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ADSS AND UAB SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY TO PARTNER ON DENTAL HEALTH PROJECT FOR SENIORS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MONTGOMERY--The Alabama Department of Senior Services, Area Agencies on Aging and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Dentistry will begin their third year of partnership on a Senior Dental Program this Friday. This program is designed to assist Seniors with dental health education, free dental exams, and light cleanings from students who are about to enter the dental profession. The students are supervised by the director of geriatric dentistry at the university, Dr. Lillian Mitchell.

Two years ago, the project began in Shelby, Walker and Blount counties and this year the program is reaching Tuscaloosa, Sumter, Marengo, Bibb, and Etowah Counties. The dental visits will occur in various senior centers across these counties. The three Area Agencies on Aging which will participate are the West Alabama Regional Commission, the Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission, and the East Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission.

Todd Cotton, Acting Commissioner of ADSS said that this program is beneficial because most seniors do not have dental insurance and may not be able to afford the cost of a simple cleaning. "Dental health is crucial to keeping the rest of the body healthy," he explained. "Keeping up with cleanings and being educated about dental health and how it relates to their overall health will go a long way in assisting our seniors with eating a proper diet and remaining active and strong," he continued.

Dr. Mitchell, Director of the Geriatric Dental Program at UAB School of Dentistry, explained, "This is a great project with amazing results. The students get so much out of helping our seniors and sharing the day with them in the community."

Delia Brand, Area Agency on Aging Director for Alabama Tombigbee Regional Commission said she was thrilled to be a part of the program this year. "We have many seniors in the Black Belt and surrounding areas who need assistance simply because they may not have access to a dentist where they live or do not have transportation options. We are bringing the help to them and are excited about the opportunity," she said.

Should the clients need additional assistance beyond light cleanings, they have the option to go to a geriatric clinic to receive the help they need at a reduced cost.

"It's really a win, win for everyone. The students benefit, the community benefits, and the seniors get much needed assistance. It is a great partnership and we are so lucky as a state to have such an exceptional university like UAB to assist us," Commissioner Cotton said.

To learn more about the schedule of visits, please contact Emily Marsal at emilyt.marsal@adss.alabama.gov.

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