



JOHNSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

dedicated to the prevention of disease and promotion of wellness for our community.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

CONTACT

Barbara Mitchell, Public Information Officer
barbara.mitchell@jocogov.org

Sarah McMeans
sarah.mcmeans@jocogov.org

Melissa Henrich
Melissa.henrich@jocogov.org

For media inquiries, call: (913) 207-7711

JOHNSON COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT LAUNCHES “ELDER SMILES”

(OLATHE, KS – **FEBRUARY 26, 2008**) The Johnson County Health Department is launching a new oral health program for seniors living in Adult Care Facilities (nursing homes, assisted living, and home plus). The \$70,233 demonstration grant, funded by the REACH Healthcare Foundation, provides the springboard for this special service.

Elder Smiles is designed to provide on-site oral hygiene services in the form of cleanings and screenings twice a year and fluoride varnish and x-rays annually. The services will be provided by Extended Care Permit II hygienists (ECP II) and their sponsoring dentists. The program will start by serving Medicaid eligible nursing home residents in two facilities and will eventually serve all interested adult care residents/facilities.

Elder Smiles will be administered by the Adult/Child Care Facilities Division of the Johnson County Health Department. This program will serve as a safety net service and dental home for those facility residents that are unable to or have great difficulty going to a dental clinic for services.

“One of the important health needs in our county is oral health, particularly for many of our seniors”, said Leon F. Vinci, DHA, Director of Public Health for Johnson County. Public health research has shown that approximately only one percent of residents in nursing centers have dental insurance and most seniors have not seen a dentist in the last year.

Eldonna Chesnut, Division Director for the Adult/Child Care Facilities Division said, “Several area nursing homes have expressed an interest in participating in this program. We look forward to providing this worthwhile service to the community.”

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