



ADA Launches Campaign Alerting Americans To Oral Cancer

(NAPSA)—The American Dental Association (ADA) is rolling out a nationwide oral cancer public service campaign encouraging Americans to visit their dentist and be screened for oral cancer.

Oral cancer affects approximately 30,000 Americans each year and kills more people nationwide than either cervical cancer or melanoma, a serious form of skin cancer. Only half of all patients diagnosed with oral cancer survive more than five years. Although tobacco users and people who consume large amounts of alcohol are at particular risk of developing the disease, more than 25 percent of oral cancer victims have no known risk factors. However, the good news about oral cancer is that early detection is now easier than ever, and that can improve the potential for successful treatment.

“Our campaign goal is to alert the public to the early signs of oral cancer that too often go unnoticed and to motivate them to visit their dentists for oral cancer screenings,” says American Dental Association (ADA) president, Dr. Robert M. Anderton.

In its earliest and most treatable stages, oral cancer generally causes no pain or discomfort and may be difficult to diagnose visually. Pre-cancerous and cancerous spots or sores are virtually indistinguishable from one another.

However, such spots can quickly progress to more advanced stages of cancer. Dentists say that is why regular dental screenings are so important.



Regular self examinations and dental screenings can help protect people from oral cancer.

The national public service campaign kicked off in Chicago and will continue through March 2002. Two different advertisements will appear on a variety of outdoor venues, including billboards, bus-shelter signs and commuter bulletins. Both ads feature a small, white spot on the tongue with the message, “It’s tiny now. Don’t let it grow up to be oral cancer. Testing is now painless. See your dentist.”

The public service campaign is made possible by an educational grant from OralScan Laboratories, providers of OralCDx, a computer-assisted, painless test that can determine if oral lesions are potentially dangerous precancerous or cancerous cells.

“We hope this effort will help stimulate a dialogue between patients and health care providers, and ultimately increase the early detection of oral cancer throughout the country,” says Dr. Anderton.

For more information, visit www.ada.org.