



NATIONAL CHILDREN'S DENTAL HEALTH MONTH IN FEBRUARY **"Sealants Make Sense" for Kids 6 to 14 Years Old**

Stockton, CA (January 25, 2022) — February is National Children's Dental Health Month, bringing thousands of dedicated health care providers and educators together to spread the word on the importance of good oral health to children, their caregivers, and teachers. Since 1941, Children's Dental Health Month has grown from a single day to a whole month celebrating healthier smiles without tooth decay—the most common chronic health condition for children in the U.S., according to the American Dental Association (ADA). This year's focus on "Sealants Make Sense" offers parents an even easier way to protect their child's smile.

Research on sealants shows an 80 percent reduction in the risk of decay when adding this to a comprehensive dental health routine as recommended by the ADA. Dental sealants—a thin, non-toxic protective coating painted on the surface of teeth—are typically applied for children and teens once permanent molars have emerged, between 6 and 14 years of age. Dental sealants help keep cavities from forming but do not replace regular brushing and flossing.

Notably, children in San Joaquin County use dental services well below the state average. "With the pandemic, many regular dental visits have fallen off parents' calendars," shares Dr. Maggie Park, Public Health Officer for San Joaquin County Public Health Services. "Fortunately, most dental offices are back to pre-pandemic capacity, so parents should call their child's dentist to schedule a check-up and ask about sealants."

Children's oral health is linked to self-esteem, learning, personal expression, and overall health. In 2020, approximately one in five kindergarten students in San Joaquin County have untreated tooth decay. By the time students reach third grade, three out of every four students will have untreated decay – a 245% increase.

For more information about the Local Oral Health Program (LOHP), visit www.sjteeth.org, or contact Katelynn Peirce, Public Health Educator and LOHP Program Coordinator, at kpeirce@sjcphs.org or (209) 468-8620. Our vision is to eliminate dental disease in children and promote a lifetime of dental health.

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