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Brushing Up on Dental Care in Idaho

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Child getting a dental exam on the Mobile Dental Unit (MDU)

Tooth decay is one of the most common childhood diseases and even more of a problem for poor children. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, about **two-thirds of low-income children ages 12 to 19 have cavities. Yet, these youth are much less likely than their middle class peers to receive dental treatment.** CHF's Idaho Children's Health Project (ICHP) realized the need for dental care among the pediatric patients they serve, and in late 2006 converted their Mobile Medical Unit (MMU) into a Mobile Dental Unit (MDU).



The ICHP is a partnership between the Children's Health Fund (CHF) and Family Health Services (FHS), a community health center that provides services to low-income and uninsured families in rural communities in Twin Falls and

CHF raises \$1.5 million at our 2008 Annual Gala. The event, honoring The Honorable David N. Dinkins and Jeff Maurer with our Founders' Award, Dr. H. Jack Geiger with the Humanitarian Award, and Tim Rothwell, Chairman, sanofi-aventis U.S. with the Corporate Award, was held on June 12 in NYC.



[Please click here to see pictures from the event, including the evening's entertainment, Paul Simon, and presenters Charles Grodin, Jane Pauley and Bob Herbert.](#)



surrounding south central Idaho. FHS currently operates 11 fixed-site clinics and the mobile dental unit, providing care to residents living in eight different counties in Idaho. With about 97% of patients living at 200% of the poverty level or below, and very few dentists in the area that accept Medicaid, access to oral health care is a significant

Girl using the x-ray machine that was purchased through the Idol Gives Back grant.

problem. On the dental unit, children are provided with preventive as well as restorative treatments. **Since the beginning of 2008, over 1,000 children have received care on the MDU.** According to James Schroeder, CEO of FHS, "The MDU has been the catalyst for integrating dental and behavioral health and the expanded medical home for FHS." Although this pediatric dental unit is on the road delivering services to as many children as possible, currently the demand for service is well beyond capacity.

Last year, the ICHP received a panoramic x-ray machine purchased through the grant to CHF from *Idol Gives Back*. **Since receiving this gift, the device has resulted in potential life-saving diagnoses,** allowing dental professionals to identify tumors and other serious conditions in children that might otherwise have been missed. [Please click here to read a newspaper article about the new x-ray machine.](#)

The MDU in Idaho exemplifies CHF's commitment to providing children with the most comprehensive health care from head to toe, including oral health care.

CHF makes three presentations at the Academy Health Annual Research Meeting in Washington, D.C. showcasing our current research projects.



One presentation highlighted why only about 1/4 of pediatric emergency department visits were for urgent care. [Please click here to read more.](#)

It's the All-Star Break and **you can be an All-Star for kids** -- [Click here and join CHF's Johnny Damon Yankees Home Run Club!](#)



So far the Yankees have hit **90 home runs** in the 2008 season.

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