The Children's Oral Health Institute. NDA Past President and Director of Advocacy & Outreach for The Children's Oral Health Institute, Dr. Leslie Grant, stated, "Strong collaborations are key to elevating oral health literacy amongst our youth and our educators."

Oral health advocates in Maryland and around the country dedicated many hours to glean the March and May achievements. The Oral Health Education law and the Oral Health Literacy Plan are being cheered by the stakeholders. Mr. Ralph Fuccillo, President of the DentaQuest Foundation traveled from Boston to be in Annapolis. Members of the Maryland Dental Society, Maryland State Dental Association, and Maryland Academy of General Dentistry, Maryland Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Maryland Dental Action Coalition and The Children's Oral Health Institute were at the State House to witness the signing.

The Children's Oral Health Institute's CEO and practicing pediatric dentist, Dr. Winifred J. Booker said, "We look forward to offering curriculum resources to help make the incorporation of oral health education a seamless part of classroom instruction. She went on the say, The Oral Health Education - Certification and Monitoring law and Oral Health Literacy Plan are movements in Maryland with far-reaching promise. Reducing the loss of school and work days from painful tooth decay, alone, can lead to healthier communities."

*For more information about this press release, The Children's Oral Health Institute and to obtain oral health curriculum resources visit [www.mycchi.org](http://www.mycchi.org) or call 866-508-7400.*

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P.O. Box 1901 Baltimore, MD 21203 • 866-508-7400