

Maryland Dental Action Coalition

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Maryland Dental Action Coalition and UnitedHealthcare
Launch Oral Health Campaign for Hispanic Women**

*Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos (Healthy Teeth, Healthy Kids) to educate
people about the importance of oral health*

BALTIMORE, MD (September 15, 2014) – The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) and UnitedHealthcare are launching *Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos*, a multimedia campaign to educate Hispanic women with children about oral health.

UnitedHealthcare is investing \$25,000 in the campaign, which will enable MDAC to expand the campaign and reach more mothers.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, (CDC), oral disease is the most common chronic disease among U.S. children. Left untreated, oral disease can cause pain and infections as well as problems eating, speaking and learning. Low income and minority children, especially those of Hispanic background, are disproportionately affected by poor oral health and have a greater number of untreated cavities. According to the *Maryland Oral Health Survey of School Children, 2011-2012*, Hispanic children in Maryland are less likely to visit the dentist and more likely to lack dental insurance.

Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos will run from Sept. 15 through the end of November and will target Hispanic mothers between the ages of 18 and 34 who reside in Maryland. The campaign will include radio advertising on WLZL-FM (El Zol, 107.9) and transit advertising, as well as social media, media relations, community outreach and distribution of campaign materials including brochures and posters.

“Given the limited access to oral health care in the Hispanic community, it is essential that we reach out and provide information on how to prevent cavities and how to access care, especially for children. I am thankful that UnitedHealthcare chose to partner with us to increase the impact of this campaign,” said Margie Donohue, Executive Director of MDAC. “The goal of *Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos* is to reduce oral disease among Hispanic children by increasing healthy behaviors and improving access to critically needed oral health care.”

To ensure that *Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos* reaches the people who are most in need of access to oral health care, MDAC is conducting a pre-campaign survey that will provide baseline data on oral health awareness and behaviors among Hispanic women ages 18 through 34 years. A post-campaign survey will be

conducted to determine if the intended audience is aware of the campaign and its messaging, as well as if there were any changes in their oral health habits.

“We are grateful for the opportunity to work with MDAC to create awareness and understanding of oral health among children, particularly those in underserved communities,” said Leahanne Thomas, COO of UnitedHealthcare Community Plan of Maryland. “*Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos* will provide hygiene skills and education as well as a means to access oral health care.”

Maryland Dental Action Coalition

The Maryland Dental Action Coalition (MDAC) is a community-based membership organization that is an incorporated 501(c) 3 nonprofit whose mission is to improve the oral health of all Marylanders through increased prevention, education, advocacy, and access to oral health care. It is the state’s leading non-governmental oral health policy and advocacy organization, and was formed following the death of a 12-year-old Prince George’s County boy who died from untreated tooth decay.

MDAC has a well-established history of assessment and health communication activities. MDAC works with a wide variety of stakeholders to develop and implement initiatives to enhance oral health for all Marylanders and monitors progress on the five-year Maryland Oral Health Plan (MOHP). The MOHP is designed to improve education and literacy, increase access and assure advocacy and policy implementation to advance oral health. For more information on MDAC and the MOHP, please visit www.MDAC.us.

About UnitedHealthcare

UnitedHealthcare is dedicated to helping people nationwide live healthier lives by simplifying the health care experience, meeting consumer health and wellness needs, and sustaining trusted relationships with care providers. The company offers the full spectrum of health benefit programs for individuals, employers and Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries, and contracts directly with more than 800,000 physicians and care professionals, and 6,000 hospitals and other care facilities nationwide. Globally, UnitedHealthcare serves more than 45 million people in health benefits and is one of the businesses of UnitedHealth Group (NYSE: UNH), a diversified Fortune 50 health and well-being company.

Maryland Office of Oral Health. The pre-post campaign survey as well as the *Dientes Sanos, Niños Sanos* campaign is supported by the Maryland Office of Oral Health. The Office of Oral Health focuses on improving the oral health of Marylanders, preventing oral diseases and injuries and increasing access to oral health care. For more information on Office of Oral Health programs, please visit pha.dhmh.maryland.gov/oralhealth/SitePages/Home.aspx.

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