

Press release

Tuesday 31 October

#BlueLipSelfie ready to support Mouth Cancer Action Month 2017

As the Oral Health Foundation's Mouth Cancer Action Month gets underway in November, the #BlueLipSelfie campaign from Simplyhealth Professionals is set to involve hundreds of dental practices around the country.

As the main sponsor of Mouth Cancer Action Month, Simplyhealth Professionals is passionate about raising awareness about mouth cancer. The increasing popularity of its #BlueLipSelfie campaign allows dental professionals to talk to their patients about the risks, symptoms and prevention of this devastating disease.

#BlueLipSelfie is easy, quick and fun to do and allows everyone to visibly show their support and become more 'mouthaware'. To take part in #BlueLipSelfie all practices have to do is take a photo of themselves, their patients or their teams with blue lips and share it on Twitter or Instagram using the campaign's hashtag: #BlueLipSelfie. Practices and patients can also directly upload a selfie to the specially created microsite and gallery at www.bluelipselfie.co.uk or customise their photo with fun blue cartoon lips using the app.

Mouth Cancer Action Month aims to get more mouth cancers diagnosed at an early stage by educating people on the risk factors, signs and symptoms; while also encouraging the public to discuss them with their dental professional.

More than 7,000 people were diagnosed with mouth cancer last year in the UK, yet awareness of mouth cancer remains dangerously low. Cases of the disease have grown by a third in the last decade and it is one of very few cancers which are predicted to increase further in the coming years.*.

Dr Henry Clover, Director of Dental Policy at Simplyhealth Professionals, said: "Early detection of mouth cancer is pivotal in fighting against this disease and makes an

enormous difference to survival rates. This means that all dental professionals are on the front line of raising awareness and helping patients understand the risks and symptoms.

“By providing mouth cancer checks for their patients at routine appointments, dental professionals can open up discussions with their patients and encourage them to feel comfortable when talking about the lifestyle choices that may be putting them at risk of mouth cancer.”

He added: Practices can wear blue lips as a visible sign of their support for the mouth cancer campaign, which can help raise awareness and if wearing them in practice, can be a positive conversation starter. They can also share their photos on their social media sites. We saw hundreds of practices taking part last year, and we hope we will see even more this year.”

Simplyhealth Professionals has included a range of information including case studies of people who have survived mouth cancer – due to their dentist spotting early signs of the disease– as well as information about what a mouth cancer check involves.

Dr Nigel Carter, Chief Executive of the Oral Health Foundation, commented: “We are extremely grateful that Simplyhealth Professionals is once again a key supporter of Mouth Cancer Action Month. With a joint approach from the dental profession we can all help raise public awareness of the signs and symptoms of mouth cancer and help ensure that every patient is checked for signs of the disease. This should increase the likelihood of the disease being detected early, with treatment more likely to result in a positive outcome for the patient.”

Dr Carter also highlighted how the dental profession is central to the battle: “The chances are that we all know at least one person who has been diagnosed with cancer at some point in their life, and we recognise the hurt and pain it can cause both physically and emotionally.

“Unfortunately, survival rates for those with mouth cancer have not improved in the last 30 years. By being ‘mouthaware’ and spotting mouth cancer early enough we will give patients the best possible chance to beat mouth cancer and have a good quality of life.”

For more information on Mouth Cancer Action Month and how you can get involved please visit www.mouthcancer.org.

*Oral Health Foundation

ENDS

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For more information on the Oral Health Foundation:

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About Simplyhealth Professionals:

In February 2017, Denplan rebranded as Simplyhealth Professionals.

Dental

Simplyhealth Professionals is the UK's leading dental payment plan specialist with more than 6,500 member dentists nationwide caring for approximately 1.7 million patients registered to a Denplan product.

Simplyhealth Professionals provides the following range of leading Denplan dental payment plans under the Denplan name:

- Denplan Care: all routine and restorative care + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Essentials: routine care only + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan for Children: routine and other agreed care + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Membership: registered with the dentist + worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover
- Denplan Hygiene: A dental payment plan without dental insurance for all types of practice from NHS, mixed and private to support patients commit to a consistent hygiene programme.
- Denplan Emergency Insurance: worldwide dental injury and dental emergency cover only

Simplyhealth Professionals also provide a wide range of professional services for its member dentists and their practice teams, including the Denplan Quality Programme and Denplan Excel Accreditation Programme. Plus regulatory advice, business and marketing consultancy services and networking opportunities.

Dentist enquiries telephone: 0800 169 9962.

For patient enquiries telephone: 0800 401 402

For details of all of our products, visit www.denplan.co.uk

Vets

Simplyhealth Professionals is the UK's leading pet health payment plan specialist with more than 1,800 member vets nationwide caring for approximately 600,000 registered pets.

Pet owner enquiries telephone: 0800 169 9958

Vet enquiries telephone: 0800 587 2581 www.pethealthplans.co.uk

About the Oral Health Foundation

The Oral Health Foundation is the leading national charity working to improve oral health. Our goal is to improve people's lives by reducing the harm caused by oral diseases – many of which are entirely preventable. Established more than 45 years ago, we continue to provide expert, independent and impartial advice on all aspects of oral health to those who need it most. We work closely with Government, dental and health professionals, manufacturers, the dental trade, national and local agencies and the public, to achieve our mission of addressing the inequalities which exist in oral health, changing people's lives for the better. Visit www.dentalhealth.org for more information.

About Mouth Cancer Action Month

Every November, the Oral Health Foundation organises and runs Mouth Cancer Action Month, under the message 'if in doubt, get checked out'. Our campaign has become an influential springboard in educating the public about mouth cancer, highlighting the risks, symptoms and causes of the disease.

The campaign is about taking action and raising awareness, particularly among those groups who are most at risk. We want people to look out for ulcers which do not heal within three weeks, red and white patches in the mouth, and unusual lumps or swellings while encouraging them to regularly visit a dentist to ensure they're checked for signs of mouth cancer.

By working closely with the dental and health profession and supporting them in their activities to patients and local communities, we continue to increase mouth cancer awareness and save lives through early detection.

Mouth Cancer Action Month is Sponsored by Simplyhealth Professionals and also supported by Dentists' Provident, plus a number of other professional and commercial partners.

For further information, please register your details at www.mouthcancer.org.

About Simplyhealth

In the world of healthcare, more than anywhere, experience counts. Since 1872 – long before the existence of the NHS – Simplyhealth has been helping people to make the most of life, by managing their everyday health needs. That's why today we ensure over 3 million people in the UK have access to the health products, services and support that they need, when they need them and at a price they can afford.

We're the kind of people who live by our purpose: we're here to help people make the most of life through better everyday health. We're proud to be the leading provider of everyday health cash plans, dental payment and pet health plans. And whilst we may be 144 years old, we're not afraid to innovate. Whereas once we were known purely for cash plans, we now offer a wide range of products and services with one thing in common: an unflinching desire to cater for peoples' everyday health needs – now and into the future.

We exist to help people make the most of life through better everyday health. That's our purpose. We use charitable partnerships to also deliver that purpose, going beyond our products and services, but very much aligned to our business strategy. As a result of our success, in 2016 we were able to donate £1.7m to our charitable causes, supporting 23 different charities including Revitalise, Music in Hospitals, Brainwave Centre and Auditory Verbal, touching the lives of thousands of people across the UK.

Our future success and performance will enable us to deliver our ongoing pledge to donate 10% of our profits to charity every year, supporting health-related charities that share a similar outlook to us and a dedication to helping people with everyday health challenges make the most of life.

Simplyhealth is a trading name of Simplyhealth Access, which is authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority.

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