



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**MOBILE DENTAL CLINIC PROVIDES CRITICAL SERVICES
TO LOCAL CHILDREN AND PREGNANT WOMEN FACING BARRIERS TO CARE**

Traveling dental clinic serves more than 659 in Butte County since opening

The Mobile Dental Clinic (MDC), a traveling dental clinic providing a full range of oral health care services for pregnant women and children without access to dental care, will serve families in Butte County in early 2010. This collaborative tri-county program, partially funded by the Butte County Children and Families Commission, has provided 5,858 services to more than 659 young children and pregnant women during its few months of operation in Butte County.

“Access to dental care is a serious concern in our area. Economic strain has left many families without health insurance,” said Supervisor Maureen Kirk, a dental hygienist and Butte County Children and Families commissioner. “Children’s oral health is a critical part of their overall well-being. Receiving regular dental care early on can make a difference in children’s ability to grow up healthy and do well in school.”

The MDC is funded by First 5 commissions in Butte, Glenn and Tehama counties who collectively awarded a grant of \$375,000 to Northern Valley Indian Health (NVIH) in August 2008 to purchase the facility and provide services in all three counties. The program, which supplies a full range of services including dental exams, cleanings, fluoride varnishes, sealants, extractions, crowns, fillings and pediatric root canals, launched in late 2008 and is expected to continue through June 2013.

According to the UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, nearly one-third of all children in the area did not have a dental exam in 2007. Low-income children are half as likely to have access to preventive dental services as children from middle or high-income families and are two to three times more likely to suffer from untreated dental disease, according to the Centers for Disease Control.

“Tooth decay is preventable, yet remains the single most common chronic childhood disease,” said Dr. Melvin Sage, Dental Director of NVIH. “When dental disease is left untreated, it can adversely affect children’s ability to eat, speak and develop positive self-esteem – all of which can adversely affect their health and ability to learn.”

The MDC will be in Gridley February 22 through March 5. Pregnant women and children under age 6 who live in Butte County and are not currently under the care of a dentist are eligible for services. Please call the MDC at (530) 520-6913 to schedule an appointment.

About Butte County Children and Families Commission

Research shows that a child’s brain develops most dramatically in the first five years and what parents and caregivers do during these years to support their child’s growth will have a meaningful impact throughout life. Based on this research, California voters passed Proposition 10 in 1998, adding a 50 cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes to support programs for expectant parents and children ages 0 to 5. Since 1999, Butte County has distributed approximately \$19 million in Prop. 10 revenues to programs and services that meet local needs. For more information on Butte County Children and Families Commission’s programs and services, call 538-7964 or visit www.buttecounty.net/bccfc.

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