Survey shows Tooth Fairy is giving more per tooth

By Fred Michmershuizen, Online Editor

The Tooth Fairy is being more generous these days, according to a recent survey. In fact, some are even saying the increased amounts that children are receiving for their teeth point to signs of a recovering economy.

The 2010 Tooth Fairy Poll, conducted by Delta Dental of Minnesota, showed that in Minnesota, children are now receiving an average of $1.96 per tooth, which increased significantly from the previous year’s average of $1.62—a 21 percent increase. Nationally, the average is $2.13, which is a 15 percent increase over last year’s average of $1.88.

“This year’s Tooth Fairy Poll average reflects improvements we’re seeing in other areas of the economy,” said Ann Johnson, director of community affairs for Delta Dental of Minnesota, in a press release announcing the poll results.

“For example, the Dow Jones Industrial Average increased 23 percent during the same time period. The Tooth Fairy may be another indicator that the economy is starting to recover.”

The annual Tooth Fairy poll results are derived from a national survey randomly distributed to Delta Dental of Minnesota members and their families across the United States who are served by Delta Dental of Minnesota. The poll also revealed some other interesting results.

Nearly half of children’s first dental visits occur by age 2, which is a move in the right direction, according to Delta Dental of Minnesota.

“For the past few years, the poll revealed the child’s first dental visit was closer to age 5, so this is a positive shift,” Johnson said.

“The American Dental Association recommends that a child be seen by a dentist as soon as his or her first tooth erupts, but at least no later than the child’s first birthday.”

Approximately 90 percent of parents surveyed state their children receive a dental exam every six months.

“The frequency of dental visits should be determined by the child’s dentist, based on an assessment of the child’s unique oral health needs,” Johnson said. “This process ensures that each child receives the most appropriate dental care.”

The poll continues to show children are consuming fewer sugary drinks and treats. More than half of parents surveyed indicated their children consume an average of one to two sugar drinks or treats per day.

“Encourage children to make healthy choices,” Johnson advised. “Teach them to eat a balanced diet and limit in-between meal snacks of foods containing high levels of sugar. This will help promote good dental health as well as overall health.”

The poll also shows most Minnesotans are working hard to keep their teeth clean. According to the poll, 79 percent of parents report that their children brush their teeth in the morning, and 90.5 percent of children brush at night, while only 5.1 percent brush at noon.

“Children should brush with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste after sugary or starchy meals or snacks to help reduce the incidence of tooth decay,” Johnson said.

“Children should also drink fluoridated water after meals to help cleanse the teeth.”

Approximately 56 percent did not know that tooth decay is contagious, transmissible and a bacterial infection. However, Delta Dental was pleased to learn that 60.8 percent of survey-takers changed their toothbrush after the cold or flu.

For the official Tooth Fairy Poll Web site, visit www.thefoulfaithoftoothfairypoll.com. It lists current Tooth Fairy rates, statistics, oral health information and Tooth Fairy customs from around the world.

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ADA, other groups petition against FTC ‘red flags’ rule

By Fred Michmershuizen, Online Editor

Following a recent federal court decision, the American Dental Association (ADA) has joined with three other national organizations representing professional health care providers calling on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) to exclude health professionals from controversial new regulation intended to combat identity theft.

A letter sent to FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz by leaders of the ADA, the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Osteopathic Association (AOA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) is the latest challenge to the so-called “red flags” rule.

According to the associations, the FTC’s interpretation of the regulation imposes an unjustified, unfunded mandate on health professionals for detecting and responding to identity theft.

“Congress did not intend the original red flags legislation to apply to small businesses, but rather was intended to encourage large businesses like banks, credit firms and national retailers to implement best practices to protect customers’ from identity theft,” said AVMA President Ronald Tankersley, DDS.

In their petition, the organizations asked the FTC to make it clear that the rule will not apply to their members given the result of recent litigation brought by the American Bar Association against the FTC.

In that case, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia ruled that lawyers should be excluded from the requirements imposed by the red flags rule.

The court decision follows wide criticism that the FTC’s overly broad interpretation of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003 (FACT) facted the commission to create a rule that oversteps its authority.

In response to these concerns, the FTC postponed the rule’s effective date to June 1, but it has never changed the position that the rule will apply to health professionals.

In its ruling against the FTC, the court said that the application of this rule to attorneys is both plainly erroneous and inconsistent with the purpose underlying enactment of the FACT Act.

The court also stated that the FTC “not only seeks to extend its regulatory power beyond that authorized by Congress,” but also “arbitrarily selects monthly invoice billing as the activity it seeks to regulate.”

“The court ruling sends a clear signal that the FTC needs to re-evaluate the broad application of the red flags rule,” said AMA President J. James Rohack, MD.

“Our four organizations firmly believe that applying the rule to health professionals, but not to lawyers, would be unfair.”

“Postponement of the rule’s effective date is inadequate,” said AOA President Larry A. Wickless, DO. “Our four organizations need a commitment from the FTC that it will not apply the red flags rules to health professionals if it is not applied to lawyers.”

“The burdens of complying with this rule outweigh the benefits,” said AVMA President Larry R. Corry, DVM. “The FTC’s interpretation of the FACT Act should be redefined to exclude health professionals.”

Eva’s Village: Paterson, N.J.-based dental clinic seeks volunteers

Eva’s Village, www.evasvillage.org, is a Paterson, N.J.-based comprehensive anti-poverty, social service agency with a mission to feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, treat the addicted and provide medical care to the poor with respect for the human dignity of each individual.

Eva’s Village serves a warm lunch 365 days a year, operates shelters for men, women and children, operates an inpatient recovery center for men and women, as well as an intensive outpatient recovery center, and has a free medical clinic.

Yet shelter, food, addiction services and primary health care aren’t the only things provided.

Eva’s Village also gives residents much-needed free dental care thanks to a program established by Dr. Brian Ullmann, a prosthodontist in Ho-Ho-Kus, N.J. The free clinic operates each Wednesday, staffed by volunteer dentists and a dental assistant.

Funding from the Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation helps pay the salary for the dental assistant and a recording assistant. It also helps pay for supplies and prosthodontic laboratory fees.

The clinic provides preventive and emergency dental care, including digital panoramic X-rays, cleanings, fillings, extractions, root canals, oral cancer screenings, stainless-steel crown restorations and dentures.

“Proper dental care is tremendously important for people trying to rehabilitate their lives,” said Ullmann. “It improves the way they look and the way they feel — and it can help give people more confidence and a positive attitude when looking for work.”

Other volunteers at the Eva’s Village dental clinic include Dr. Yvonne Callas and Dr. Ed Kim. The clinic is presently in need of more volunteer dentists.

If you are interested in volunteering, call Jennifer Doherty at (973) 523-6220, ext. 248, or e-mail her at Jennifer.Doherty@evasvillage.org.

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