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Dear Colleague:

A panel of outside advisers last month rejected an FDA report concluding that there's no new scientific evidence to justify regulation of **dental amalgam**. The advisory panel was concerned about gaps in available science on amalgam safety, among them the lack of studies on the effect of maternal amalgams on the fetus. The report was based on a review of 34 recent studies and found "no significant new information," but the advisory panel said more research is needed. The panel didn't find amalgam unsafe; it concluded that the FDA report didn't objectively and clearly present current research. In a second 13-7 vote, panelists said the report's conclusions about safety weren't "reasonable," given currently available research. Again, the focus of their concern was the gap in science. The panel consisted of the FDA dental products panel and a neurological advisory panel on dental amalgam and mercury toxicity. The votes came at the end of two days of hearings and don't mean amalgam will be banned or otherwise restricted. The panel of advisers did recommend, however, that the report be rewritten. Three witnesses testified for the ADA: Council on Scientific Affairs Chair Dr. Amid Ismail, CSA Director Dr. Ron Zentz, and Dr. Milton Marshall, a CSA consultant and toxicologist.

We issued a [news release](#) after the hearings welcoming further study on amalgam safety, while reiterating that "the overwhelming weight of scientific evidence supports the safety and efficacy of dental amalgam" and that it should remain available for dentists and patients. **Media coverage** was extensive and included ADA Consumer Advisor Dr. Ada Cooper appearing on NBC Nightly News to reaffirm the ADA's position. ABC's [Good Morning America](#) ran a story Wednesday morning in which ADA Consumer Advisor Ed Hewlitt was quoted. See [MSNBC online](#) for an AP story and the NBC Nightly News segment. Reuters, Bloomberg and CBS radio also picked up the story. An *eGram* went

to ADA members immediately after the hearings.

In a reconfirmation of already existing research findings, [MedPage Today.com](http://MedPageToday.com) reports that **amalgam** is superior to composite restoration materials in reducing decay-causing bacteria. The findings come from a German study of 73 samples presented in a poster session at the Interscience Conference on Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy.

Our 5th annual **Give Kids A Smile** event is Friday, Feb. 2. We anticipate that 500,000 or more underprivileged children nationwide will receive free dental care on that day via thousands of programs, large and small. We encourage you to volunteer for this fulfilling program, whether as first-timers or repeat participants. "Give Kids A Smile is a win-win for everyone involved," says Dr. Jeff Dalin, one of Give Kids A Smile's founders in St. Louis. "We get to do a tremendous amount of good for kids who usually have no other source of care, we have built coalitions with other organizations in our community to leverage the scope of our program and we have become trusted advocates for access to care for the underserved."

There's ample background information on Give Kids A Smile, whether you're a first-timer or veteran, on ADA.org, and beginning Oct. 1 participants can **register their program and request free product** from our corporate sponsors. Product requests will be accepted Oct. 1-Nov. 15, but sign-up continues through Feb. 2. Please understand that requests for free product are just that—requests—not "orders placed" with expectation of fulfillment. We appreciate participants' understanding that even though our sponsors are very generous, demand always exceeds supply for this growing national program, and no one should plan a GKAS program around the receipt of free product.

We hosted a congressional briefing on "**Oral Health & Methamphetamine Use: A Growing Public Health Issue**" in Washington, DC, Sept. 12. ADA President Bob Brandjord discussed the harmful effects of meth dependence on oral health and ways dentists can work with the federal government to help reduce its use. Underscoring our message on the damaging condition known as meth mouth, Dr. Brandjord previewed a two-minute video news release (VNR) explaining meth mouth and how it affects users. The VNR also features soundbites from Dr. Keith Collins of the Partnership for a Drug Free America and former meth addicts. The briefing laid groundwork for a bill we hope to have introduced during the next session of Congress. DVD copies of the VNR were distributed to all attendees at the briefing. The VNR and a news release were distributed nationwide Sept. 13.

ADA's free Podcasts launched as a pilot in late July are proving more and more popular. The four available podcasts have been downloaded more than 2,000 times, and the subscription trend is steadily up. Subscribe (free) to the podcasts on ADA.org. We hope to post two more later this year. The podcasts are tailored for a new dentist audience.

HHS has advised us about **two new resources** from the National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center (OHRC).

- *Dental Sealant Resource Guide, 2nd edition*, encourages the exchange of information about dental sealants and promotes their use. The guide contains a listing of journal articles; materials, including books, curricula, fact/tip sheets, guidelines, manuals, reports, papers and CD-ROMs; and resource organizations.
- *Oral Health Resource Bulletin, Volume XV*, contains descriptions of brochures, posters and fact sheets for consumers; materials from funded and other oral health programs; policy-related materials and education and training materials.

The documents can be viewed on the [OHRC Web site](#).

The American Academy of Periodontology has completed work on its **Guidelines for the Management of Patients with Periodontal Diseases** and the document is available on [AAP's Web site](#). The document reflects the latest research in periodontics, with input from the ADA, AAP members, AGD and ADHA. Our comments on a draft document last year primarily expressed concern that the document did not adequately acknowledge that a significant amount of periodontal care is provided by general dentists, and on delivery of follow-up care, diagnosis of periodontal diseases and effects of varying skill levels and patient bases on referral protocols.

The ADA and Colgate are again co-sponsoring "**Save the World from Cavities**," a consumer campaign to raise awareness about the importance of cavity prevention and to encourage dental visits by children. From Oct. 2006 through June 2007, kids will be able to get a special Save the World from Cavities form from retail outlets, the Internet or participating dental offices, which they get stamped by their dentist. The form goes to Colgate (with a proof of purchase of any Colgate toothpaste or toothbrush), and the child receives a free battery-powered toothbrush. Colgate will make a Save the World from Cavities kit available to members who order from [Colgate's Web site](#). A letter went to dentists last month announcing the program. The free kit includes an easel with tear pad containing 50 Save the World from Cavities forms for office display. A bilingual version is being provided to members of the Hispanic Dental Association. A free-standing, co-branded insert (FSI) was in Sunday newspapers in late August to promote the program, with a bilingual version in selected markets. An in-store display featuring the campaign will appear in supermarkets. As part of the effort to promote access to oral care for children, Colgate will again make a \$100,000 donation to the ADA Foundation.

The Council on Dental Benefit Programs has written a paper summarizing ADA policies and positions on **explanation of benefit (EOB) statements** sent from third-party carriers to patients and dental offices. The paper's purpose is to help carriers use EOBs that clearly convey the plan's benefits to patients and providers, preserve the dentist-patient relationship and use language that replaces references to usual and customary fees. The document is available on [ADA.org](#).

Sincerely,



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