

A RESOLUTION declaring February 2015 to be Oral Health Awareness Month.

WHEREAS, oral health is a critical component of overall health affecting speech, nutrition, growth and function, social development, employability, productivity, and quality of life; and

WHEREAS, tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children in the United States: it is four times more common than asthma, four times more common than early-childhood obesity, and 20 times more common than diabetes; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky has the highest percent of adults missing all of their teeth, 13 percent compared to 6 percent nationally; and

WHEREAS, approximately 43 percent of Kentucky's children have severe early childhood dental decay before reaching the age of five and approximately 39 percent of these children have never visited a dentist; and

WHEREAS, tooth decay affects 20 percent of preschoolers, 50 percent of second graders and nearly 75 percent of 15 year olds in Kentucky; and

WHEREAS, untreated dental disease is linked to adverse health outcomes associated with diabetes, stroke, heart disease, bacterial pneumonia, preterm and low birth weight deliveries, and in some instances, death; and

WHEREAS, students in the United States miss more than 51 million hours of school and employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work each year due to dental disease or dental visits; and

WHEREAS, access to dental care is associated with higher utilization of preventive and restorative dental services; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky has improved access to dental care for children enrolled in Medicaid but more can be done for these low-income children who suffer more tooth decay than their higher-income peers; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky residents deserve access to high-quality oral health care;

NOW, THEREFORE,

*Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

➔Section 1. This honorable body declares February 2015 to be Oral Health Awareness Month to:

- (1) Draw attention to ongoing efforts at the local, state, and federal levels that promote optimal oral health;
- (2) Increase awareness that good oral health is critical to good overall health;
- (3) Recognize oral health impact as a consideration in the development of state health policy;
- (4) Encourage the use of available resources to monitor oral health status; and
- (5) Support community oral health initiatives aimed at improving oral health literacy and better health outcomes.