

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **“March Mouthness” Provides Teaching Moments**

*Parents encouraged to highlight mouthguard use during basketball tournaments*

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. (March XX, 2014)** – While cheering on your favorite basketball team this March, take time to point out mouthguard use during the games to your children and reinforce why mouthguard use is important, advises Dr. Katina Spadoni, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois.

Although not required, many collegiate basketball players use mouthguards to help prevent mouth injuries. That’s a great example for kids, especially those who are not using mouthguards today, Spadoni says.

Although mouthguards are mandatory for some youth sports, such as ice hockey, football and lacrosse, dental professionals recommend they be worn for all athletic activities where there is a strong potential for contact with other participants or hard surfaces.

“According to a survey<sup>1</sup> conducted by Delta Dental, six in 10 Americans say their children do not wear a mouthguard for basketball, soccer, baseball or softball,” Spadoni says. “But studies show that today’s basketball players are five times more likely to sustain an orofacial injury than football players<sup>2</sup>, and use of mouthguards can reduce the rates of dental injuries and need for referrals to dental specialists.”<sup>3</sup>

Spadoni says it’s also important to stress that mouthguards be worn during practices, not just games.

“Broken bones or strained muscles heal, but teeth don’t. When kids lose, crack, or break teeth or damage the bone that holds them in place – whether in a practice or a game – they typically need extra dental care for the rest of their lives,” Spadoni says. “Not to mention it’s much easier to cheer on your favorite team without mouth injuries.”

### ***About Delta Dental of Illinois***

*Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL) is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and more than 5,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. DDIL covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members in these groups nationwide. DDIL is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.*

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<sup>1</sup> 2013 Delta Dental Children's Oral Health Survey.

<sup>2</sup> *Journal of the American Dental Association*, "The incidence and severity of dental trauma in intercollegiate athletes," August 2007. <http://jada.ada.org>

<sup>3</sup> *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise*, "Effect of mouthguards on dental injuries and concussions in college basketball," January 2002. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11782645>