As the largest and most highly attended annual dental meeting and exhibition in the United States, the Greater New York Dental Meeting is constantly adding to its already impressive array of educational programs. This year the meeting’s organizers will unveil a program focused on children’s oral hygiene — The Children’s Dental Health Initiative Program — which was made possible by their joining efforts with the United Federation of Teachers and Doral Dental USA.

Children from all five New York City boroughs will travel from their local schools in order to convene on the Greater New York Dental Meeting’s exhibition area in the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center. There they will receive oral hygiene instruction in a fun child-friendly atmosphere. The entertaining program will emphasize the importance of oral care in a way that children can understand, and showcase step-by-step tooth care utilizing proper brushing techniques. At the end of the program, children will have the opportunity to practice their newly learned oral hygiene skills at sinks located in the area and under the supervision of program volunteers.

Hypoglossic students from the New York University College of Dentistry Dental Hygiene Program, the New York City College of Technology Department of Dental Hygiene, volunteers from the Dental Hygienists’ Association of the City of New York, and the New Jersey Dental Hygienists’ Association have generously offered to volunteer their time and skills to be a part of this unique new program.

Children will leave with a toothbrush, toothpaste and lots of new information on how to properly care for their teeth. To maximize attendance, the program will run for three school days — Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday. Executive Director of the Greater New York Dental Meeting Dr. Robert Edwab said, “We are very excited about being able to help children learn proper oral health care in a fun atmosphere.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Division of Oral Health, tooth decay is one of the most common chronic infectious diseases among U.S. children. This preventable health problem begins early: 28 percent of children aged 2–5 have already had decay in their primary teeth. By the age of 11, approximately half of children have experienced decay, and by the age of 19, tooth decay in the permanent teeth affects two-thirds of adolescents.

Low-income children have twice as much untreated decay as children in families with higher incomes. Decay may result in pain, dysfunction, underweight, and poor appearance — problems that can greatly reduce a child’s capacity to succeed in the educational environment. However, all these problems can be avoided by instructing children on proper brushing and flossing techniques and stressing how imperative it is they take care of their teeth and gums. “We must teach our children the importance of oral health early in their childhood,” said General Chairman of the Greater New York Dental Meeting Dr. Clifford Salm.

Bring your entire staff and your family because New York City has something for everyone during the spectacular holiday season. There is no other city where attendees can socialize with colleagues, reap the benefits of an outstanding dental congress that features some of the most highly regarded educators in dentistry, and enjoy the eclectic and abundant mix of attractions that only the “Big Apple” has to offer. And remember, there is never a pre-registration fee at the meeting.

For additional information, please contact the Greater New York Dental Meeting at 570 Seventh Ave., Suite 800, New York, N.Y., 10018-1806; Tel. (212) 598-6922; Fax (212) 598-6954; Web site www.gnydm.com; e-mail info@gnydm.com.