

**CONTACT:** Elizabeth Rogers, (312) 836-9900



## **HEALTH LEADERS CHART COURSE TO TACKLE PERIODONTAL DISEASE**

*Coalition Brings Together Providers, Insurers, Advocacy Groups and Government Agencies*

November 29, 2004, Washington, DC—Oral Health America today announced the formation of the National Periodontal Disease Coalition. The effort grew out of a meeting attended by more than 50 business and professional leaders to address issues surrounding periodontal disease—an infection that afflicts most adults, but is virtually ignored outside of dentistry.

The coalition will work to make Americans start thinking about periodontal disease and its relation to overall health. Attendees at the first of its kind meeting included a diverse array of opinion leaders and decision makers from practices, associations, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, industry, advocacy groups, universities, government agencies, and foundations.

“This coalition is an important first step to improving the nation’s oral and overall health,” said Robert J. Klaus, President and CEO of Oral Health America. “The coalition can use the collective power of its participants to work toward framing periodontal disease as a national health issue.”

Oral Health America’s main objective in bringing the groups together was to investigate opportunities for advancing a national periodontal disease agenda through social marketing strategies—effectively empowering health professionals and the public to be more proactive in recognition and treatment.

Points of discussion included the state of periodontal disease research; impact on overall health; general recognition, identification and treatment patterns; economic considerations; and public, professional, and business involvement. Participants identified comparisons and differences between periodontal disease and other health issues that have benefited from social marketing campaigns, including high blood pressure, colorectal and breast cancer, folic acid, and tobacco control.

Oral Health America is the nation’s premier independent organization devoted to oral health. More information is available at [www.oralhealthamerica.org](http://www.oralhealthamerica.org).