AAE uses Root Canal Awareness Week to dispel myths

By Fred Michmershuizen, Online Editor

Everyone's heard the jokes, the innuendos and the comparisons to unpleasant things. Nothing can be so bad, according to popular perception, as having to undergo a root canal procedure. (Except perhaps an IRS audit.) That's why every spring, the American Association of Endodontists (AAE) holds Root Canal Awareness Week.

The idea behind the event, according to the AAE, is to help dispel long-standing myths about root canal treatment and increase the public's understanding of the procedure as one that is virtually painless. The week also seeks to raise awareness of endodontics as a specialty and highlight the importance of endodontists.

This year in particular, the AAE used its Root Canal Awareness Week, held in the spring, to help encourage general practitioners to refer more cases to endodontists and to help patients make more informed decisions about whether to see a specialist.

With their use of advanced technologies and expertise in administering anesthesia, the AAE pointed out that endodontists perform virtually painless root canal treatments that can last a lifetime. The AAE also says that patients who require endodontic therapy should undergo a root canal procedure.

After all, the AAE pointed out, when it comes to serious health needs, family physicians turn to specialists such as cardiologists for heart disease and podiatrists for foot troubles. However, when it comes to dentistry, general practitioners refer less than half of patients who need root canals to colleagues who specialize in the procedure, according to a recent survey by the AAE.

According to the survey, dentists refer an average of 46 percent of root canal patients to endodontists, yet almost all general dentists surveyed, 94 percent, say they have a positive or very positive perception of the procedure as one that is virtually painless. The week also seeks to raise awareness of endodontics as a specialty and highlight the importance of endodontists.

Reacting to remark by Obama
Speaking of the public's perception of root canal treatment, the AAE did not let a negative reference to the procedure by President Barack Obama go unchecked.

Obama uttered the phrase “as popular as a root canal” when outlining the many difficult challenges facing the nation in his first State of the Union address earlier this year. The AAE cried foul. (Photo/Whitehouse.gov)

The American Association of Endodontists (AAE) holds Root Canal Awareness Week. (Photo/Dental Tribune America.)

A.M. Michmershuizen

When President Barack Obama used the phrase “as popular as a root canal” when outlining the many difficult challenges facing the nation in his first State of the Union address earlier this year, the AAE cried foul. (Photo/Whitehouse.gov)

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AAE stated that patients who require endodontic therapy should undertake a root canal procedure. They explained that endodontists perform virtually painless root canal treatments that can last a lifetime. The AAE also points out that patients who require endodontic therapy should undergo a root canal procedure.

The AAE explained that most root canal treatments can be completed in one visit and are extremely comfortable. A national consumer survey published in 2009 shows that an overwhelming majority of root canal patients use positive words to describe the experience.

According to a previous AAE poll, those who had a root canal performed by an endodontist were six times more likely to describe it as “painless” than those who had never had the procedure.
Sybron is proud to support NCOHF an NCOHF founding underwriter, past chairman of NCOHF, said: “As care needs of underserved children.

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care centers in the NCOHF affili -

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and enhance oral health services for

donations from two of the largest dental

The 10-year plan for the NCOHF affiliate network includes treating more than 5 million children through more than 500 centers throughout the United States and to begin providing global support to developing nations. In addition, NCOHF aims to educate and screen more than 20 million children through schools, community events and ongoing, community-based prevention activities.

Corporate donations

The NCOHF recently announced it has received dental product donations from two of the largest dental products manufacturers in the United States.

Sybron Dental Specialties has donated dental products valued at more than $59,000 to NCOHF to provide vital dental treatment for underserved children. NCOHF affiliates across the country continue to show impressive results in their efforts to provide quality, comprehensive care to the children who need it.

“It is also tremendously valuable to our work to help break the cycle of its devastating effects through supporting our national network of affiliates, which provide vital prevention, education and treatment services,” Drake said.

Since 2006, NCOHF has distributed more than $65.5 million in direct funding, donated dental products and technical resources to the affiliate network to expand and enhance critical oral health services for their local communities. In only four years, NCOHF affiliates have provided critical preventive, restorative and educational oral health services to more than 1 million children.

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“We are extremely grateful to Sybron Dental Specialties for their generous product donation to our affiliate partner, The Children's Dental Center,” said Fern Ingber, NCOHF president and CEO. “Sybron provided the leadership gift to establish NCOHF and continues to be a dedicated partner in our mission to eliminate children's suffering from preventable pediatric dental disease.”

In addition, DENTSPLY International donated dental products valued at more than $165,000 to NCOHF in 2009 to provide vital dental treatment for underserved children across the country.

Twenty-two NCOHF affiliate nonprofit oral health care centers received donated dental products throughout the year from DENTSPLY International.

Christopher Clark, president and chief operating officer of DENTSPLY, said: “DENTSPLY is proud to serve as a longstanding partner for the NCOHF affiliate network, providing both financial and product support. “NCOHF programs for underserved children meet the goals of DENTSPLY’s corporate philanthropy by improving dental prevention, education and access to care in our most vulnerable children. Only by working together can we eliminate the oral health crisis plaguing our nation.”

“We are very grateful that DENTSPLY has been a dedicated NCOHF underwriting partner since our founding in 2006,” Ingber said. “The continued generosity of DENTSPLY, through product donations as well as financial and technical support, has played a significant role in our affiliates’ ability to reach more than 1 million children with prevention, education and treatment services that give them hope for a pain-free and bright future.”

Thanks to generous corporate underwriters such as Sybron, DENTSPLY and many others, 100 percent of all contributions to America’s Toothfairy go directly to fund life-changing oral health care for the children in the United States who need it most.

More information about NCOHF is available online at www.ncohf.org.