



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hawaii Dental Service Celebrates 60th Anniversary by Donating HDS Smile Kits to Keiki Statewide

Honolulu, Hawai‘i – Hawaii Dental Service (HDS), the state’s leading dental benefits provider, is celebrating its 60th anniversary this year by giving HDS Smile Kits to more than 11,000 kindergarten children in 208 Title I schools throughout the state, including 37 charter schools, beginning in May 2022.



Title I schools have high percentages of children from low-income families and these schools receive federal financial assistance to meet state academic standards. The HDS Smile Kits contain a toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, a small toy, and an HDS oral health activity booklet.

“Hawaii Dental Service began 60 years ago by 15 pioneering and visionary dentists to make oral health care more accessible for everyone in our community. The keiki of the Hawaii Stevedores union employees were the first to receive coverage

from HDS,” said Dr. Diane Paloma, HDS president and CEO. “Today, we’re proud to carry on this commitment that began with our founding dentists by extending coverage to keiki and other family members and continually looking at ways to improve the oral health of our community.”

Hawaii Keiki: Healthy and Ready to Learn, a partnership between the University of Hawaii at Manoa’s Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing and the Hawaii Department of Education, is assisting Hawaii Dental Service in distributing the HDS Smile Kits to schools.

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This HDS anniversary community initiative is just one of several major oral health-related programs that HDS has launched in the last few years to develop school-based preventive care programs and education for Hawaii's students:

- “Seal Away Decay,” an HDS Foundation initiative that began two years ago in partnership with Hawaii Keiki to provide oral assessments and sealants in highneed public schools by a team of dental professionals.
- “Gear Up with Mouthguards for Student Athletes,” an HDS program distributing fitted mouthguards to student athletes throughout Hawaii. Last year, HDS partnered with the State of Hawaii Department of Education, Oahu Interscholastic Association, Interscholastic League of Honolulu, Maui Interscholastic League, Kauai Interscholastic Federation, and the Big Island Interscholastic Federation to distribute 10,000 mouthguards, valued at \$250,000, for student athletes in 90 Hawaii public, charter and private high schools. The program will continue as new partnerships are formed with additional youth sports leagues in Hawaii. HDS continues that commitment to protect the oral health of youth and to minimize the impact of concussions.
- In 2021, the HDS Foundation gave \$1.6 million to numerous community programs to promote oral health education, prevent oral disease and improve access to oral health care throughout the state with nearly 10% of this total earmarked for oral health education and prevention. On this anniversary year, the HDS Foundation continues its commitment to support more community programs to promote good oral health in the state.

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Photo caption:

In celebration of its 60th Anniversary, Hawaii Dental Service is distributing HDS Smile kits to more than 11,000 children in 208 Title I schools throughout the state. HDS Smile Kits will have a toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, a toy and an oral health activity booklet. From left: Deborah Matheus and Kenna Gardes of Hawaii Keiki; Rachel Faasau of Cardinal Mailing Services LTD; and Kahala Howser of Hawaii Dental Service.

About Hawaii Dental Service

Hawaii Dental Service (HDS) is the leading dental benefits provider in the state, serving nearly one million residents throughout Hawaii, Guam, and Saipan. It has the largest network of dentists, with more than 95 percent of Hawaii's licensed, practicing dentists participating with HDS.

As a nonprofit founded in Hawaii in 1962, HDS is committed to making quality oral health care affordable and accessible. Employers who offer HDS dental plans to their employees represent Hawaii's diverse industries, companies, unions, associations, and nonprofit organizations. HDS also offers dental plans for individuals and families.

The logo for Delta Dental, featuring a white triangle icon to the left of the text "DELTA DENTAL" in white, all contained within a green rectangular background.The logo for Hawaii Dental Service (HDS), consisting of the letters "HDS" in a large, bold, black sans-serif font, with the text "Hawaii Dental Service" in a smaller, black sans-serif font directly below it.

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HDS has been a part of Delta Dental, the nation's largest and most experienced dental insurance benefits provider, since 1966. This affiliation gives members access to a nationwide network of participating dentists.

For more information, please visit HawaiiDentalService.com.