

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

November 16, 2007

Contacts:

Children's Hospital
Jennifer Seymour
(206)987-5207

UW School of Dentistry
Dana Robinson Slote
(206) 616 - 0827

Washington Dental Service
Sean Pickard
(206) 528-2304

\$5 M Gift Boosts Childhood Oral Health Care Offered by UW, Children's Hospital *Washington Dental Service Building for Early Childhood Oral Health at Magnuson Park to provide 30,000 patient visits annually*

SEATTLE, WA – The University of Washington (UW) School of Dentistry and Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center today announced they are joining forces to combat the growing crisis of childhood dental disease with the development of a new pediatric dental facility.

The new facility, located in Magnuson Park, will double the capacity of the dental programs at both institutions, providing 30,000 pediatric dental visits per year for healthy children and those with urgent or special needs.

Washington Dental Service and the Washington Dental Service Foundation have provided a lead gift of \$5 million to build the facility which will house an innovative clinical, research and training program, the Early Childhood Oral Health (ECOH) program.

“There is no disease as widespread as childhood cavities, and the shame is they are nearly preventable with regular dental care,” said Washington Dental Service CEO Jim Dwyer. “Washington Dental Service is committed to being part of the solution. We believe every child should have a chance to learn, play and grow up in good health. We are excited about the potential for the ECOH-WDS partnership.”

Washington Dental Service's gift is the largest received by Children's for support of dental services. Children's, Washington Dental Service and the UW School of Dentistry have a long history of collaboration, developing new models for pediatric dental care and advocating for improved access to that care.

Dr. Sanford Melzer, MD, Children's senior vice president for strategic planning, notes that “this generous gift from Washington Dental Service provides the basis for an important joint effort between Children's and the UW School of Dentistry that will dramatically improve the dental care of children in our region.”

(MORE)

In Washington, nearly 60 percent of elementary children suffer from preventable dental decay and more than one in five suffer from rampant decay -- cavities in seven or more teeth.

“Children are not healthy if their mouths aren’t healthy,” said Dr. Joel Berg, DDS, director of the ECOH program and chair of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry at the UW School of Dentistry. “Left untreated, dental disease can be intensely painful, costly and lead to other serious lifelong health complications. The problem is even worse for the children living in low-income households and for those with special needs.”

Added Berg: “This new venture will ensure our region’s children receive the highest quality oral health care at an early age when disease can be prevented. The Washington Dental Service Building for Early Childhood Oral Health will bring nationally-recognized oral health care and medical professionals together under one roof to directly impact healthcare delivery models, research and education.”

###