

## **For Immediate Release**

### **Groundbreaking Grant to Assist Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center Patients**

**The Dental Foundation of Oregon has joined with Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center to help reduce the incidence of premature births through an innovative program.**

Hillsboro, OR (December 10, 2008) – According to the Oregon Department of Human Services' *Smile Survey*, Oregon's children have one of the highest rates of tooth decay in the United States. Working towards fulfilling its mission of improving oral health for Oregon's children, The Dental Foundation of Oregon provides grants to a variety of worthwhile community programs. On October 7, 2008, the foundation awarded \$5,000 to The Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center for their innovative and successful OB Baby Dental Project.

"To me – the importance of the OB Baby Dental project is being able to help a pregnant woman by addressing her own oral health needs through education and treatment. A pregnant woman may not initially see the connection between her own oral health and that of her unborn child's, but as soon as she learns that by taking care of her own teeth and gums she can reduce the risks of a premature birth – she listens," said Lisa Bozetti, DDS and dental director for the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center. "This program not only focuses on a pregnant woman's oral health, it provides her with the tools she needs to teach her children to care for their own teeth – thereby increasing their ability to be healthy."

Virginia Garcia's OB Baby Dental Project provides education and periodontal screening and treatment for low-income, uninsured, primarily Hispanic, pregnant women in Washington County. Periodontal disease impedes the proper development of the fetus and often leads to premature birth or low birth weight.

Hispanics have the lowest percentage of dental coverage of any ethnic group and therefore many are unable to access dental treatment. This program helps women to improve their own oral health, the overall health of their newborn infants and the oral health of their other children.

The Dental Foundation of Oregon, established in 1982 as the philanthropic arm of the Oregon Dental Association, is dedicated to improving oral health for Oregon's children. The foundation aims to change the rate of youth dental decay by funding community projects that focus on prevention and education, and those that provide emergency dental care for children who are disadvantaged and have no access to care.

"We are proud to support organizations such as The Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center and programs like the OB Baby Dental Project," said Patrick Nearing, DMD, Dental Foundation of Oregon Board President. "They make a vitally important contribution to improving the oral health of disadvantaged children, Oregon's most vulnerable population."

### **About The Dental Foundation of Oregon**

The Dental Foundation of Oregon is a permanent endowment supported through individuals and organizations both within and outside the dental community. The foundation is governed, and grants are awarded by, a board of volunteer dentists and public members elected by the Board of Trustees of the Oregon Dental Association. Visit the foundation's website at [www.SmileOnOregon.org](http://www.SmileOnOregon.org).

### **About the Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center**

In 1975, Virginia Garcia Memorial Health Center was founded in memory of six-year-old Virginia Garcia. While accompanying her farmworker parents to Oregon to pick strawberries, Virginia developed blood poisoning from a simple foot wound. The unavailability of appropriate cultural and lingual medical services ultimately resulted in her preventable death. Stunned by this tragedy, community leaders joined forces in an unprecedented effort to ensure that such a tragedy would never be repeated.

Today, Virginia Garcia is the only Federally Qualified Health Center in Washington and Yamhill Counties. Virginia Garcia serves more than 30,000 community members with barriers to health and dental care per year with 280 staff members in four medical clinics, three dental clinics, two school-based health centers and a mobile clinic. Find out more by visiting their website at [www.viriniagarcia.org](http://www.viriniagarcia.org).

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