



## Colgate-Palmolive Company Reaches 100 Million Children With Its "Bright Smiles, Bright Futures" Oral Health Education Program

### Actress and Musician Miranda Cosgrove Celebrates U.S. Milestone with Local School Children, Leading a "Brush-a-Thon"

NEW YORK, NY (Oct. 30, 2009) Colgate-Palmolive Company, the world leader in oral care, announced this week that it has reached 100 million children in the United States, providing free dental screenings, oral health education and treatment referrals as part of its ongoing national education program *Colgate Bright Smiles, Bright Futures*<sup>®</sup>.

The company celebrated the milestone with a "brush-a-thon" in midtown Manhattan that featured over 170 children from Juan Ponce De Leon Public School of the Bronx, NY and actress and musician Miranda Cosgrove, star of the Emmy-nominated television series "iCarly."

Colgate was joined by Diahann Billings-Burford, Chief Service Officer for the City of New York and leader of NYC Service, an initiative that promotes service and volunteerism in New York City. Ira B. Lamster, D.D.S., M.M.Sc., Dean of Columbia University's College of Dental Medicine, and *Bright Smiles, Bright Futures* community, education and professional partners were also present at the celebration. Actress and musician Miranda Cosgrove, a role model for young people, helped emphasize the importance of good oral care as she led the students in a celebratory "brush-a-thon."

"It is unfortunate that there are millions of people who can't get to or can't afford to go to the dentist, which is why efforts like this are so important," said Miranda Cosgrove. "Children are busy and distracted and don't realize how important it is to practice good dental habits or what maintaining them can mean in terms of their overall health. I am hoping that getting the message out will help encourage more kids to brush their teeth and go to the dentist."

Colgate set the ambitious "100 Million Smiles" goal in the United States in 2002 to help reduce the epidemic of oral disease in urban and rural areas where children are especially at risk. Colgate's *Bright Smiles, Bright Futures* program, which began in 1991, uses mobile dental vans staffed with volunteer dentists to conduct free dental screenings, distribute multicultural educational materials, samples, and educate children and their families about the importance of maintaining good oral health. Since launching this program, Colgate has also provided grants to dental students to encourage new practices in underserved areas.

Getting children to develop good brushing habits early is critical. Oral disease remains a national epidemic with tooth decay now being the single most common chronic childhood disease among ages 5 to 17 -- more common than asthma or hay fever (1). Lower income children are only half as likely to access preventative dental services as middle or high-income children, despite their higher occurrence of dental problems(2). A major contributor is dental coverage - for every child in America who does not have medical insurance, there are 2.6 children who do not have dental insurance. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's 2007 National Health Interview Survey, uninsured children (24%) were six times as likely to have unmet dental needs as children with private health insurance and four times as likely as children with Medicaid or other public coverage(3).

"We are deeply committed to improving children's oral health here in the U.S. and around the world," said Ian Cook, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Colgate-Palmolive. "As part of our ongoing journey, we partner with government agencies, dental health professionals and community-based groups to help children in need, making sure they are developing healthy habits early on, and today I want to recognize the efforts they are making and the impact they are having on children's lives."

Colgate's *Bright Smiles, Bright Futures* reaches 50 million children each year in 80 countries. The program continues to partners with governments, the World Health Organization -- the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations -- dental and education professionals and community groups to reach more children and raise awareness of the association between oral health and overall health. In the United States, Colgate continues to work with the U.S. Surgeon General's Office and professional organizations to empower children and their families to take control of their oral health.

"There is still much work to be done in terms of eradicating oral health disease," said Dr. Marsha Butler, Vice President, Global

Oral Health and Professional Relations, Colgate-Palmolive. "Today, we are celebrating a terrific milestone and tomorrow we will be back in the communities, in our dental vans, raising awareness and helping to meet the oral health challenges facing us all."

### **About Colgate-Palmolive Company**

Colgate-Palmolive Company is a leading global consumer products company, tightly focused on Oral Care, Personal Care, Home Care and Pet Nutrition. Colgate sells its products in over 200 countries and territories around the world under such internationally recognized brand names as Colgate, Palmolive, Mennen, Softsoap, Irish Spring, Protex, Sorriso, Kolynos, Elmex, Tom's of Maine, Ajax, Axion, Fabuloso, Soupline and Suavitel, as well as Hill's Science Diet and Hill's Prescription Diet. For more information about Colgate's global business, visit the Company's web site at <http://www.colgate.com>.

### **REFERENCES**

- (1) Surgeon General's report on Oral Health.
- (2) Edelstein, Burton. "Disparities in Oral Health & Access to Care" Ambulatory Pediatrics.
- (3) CDC 2007 National Health Interview Survey