

GOING THE EXTRA SMILE



By *Melanie Simmer-Beck, R.D.H., B.S., M.S., and Haley Vaughn-Barker, R.D.H., B.S.D.H., E.C.P.*

With the support of a \$125,000 grant from the REACH Healthcare Foundation, the UMKC School of Dentistry has launched “Miles of Smiles,” a pilot teledentistry program in four Title I Olathe School District elementary schools. The program began in June 2007 when a Teledentistry Committee was formed to develop the project. Committee members included Cindy Galemore, director of health services for the Olathe School District, and the following personnel from the UMKC School of Dentistry: Melanie Beck, dental hygiene senior

clinic coordinator; Harvey Eplee (DDS '71), assistant dean for clinical programs; Cindy Amyot (DH '92 MS 93, EdD '00), director of distance education and faculty development; and Bill Marse, director of Biomedical Communications.

Miles of Smiles replicates a well-established “Community Collaborative Practice” oral health model originated by the not-for-profit organization Apple Tree Dental, which has been replicated in several states. Miles of Smiles enables dental hygiene students to utilize a direct internet connection to the UMKC School of Dentistry’s clinic management system while providing preventive oral health services to children in Olathe. This gives students

real-time access to the dental school’s electronic patient record while they deliver off-site preventive oral health care such as prophylaxis, X-rays, intraoral photos, fluoride varnish application, sealants, and patient education to low income children. The UMKC dental hygiene students are supervised by Hayley Barker, who holds an Extended Care Permit I and serves as an assistant clinical professor in the UMKC Division of Dental Hygiene. The Miles of Smiles clinic allows dental hygiene students to gain additional





experiences providing care to children in an alternative environment. The program estimates that more than 450 underserved children will receive

preventive dental care every six months. Miles of Smiles also seeks to improve children's overall knowledge about oral health by providing oral health education to all children in participating schools. Another goal is to reduce the proportion of children and adolescents who

have untreated dental decay in primary and/or permanent teeth by referring



children with decay to local Olathe dentists who have volunteered to participate in "Dentist Community Care," an Olathe School District advisory board. To date, 10 Olathe dentists have volunteered to provide care once a month to a child who does not have dental insurance or Medicaid. Nineteen students throughout the district have received more than \$10,000 in dental care through "Dentist Community Care" from January through May 2008. The school nurses at Havencroft Elementary, Washington Elementary, Ridgeview Elementary, and Fairview Elementary have coordinated these services.

Miles of Smiles thanks the following companies for donating equipment and supplies:

A-Dec, Premier Instruments, Opalescence, Hu-Friedy; and these Olathe oral healthcare providers: Craig Alexander, Jon Bevan, William E. Bucher (DDS '80), John T. Fales Jr. (DDS '82, PED '91), Larry Gangel (DDS '66), Amy Hahn, Corey Hinrichs (DDS '89), Kelly Lineback, Anthony Marengo Jr. (DDS '85), Dr. Ross L. Thompson, Nevin Waters (DDS '73) and Lindsay Waters Davidson.