Survey shows Tooth Fairy is giving more per tooth

By Fred Michmershuizen, Online Editor

The Tooth Fairy is being more generous these days, according to a recent survey. In fact, some are even saying the increased amounts that children are receiving for their teeth point to signs of a recovering economy.

The 2010 Tooth Fairy Poll, conducted by Delta Dental of Minnesota, showed that in Minnesota, children are now receiving an average of $1.96 per tooth, which increased significantly from the previous year’s average of $1.88—a 21 percent increase. Nationally, the average is $2.13, which is a 15 percent increase over last year’s average of $1.88.

“This year’s Tooth Fairy Poll average reflects improvements we’re seeing in other areas of the economy,” said Ann Johnson, director of community affairs for Delta Dental of Minnesota, in a press release announcing the poll results.

“For example, the Dow Jones Industrial Average increased 23 percent during the same time period. The Tooth Fairy may be another indicator that the economy is starting to recover.”

The annual Tooth Fairy poll results are derived from a national survey randomly distributed to Delta Dental of Minnesota members and their families across the United States who are served by Delta Dental of Minnesota. The poll also revealed some other interesting results.

Nearly half of children’s first dental visits occur by age 2, which is a move in the right direction, according to Delta Dental of Minnesota.

“For the past few years, the poll revealed the child’s first dental visit was closer to age 3, so this is a positive shift,” Johnson said.

“The American Dental Association recommends that a child be seen by a dentist as soon as his or her first tooth erupts, but at least no later than the child’s first birthday.”

Approximately 90 percent of parents surveyed stated their children receive a dental exam every six months.

“The frequency of dental visits should be determined by the child’s dentist, based on an assessment of the child’s unique oral health needs,” Johnson said. “This process ensures that each child receives the most appropriate dental care.”

The poll continues to show children are consuming fewer sugary drinks and treats. More than half of parents surveyed indicated their children consume an average of one to two sugar drinks or treats per day.

“Encourage children to make healthy choices,” Johnson advised. “Teach them to eat a balanced diet and limit in-between meal snacks of foods like the underserved children benefitting each day from NCOHF programs and services.”

In addition to underwriting of operational expenses since 2006, Ultradent has provided more than $107,000 in donated products to the national NCOHF Affiliate network of nonprofit health care programs working in local communities to combat America’s oral health epidemic. Four NCOHF Affiliates benefited from the latest product donation from Ultradent, allowing these facilities to expand and enhance preventive and restorative services for children in their area suffering from pediatric dental disease.

“Millions of children across our country are in dental pain so severe it impacts their ability to eat, sleep and learn,” said Fern Ingber, NCOHF’s president and CEO. “Ultradent has long been an invaluable partner to NCOHF, and we are honored to work with a corporation that shares our mission, Ultradent works to improve the quality of life and health of individuals through various financial and charitable programs.”

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ADA, other groups petition against FTC ‘red flags’ rule

By Fred Michmershuizen, Online Editor

Following a recent federal court decision, the American Dental Association (ADA) has joined with three other national organizations representing professional health care providers calling on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to exclude health professionals from controversial new regulation intended to combat identity theft.

A letter sent to FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz by leaders of the ADA, the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) is the latest challenge to the so-called “red flags” rule.

According to the associations, the FTC’s interpretation of the regulation imposes an unjustified, unfunded mandate on health professionals for detecting and responding to identity theft.

“Congress did not intend the original red flags legislation to apply to small businesses, but rather was intended to encourage large businesses like banks, credit firms and national retailers to implement best practices to protect customers’ from identity theft,” said AVMA President Larry R. Corry, DVM. “The FTC’s interpretation of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 (FACT) led the commission to create a rule that oversteps its authority.

In response to these concerns, the FTC postponed the rule’s effective date to June 1, but it has never changed the position that the rule will apply to health professionals.

In its ruling against the FTC, the court said that the application of this rule to attorneys “is both plainly erroneous and inconsistent with the purpose underlying enactment of the FACT Act.”

The court also stated that the FTC “not only seeks to extend its regulatory power beyond that authorized by Congress,” but also “arbitrarily selects monthly invoice billing as the activity it seeks to regulate.”

“The court ruling sends a clear signal that the FTC needs to reevaluate the broad application of the red flags rule,” said AMA President Larry A. Wickless, DO. “Our four organizations firmly believe that applying the rule to health professionals, but not to lawyers, would be unfair.”

“Postponement of the rule’s effective date is inadequate,” said AOA President Ronald Tankersley, DDS. “Our four organizations need a commitment from the FTC that it will not apply the red flags rules to health professionals if it is not applied to lawyers.”

“The burdens of complying with this rule outweigh the benefits,” said AMA President Larry R. Corry, DVM. “The FTC’s interpretation of the FACT Act should be redefined to exclude health professionals.”

Eva’s Village: Paterson, N.J.-based dental clinic seeks volunteers

Eva’s Village, www.evasvillage.org, is a Paterson, N.J.-based comprehensive anti-poverty, social service agency with a mission to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, treat the addicted and provide medical care to the poor with respect for the human dignity of each individual.

Eva’s Village serves a warm lunch 365 days a year, operates shelters for men, women and women with children, operates an inpatient recovery center for men and women, as well as an intensive outpatient recovery center, and has a free medical clinic.

Yet shelter, food, addiction services and primary health care aren’t the only things provided.

Eva’s Village also gives residents much-needed free dental care thanks to a program established by Dr. Brian Ullmann, a prosthodontist in Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J. The free clinic operates each Wednesday, staffed by volunteer dentists and a dental assistant.

Funding from the Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation helps pay the salary for the dental assistant and a recording assistant. It also helps pay for supplies and prosthetic laboratory fees.

The clinic provides preventive and emergency dental care, including digital panoramic X-rays, cleanings, fillings, extractions, root canals, oral cancer screenings, stainless-steel crowns, restorations and dentures.

“Proper dental care is tremendously important for people trying to rehabilitate their lives,” said Ullmann. “It improves the way they look and the way they feel — and it can help give people more confidence and a positive attitude when looking for work.”

Other volunteers at the Eva’s Village dental clinic include Dr. Yvonne Callas and Dr. Ed Kim. The clinic is presently in need of more volunteer dentists.

If you are interested in volunteering, call Jennifer Doherty at (973) 523-6220, ext. 248, or e-mail her at Jennifer.Doherty@evasvillage.org.