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May 12, 2008

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CHILDREN IN ILLINOIS TO HAVE HEALTHIER SMILES

Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation announces a request for proposals to expand oral health care services; awards two significant oral health care grants

HINSDALE, Ill. – As part of the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation's (ILCHF) \$20 million, five-year initiative to expand access to oral health care for Illinois children, the Foundation is pleased to announce a request for proposals in the oral health care field. The RFP process is open to any nonprofit that currently provides primary care services directly to children or formally collaborates with a primary care provider and desires to establish a new oral health service, expand existing services in a clinical setting or implement a community planning process. This RFP is expected to result in ILCHF awarding a number of grants ranging between \$50,000 and \$300,000.

"Expanding access to quality oral health care for all children in Illinois is one of the Foundation's primary objectives, along with addressing the mental health needs of children and increasing the rate of developmental screening of young children," said Dr. Peter E. Doris, chair of ILCHF board of directors. "As a component of ILCHF's oral health care initiative, the Foundation supports programs that are designed to increase the number of oral health professionals caring for underserved children."

To encourage an increase in the number of oral health professionals dedicated to serving children in underserved areas, the Foundation also announces the recent award of \$3 million to the two dental schools in Illinois. Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine and the University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Dentistry will each receive \$1.5 million over the next several years.

The grant awarded to Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine will, over the next six years, allow the School to better prepare dentists to provide care for underserved children, primarily in southern Illinois. The University will design and implement a program that modifies the admission process, updates the curriculum, provides mentoring and support to students, expands community-based service-learning opportunities and assesses the outcomes of the program.

Likewise, the grant awarded to University of Illinois at Chicago, College of Dentistry will support significant changes and enhancements to the existing community-based dental program over the next five years. These changes include a greater emphasis on pediatric dentistry at community sites and earlier, more in-depth exposure to service-learning opportunities for students. The University expects to graduate professionals with a greater understanding of the social dimensions of their profession and who are equipped to participate in the development of solutions for expanding access to oral health care for children.

The oral health care RFP is now open and will close June 20, 2008. Grantees can expect to be notified of selection by October 31, 2008. All interested applicants should visit www.ilchf.org to determine eligibility and review the process for online application submission.

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About Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation

The Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation was formed in 2003 with one goal in mind: to improve the health of all Illinois children. Through the release of targeted RFPs and proactive, ongoing funding, ILCHF works to eliminate the barriers that prevent children from regularly accessing high-quality health care. Since 2004, the Foundation has awarded more than \$25 million in grants to organizations serving children's health needs across the state. Please visit www.ilchf.org for more information about the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation.