



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
February 16, 2010

CONTACT: Liz Rogers, (207) 756-2444  
[liz@oralhealthamerica.org](mailto:liz@oralhealthamerica.org)

**Oral Health America and Trident® gum Celebrate Children’s Dental Health Month  
with Grant Award to the Deamonte Driver Dental Project**

CHICAGO, IL, February 16, 2010—Oral Health America, Trident® gum, and Maryland leaders are celebrating Children’s Dental Health Month (February) and the expansion of the Deamonte Driver Dental Project, a school-based community oral health initiative in Prince George’s County, MD. Oral Health America is honoring the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society Foundation’s Deamonte Driver Dental Project with a \$20,000 grant award. The grant is made possible through a \$1.5 million, three-year commitment from Trident® gum to Oral Health America’s Smiles Across America® program.

“Dental care is an essential part of appropriate medical care,” said Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD) in a statement about the award. “In 2007, 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from Prince George’s County died from a brain infection caused by a tooth abscess. Treating a cavity takes very little time or effort, but the death of a child from tooth decay is a national tragedy we must make sure never happens again.”

“The painful lesson learned from the needless and tragic death of Deamonte Driver is that without access to quality dental care, every child in America is at risk,” Congressman Elijah Cummings (D-MD) added. “Because of the support from Oral Health America, the Deamonte Driver Dental Project will ensure that children in our community who are most vulnerable to dental disease will receive the care they so desperately need.”

Founded by Robert T. Freeman Dental Society members Drs. Hazel Harper and Belinda Carver-Taylor with the encouragement of state Senator Ulysses Currie and Dental Director, Dr. Harry Goodman, the Deamonte Driver Dental Project was launched in 2008 to ensure that no child in Prince George’s County would lack access to needed dental services.

“On behalf of the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society Foundation, I am thrilled with the award for the Deamonte Driver Dental Project,” said Dr. Harper. “Deamonte left a legacy for the children of Prince George’s County, and for the entire country, that we will not walk away from. Thank you to all of our supporters who are working in collaboration with us to ensure that all children get the dental care they need.”

The Smiles Across America grant will provide funding to support the expansion of school-based dental care in Prince George's County.

"Oral Health America applauds Maryland's efforts and the work of the Deamonte Driver Dental Project," said Beth Truett, President and CEO, Oral Health America. "We celebrate Children's Dental Health Month with this gift, recognizing the National Dental Association, Robert T. Freeman Dental Society Foundation, Senator Cardin, Congressman Cummings, and community leaders who are bringing needed oral health services to life."

**Oral Health America** is a national non-profit organization, founded in 1955 and located in Chicago, dedicated to changing lives by connecting communities with resources to increase access to oral health care, education, and advocacy. Find out more at [www.oralhealthamerica.org](http://www.oralhealthamerica.org).

The **Robert T. Freeman Dental Society (RTFDS) Foundation** is the community service component of the Robert T. Freeman Dental Society, a chapter of the National Dental Association, which was founded in 1900. Membership is comprised of dentists in Washington, DC and neighboring Southern Maryland.

**Trident® Sugar-Free gum** has long been a pioneer in providing oral health benefits to consumers. Trident was the first gum brand of its kind to undergo extensive long-term clinical testing in 1967 with studies showing that people who chewed Trident experienced significantly fewer cavities. Most recently, the brand introduced Trident Xtra Care™ with Recaldent®, a great tasting sugar free gum that delivers superior strengthening power versus regular sugar-free chewing gum. Today, Trident is the best selling chewing gum and sugar-free gum in the world<sup>4</sup>, and a recent study shows that the brand continues to be recommended by four out of five dentists who would recommend sugar-free gum to their patients who chew gum<sup>5</sup>.

###

<sup>4</sup> 2007 Euromonitor

<sup>5</sup> Data on file