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**PRESS RELEASE- For Immediate Release**

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**Free Dental Sealant Clinic for Grade School Children**

A clinic to provide dental sealants and fluoride treatments for elementary school children will be held Saturday, May 3<sup>rd</sup>, at the College of Southern Idaho. The clinic is free of charge and is available for students in grades two through six. The purpose of the clinic is to help improve oral health of young children. The clinic is sponsored by Regence Caring Foundation for Children in partnership with the South Central Public Health District and CSI. The clinic will run from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the CSI Dental Assisting Learning Lab in the Aspen Building, Room 182.

Sealants are a simple and effective way to prevent the most common type of tooth decay in molar teeth. The chewing surfaces of molars have many deep pits and fissures (grooves) in which cavity-causing bacteria hide. These pits and fissures are hard to clean with a toothbrush. Sealants are plastic coatings that are painted on the teeth to seal the pits and fissures to help prevent tooth decay. "Placing sealants is painless and easy for children," explained Susie Beem, Dental Health Program Coordinator for South Central Public Health District. "The tooth is cleaned, conditioned, dried, and painted with the plastic sealant."

Sealants only protect the chewing surfaces of molars, but will not prevent decay between teeth, in the front teeth, or on tooth roots. Studies show that 84% of tooth decay in children occurs in the pits and fissures of permanent molars which are areas best protected by sealants. Without sealants 75% of lower first permanent molars decay by age 13. While sealants do not completely protect children from tooth decay, they significantly reduce the chances of cavities.

Call South Central Public Health District at 737-5975 to make an appointment for this free clinic.

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