



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
December 29, 2005

**Contact:** Diana Yates, Communications Coordinator  
(217) 531-4275, mobile: (217) 202-7781  
Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

## **Public Health to Provide Exams and Preventive Dental Care in Champaign–Urbana Schools**

Program Will Reach Out to All Champaign-Urbana School Children

*“Rather than hiring another company to do this work, as we have in the past, we’ve decided to bring these dental services to the schools ourselves.”  
– Interim Public Health Administrator Garry Bird.*

Starting January 10, 2006, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District dentists and dental hygienists will go directly to area schools to offer exams and preventive dental services to all schoolchildren who opt to take advantage of the program.

The dental health visits will help children in Kindergarten, 2nd and 6th grades get their required dental exams by a May 1 deadline. But the program will also provide exams to children in other grades, along with fluoride treatments to all children who opt to take advantage of the program.

And school children who qualify for the schools’ free or reduced lunch program will be eligible for dental sealants.

Cavities are a common problem for children – and the problem begins when they’re quite young. Tooth decay affects nearly a fifth of 2–4-year-olds, more than half of 8-year-olds, and more than three-fourths of 17-year-olds.

Dental exams can catch problems early and fluoride treatments are effective at preventing tooth decay.

Dental sealants are a plastic coating applied to the chewing surfaces of the back teeth. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, sealants are a safe,

effective way to prevent cavities in children. The sealants are a physical barrier so that cavity-causing bacteria cannot invade the chewing surfaces of teeth.

Healthy People 2010, an initiative of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, proposes that no less than half of all U.S. children have dental sealants by 2010. Currently, less than 25% of schoolchildren do.

Students who are found to have dental problems that require more intensive care will be referred to the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District's Division of Dental Health for these services.

####