

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – October 24, 2008**

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Sealants for Smiles

**“A Silent Epidemic”** Surgeon General David Satcher  
**Utah’s Most Common Chronic Childhood Healthcare Concern**

SALT LAKE CITY – “One out of two 2<sup>nd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> grade children screened in the 70 Title I/low income elementary schools in Salt Lake, Davis, Summit and Tooele counties had unmet dental needs, “It’s a travesty!” said Dr. Roger Adams, President and CEO of Sealants for Smiles in a documentary produced by Bonneville International. The documentary will be shown to 200 business, civic, religious and government leaders gathered at ‘An Evening of Smiles’ Gala at the Grand America tomorrow evening.

Governor Jon M. Huntsman Jr. and Winston Wilkinson, Director of Civil Rights at Health and Human Services, will address the critical challenges in dealing with the most common chronic childhood healthcare concern in Utah – dental disease. Nadine Wimmer, KSL 5 Eyewitness News Anchor will emcee the event and a performance by the renowned Salt Lake Children’s Choir. Special recognition will be given to Dental Select, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Humanitarian Services, Ultradent Products Inc, Intermountain Healthcare and Bonneville International for their support of Sealants for Smiles.

The cost of preventing tooth decay by placing dental sealants in children is much less than the cost of treating tooth decay and the savings realized over a lifetime can be substantial. Dental Sealants are a clear plastic material applied to the pits and fissures of the chewing surfaces of teeth, where up to 90% of decay occurs in school children. The American Dental Education Association estimates that every \$1 spent on dental prevention will save \$50 in treatment. If untreated decay progresses, it may be necessary to perform root canals and other extensive and expensive procedures. According to the Surgeon General’s Report and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), dental sealants applied through school-based sealant programs are effective in prevention of dental decay, particularly for high-risk children.

On July 1, 2007 the United Way of Salt Lake ‘*Sealants for Smiles*’ school-based oral health education and dental sealant initiative was transferred to Sealants for Smiles. In its first year

(July 2007-June 2008), **Sealants for Smiles exceeded the previous school-year (2006/2007) services provided to low-income children by more than 300%**. By the end of the 2007-2008 school-year, Sealants for Smiles visited 70 Title I elementary schools in Salt Lake, Davis, Summit and Tooele Counties and applied **16,357 dental sealants** on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade children who would otherwise not have access to these services.

“By bringing the dental sealant program directly to the schools, Sealants for Smiles provides sealants to children unlikely to receive them otherwise,” said Brent Williams, CEO and President of Dental Select. “We are delighted to be the Title Sponsor and provide the administrative support for Sealants for Smiles. This allows 100% of all contributions to go directly to oral health education and dental sealant application,” said Williams.

For detailed descriptions or additional information, visit [www.sealantsforsmiles.org](http://www.sealantsforsmiles.org).

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Oral health is a critical component of a child's overall health. Despite recent technological advancements in dentistry, the incidence of dental decay in children remains unaltered. Sealants for Smiles provides school-based oral health education and dental sealants at no cost to Utah Title I and low-income elementary schools. Dental Select, Utah's largest dental insurer, provides all administrative support allowing 100% of contributions to go directly toward oral health education and application of dental sealants. For more information about Sealants for Smiles, go to [www.sealantsforsmiles.org](http://www.sealantsforsmiles.org).