



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 13, 2019

Contact: [mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov](mailto:mediainquiry@acs.nyc.gov)

## **MORE THAN 200 NYC YOUTH IN FOSTER CARE NOW HAVE HEALTHIER SMILES THANKS TO ACS & NYU COLLEGE OF DENTISTRY PARTNERSHIP**

*51M School Hours Are Lost Each Year Nationally Due to Dental Issues; ACS/NYU Ensuring NYC Youth in Foster Care Have Easier Access to Much-Needed Dental Services, Putting Them On the Path to a Brighter Future*

NEW YORK, NY – Today, Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Commissioner David A. Hansell announced that, because of a recent partnership with the NYU College of Dentistry, more than 200 NYC children in foster care have been provided with critically needed dental screenings. As part of the partnership, twice per week, dental students from the NYU College of Dentistry visit children at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children's Center and perform full dental examinations of teeth, mouth and gums, looking for signs of cavities or disease.

"Today's ACS is committed to enhancing the lives of children in foster care and the partnership we have with the NYU College of Dentistry is just one more way that we're doing that work," **said ACS Commissioner David A. Hansell.** "Already, more than 200 children in foster care have benefited from this dental program, putting them on the path to a brighter future. Thank you to all those at the NYU College of Dentistry who have helped create healthier smiles for children in foster care and I look forward to our continued partnership."

Children who need cleanings, fillings, braces or other procedures are scheduled for expedited follow-up visits at the NYU College of Dentistry, just a few blocks from the Children's Center. Most commonly, NYU dental students identify youth with poor oral hygiene and then educate them on the proper technique for brushing and how long they should brush. If children need further treatment like a root canal or an extraction, we work collaboratively with NYU Dental to ensure that they are treated promptly.

According to NYU College of Dentistry, the single most common chronic childhood disease is dental caries (cavities); it occurs five times more often than asthma and seven times more often than hay fever. Each year, 51 million school hours are lost nationally due to dental-related illness. In addition to pain and infection, issues with oral health can mean difficulty eating or speaking.

"NYU Dentistry is especially proud of the support that our partners at ACS have provided which allows us to contribute to improving the health of these children. This is especially meaningful for our students and will provide a positive influence on their community interactions throughout their careers," **said Andrew Schenkel DMD, MS, Director of Community-Based Dental Education and Assistant Chair of the Department of Cariology and Comprehensive Care at NYU College of Dentistry.** "We look forward to providing care to the next 200 children and

beyond as well. It is especially important for us to be able to provide care in this setting which is literally across the street just a few blocks from our main patient care center.”

Children in poverty experience twice the caries (cavities) rate when compared to other children and they are four times more likely to be untreated for these issues. Recent studies conducted at the NYU College of Dentistry have demonstrated that when children lose the family structure that is needed to help manage their diet, brushing, and routine dental care, it affects their oral health, including an increase in tooth decay.

Just 15 months ago, ACS and NYU College of Dentistry announced a new partnership to provide dental care to students entering foster care. Already, more than 200 youth in foster care have benefitted from the partnership.

Twice per week, students from the NYU College of Dentistry provide on-site dental care and education to youth at the Nicholas Scoppetta Children’s Center. NYU dental students perform a full dental examination of teeth, mouth and gums, looking for signs of disease or other problems, and finish with a fluoride treatment. Children who need cleanings, fillings, braces or other procedures are scheduled for expedited follow-up visits at the NYU College of Dentistry, just a few blocks from the Children’s Center.

The Nicholas Scoppetta Children’s Center is a child-friendly facility that operates 24 hours a day, temporarily housing children and youth who are awaiting foster care placement. Dental care is just one of the comprehensive health services provided to youth at the Children’s Center. In addition to medical care, children and youth at the Children’s Center are evaluated and provided with vision care via a new partnership with optometrists from “Eye on Education.” Additionally, youth have access to therapy dogs, which help reduce stress and anxiety for youth who have experienced trauma. ACS also partners closely with the Bellevue Hospital in order to meet children’s clinical and mental health needs.

###