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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**VALLEY HEALTH PARTICIPATES IN GIVE KIDS A SMILE DAY
FOR NATIONAL DENTAL HEALTH MONTH**

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. – Valley Health proudly announces its participation on Feb. 5 in Give Kids A Smile Day at Kellogg Elementary School as part of National Dental Health Month.

As part of Give Kids A Smile Day, Valley Health dental providers, Andrea Kelly, DDS, and Michele Endicott, RDH, will be on hand at Kellogg Elementary to provide free dental exams and cleanings for second-grade students. The children will also receive a free toothbrush, donated by United Concordia, to help keep their smiles healthy.

“As Kellogg forges its way toward its Field of Fitness program to increase healthy lifestyles, dental health is an aspect we don't want to overlook,” Dr. Damron, principal of Kellogg Elementary, said. “We want our children to be healthy in every avenue of their lives.”

Hosted each year on the first Friday of February, Give Kids A Smile is a program spearheaded by the American Dental Association to raise awareness about the importance of dental care among underserved families throughout the country. In 2010, the program plans to reach more than 318,432 children nationwide with the help of more than 12,680 dentists.

“Dental healthcare is an important part of maintaining overall health and should begin at an early age,” Andrea Kelly, DDS, said. “It's heartbreaking to see a child's smile destroyed by severe tooth decay or to see a child who is not able to eat, sleep or pay attention in school due to a mouth full of toothaches. That's why we feel this outreach is so important. It affords Valley Health the opportunity to provide early intervention and reach children who may not otherwise have access to care.”

The National Institute of Health estimates that nearly 80 percent of tooth decay is found in just 25 percent of children, primarily from low-income households. While government-funded programs such as Medicaid and West Virginia Children's Health Insurance Program exist to help reduce the effects of poor oral health care, many of those programs are not fully utilized by families.

Valley Health encourages twice-yearly dental exams for optimal oral health. As part of its mission and outreach, affordable dentistry services at its Westmoreland, Fort Gay, Harts and Upper Kanawha health centers. For more information about Valley Health's dental services, call 304-525-3334, or visit www.valleyhealth.org.

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Valley Health is an integrated network of 28 primary healthcare centers and public health programs in southwestern West Virginia and southern Ohio that serves more than 68,000 patients each year. The Valley Health medical staff includes doctors, dentists, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses and midwives. Valley Health offers services including family practice, internal medicine, pediatrics, OB/GYN, dentistry, psychiatry, pharmacy services, laboratory services, X-rays and ultrasounds. For more information about Valley Health, contact Lanie Masilamani, chief operating officer, at 304-525-3334 or visit www.valleyhealth.org.