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## **What Should U.S. Children Expect Under Their Pillows?**

*Despite Sluggish Economy, The Tooth Fairy Poll<sup>SM</sup> Exposes Generosity*

**February 21, 2008 (EAGAN, Minn.)** – The results are in! The Tooth Fairy Poll<sup>SM</sup> from Securian Dental plans reports an increase in the current average “gift” U.S. children receive from the Tooth Fairy. Children receive an average of \$2.09 per tooth, which is up from last year’s gift of \$1.71 – a 22 percent increase. Tooth Fairy gift amounts range from a low of five cents to a high of \$50 per tooth.

“The Tooth Fairy Poll average usually reflects the health of the economy. However, this direction of change is inconsistent with trends exhibited in other more commonplace indices,” said Marty Weiland, operations analyst for DeCare Dental, the administrator for Securian Dental plans. “The NASDAQ and Dow Jones Industrial Average indices have decreased 7.4 percent and 3.6 percent over this same time period, respectively.”

“It is worth noting that the substantial upswing was largely driven by a substantial increase in the number of five-dollar gifts,” continues Weiland. “So either the Tooth Fairy is an expert investor or we may be seeing something analogous to the ‘lipstick effect’ -- where during an economic downturn or a recession, the tendency is for consumers to purchase small, comforting items rather than large luxury items.”

### **OPEN UP AND SAY “AHHH”**

According to Securian’s poll, which goes out to a sampling of its commercially insured population, more than half of children’s first dental visits do not occur until age three or later. “The American Dental Association recommends that a child be seen by a dentist as soon as his or her first tooth erupts, but at least no later than the first birthday,” said Dr. Richard Hastreiter, dental director for DeCare Dental.

“Regular visits give the dentist an opportunity to evaluate the child’s teeth and discover any problems in their earliest stages. Tooth decay is the most common childhood disease - yet it is completely preventable.”

*(more)*

### **A STICKY SITUATION**

The poll also revealed that more than one third of the parents indicate their children consume an average of three or more sugar drinks and/or treats per day. "Parents are instrumental in teaching healthy habits to their children at an early age," says Dr. Hastreiter. "Encourage children to make healthy choices. Teach them to eat a balanced diet and limit in-between meal snacks of foods containing high levels of sugar, especially sticky foods such as raisins, fruit snacks or candy. This will help promote good dental health as well as overall health."

"Sticky foods tend to adhere to the teeth and gums, making them more likely to contribute to tooth decay," continues Dr. Hastreiter. "Children should brush with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste after sugary or starchy meals or snacks to help reduce the incidence of tooth decay. Children should also drink fluoridated water after meals to help cleanse the teeth."

### **CHEW ON THIS**

The poll shows most children are working hard to keep their teeth clean. According to the poll, 73 percent of parents report that their children brush their teeth twice per day. Approximately 92 percent of parents surveyed state their children receive a dental exam every six months.

### **About Securian Dental Plans**

Securian Dental plans ([www.securiandental.com](http://www.securiandental.com)), available nationwide, are underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company and administered by DeCare Dental Health International LLC. In California, Securian Dental is underwritten by Securian Life Insurance Company, offered through DeCare Dental Insurance Services, LLC and administered by DDHI Administrators LLC.

With nearly 40 years of proven success, DeCare Dental is a leading dental benefits management group that oversees more than \$1 billion in managed revenues through ten of the nation's leading dental insurance brands. DeCare Dental serves 4 million individuals in 21,000 employer groups including Fortune 500 corporations, small businesses, non-profits and government entities in the United States and overseas.

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