



## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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#### **Delta Dental and Chicago Wolves partner to guard kids' mouths**

*~Youth mouth guards given to fans at 'Children's Dental Health Awareness Night' Feb. 1~*

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. (Jan. 23, 2014)** – In conjunction with National Children's Dental Health Month in February, Delta Dental of Illinois and the Chicago Wolves are teaming up to help protect kids' teeth from sports-related injuries by giving away youth mouth guards to the first 5,000 fans attending the game against the Iowa Wild at 7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 1, at Allstate Arena.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 600,000 kids end up in the emergency room each year for sports-related dental accidents. And according to the CDC, a mouth guard may prevent 200,000 oral injuries a year and prevent injury to the teeth by 60 percent.

"Reinforcing good habits in sports early on, including the use of mouth guards, is important for youth," said Dr. Katina Spadoni, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois. "Mouth guards not only protect the teeth and jaw, but it can also act as a shock absorber and help prevent other injuries."

At "Children's Dental Health Awareness Night" on Feb. 1 and throughout the month of February, Delta Dental of Illinois and the Chicago Wolves will promote the importance of good oral health habits, including mouth guard use, for children.

"We are excited to partner with Delta Dental of Illinois to help educate Illinois youth about the importance of mouth guards and dental health," said Wolves general manager Wendell Young. "Like our players know all too well, the best way to prevent an injury to the mouth is by simply wearing a mouth guard."

Mouth injuries in both hockey and football have dropped dramatically since mouth guards became mandatory. However, even in hockey – a sport requiring protective gear – only 55 percent of Americans report that their child wears a mouth guard at both practice and games and 22 percent wears a mouth guard just at games.<sup>1</sup> According to Safe Kids USA, 62 percent of most organized sports-related injuries occur during practice rather than games.<sup>2</sup>

Although mouth guards are only 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.

The good news is there is an overall trend of more mouth guard usage across all sports. According to the 2012 Delta Dental Children's Oral Health Survey, 58 percent of Americans report their child does not wear a mouth guard during soccer, basketball, baseball and softball practices or games. This is down 10 percent from 2011.

"Parents need to continue to encourage their young athletes to get in the habit of wearing mouth guards whenever they participate in sports, whether it's for practice or games," said Dr. Spadoni.

***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>*Morpace Inc. conducted the 2012 Delta Dental of Illinois Children's Oral Health Survey. Interviews were conducted statewide via the Internet with 151 primary caregivers of children from birth to age 11. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin of error is ±3.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.*

<sup>2</sup>*Safe Kids USA, "Sports and Recreation Safety Fact Sheet"*  
<http://www.safekids.org/sites/default/files/documents/2013%20Sports.pdf>