



## For Immediate Release

### Mississippi Schools Acknowledge Oral Health Education Resources

Teachers and nurses welcome the introduction of the curriculum reference during Code Red Workshop.

**Gulfport, MS** (December 9, 2011) – Teachers and nurses in Gulfport welcomed the introduction of *Code Red: The Oral Health Crisis In Your Classroom*® *Empowering the Teacher to Teach Oral Health Education – A Curriculum Resource Reference*. During the presentations of the initiative teachers and school nurses from Gaston Point Elementary School and Gulfport Central Middle School offered accounts of children often suffering from dental pain in class. School nurse, Jo Johns, RN stated that toothaches are the most common reason children visit the health suite at Gaston Point. No teacher or nurse attending the Code Red Workshop was a stranger to knowing the pain and suffering students live with at school because of untreated tooth decay.

These teachers and school nurses went on to acknowledge the importance of being able to access the compiled oral health resources found in the Code Red booklet. They validated the need for the inclusion of this educational material in school curriculums by sharing personal classroom experiences. This comes on the heels of the national introduction of the initiative, where teachers from around the country voiced support to incorporate these invaluable oral health lessons into the required K through 12 curricula.

Mississippi, like Maryland, tragically reported the death of one of their youngest citizens to untreated tooth decay in 2008. 6 year-old Alexander Collander succumbed to a preventable dental infection. The Children's Oral Health Institute believes that by sensitizing teachers to untreated early childhood caries and the cycle of pain that could ensue, is key. The organization feels future generations will develop proactive oral health care lifestyles by empowering teachers to seamlessly incorporate this education in lesson plans. Mississippi native and the next National Dental Association president, Dr. Roy Irons agrees. Many dentists, teachers and school nurses agree as well that by using the *Code Red* resources, the behavior necessary to develop a more oral disease prevention oriented society can become a 21<sup>st</sup> century reality.

The presenter, Dr. Winifred J. Booker stated that it was clear from participation that the workshop elevated the audiences understanding of the devastating consequences untreated dental disease can have on an innocent child's life. The practicing pediatric dentist from Maryland and CEO of The Children's Oral Health Institute was joined by Dr. Brigetta K. Turner. Dr. Turner, a practicing general dentist in Jackson and Secretary of the Mississippi Dental Society was instrumental in getting this workshop to teachers. Turner helped to field questions and addressed ways that schools could access dental care in Mississippi.

The acknowledgment of the acute need for these educational measures by teachers in Mississippi supports the movement to improve the well being of children and families not only in the Magnolia state but nationwide. The Children's Oral Health Institute will continue to work with organized dentistry, state educators and local governments to encourage oral health education curriculum requirements.

Teachers were pleased to receive copies of the *Code Red* booklet. The educators were also provided the Crest Oral B Pro Health System and samples of the many available resources by Colgate, Sunstar and others referenced in the booklet. To participate in these workshops visit the Institute at [www.mycohi.org](http://www.mycohi.org) or call 1-866-508-7400.

*Prevention that Empowers Globally!*