

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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CONGRESSMAN COURTNEY TO VISIT THE PUTNAM ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOLS AND TOUR GENERATIONS FAMILY HEALTH CENTER, INC.'S MOBILE DENTAL VAN PROGRAMS *ACROSS THE SMILES- NORTHEAST AND ACROSS THE SMILES - WINDHAM*

PUTNAM, CONNECTICUT – On Friday, February 27, 2009, at 10:30 a.m. Congressman Joseph Courtney will visit the Putnam Elementary and Middle Schools located at 33 Wicker Street. While visiting the schools, Congressman Courtney will also be touring Generations Family Health Center, Inc.'s (Generations) mobile dental van programs, *Across the Smiles-Northeast and Across the Smiles-Windham*. This visit will allow Congressman Courtney to tour the mobile dental programs and see first hand the impact these important mobile oral health programs have on lives of the children in this rural community. It will also allow Representative Courtney to showcase the State Children's Reauthorization Act of 2009 (S-CHIP) that was signed into law last week by President Obama.

The S-CHIP Reauthorization Act of 2009 allows for the expansion of health insurance from 7.9 million children to more than 11 million children in low and moderate-income families and includes dental insurance. With these additional funds, more children will have access to health and dental insurance. Congressman Courtney was instrumental in getting this law passed.

Generations Family Health Center, Inc. (Generations) is a private, not-for-profit, regional Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) that has been serving eastern Connecticut since 1984. Generations provides a full continuum of primary health care, oral health care and case

Keeping Families Healthy Throughout Generations

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management services to a primarily medically underserved population through sites in Willimantic, Norwich, and Danielson and two mobile dental programs, *Across the Smiles-Northeast* and *Across the Smiles-Windham*. In addition, Generations operates numerous community programs that are aimed at special populations that include: the Migrant Farmworker; Children in Foster care; Health Care to the Homeless; Ryan White Part C & D HIV Early Intervention programs; Smoking Cessation programs; and Maternal-Child Healthcare Coordination, Parent Education and Case Management Services through its Healthy Start and Nurturing Families programs.

To compliment Generations' stationary dental clinic located in Willimantic and due to requests from many community partners, in April 2002, Generations purchased a forty-five foot mobile dental van known as *Across the Smiles-Northeast* through funding from the Connecticut Office of Health Care Access. *Across the Smiles-Northeast* provides oral health services in the upper most rural areas in eastern Connecticut. Routine preventative and restorative dental care is provided by Generation's dental staff on the van. The mobility of this program and the siting of it at schools and community locations, including Head Start, across eastern Connecticut allows Generations to reduce barriers to access to care and to address the urgent needs of the children by reducing their pain and providing preventive and routine restorative services. Today, the *Across the Smiles-Northeast* dental van visits over thirty-five (35) schools and community sites across the northeast corner of the state, providing over three thousand (3,000) annual van visits. This program would not be possible without the support of the many community partners, including Day Kimball Hospital, Northeast District Department of Health, Northeast Transit District, Northeast Council of Governments, a local pediatric dentist, superintendents, nurses and teachers from the various towns the *Across the Smiles – Northeast* mobile dental program services.

Dr. Margaret Ann Smith, Dental Director at Generations said, "The *Across the Smiles –Northeast* program allows us the opportunity to make a significant long term impact on the oral health status of the children in these rural communities. Being able to bring services to the children allows Generations to reach many children who may not otherwise receive care. Good dental health is the foundation for good general health, and good dental habits formed early provide dental as well as general health benefits that can last a lifetime."

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