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News

Public Relations

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**MetLife**



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**METLIFE FOUNDATION TO SUPPORT ORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS FOR KIDS IN THE U.S. WITH \$1.1 MILLION IN FUNDING**

**Partners with Children's Health Fund and Sesame Workshop to provide direct dental care and oral health education and outreach to children and families**

NEW YORK, October 25, 2011 – In an effort to promote the importance of oral health care and the importance of teaching children and their families proper tooth-brushing techniques, MetLife Foundation announced it is awarding \$1.1 million to two organizations focused on children and children's health. Tooth decay is among the most common chronic childhood diseases and can impact a child's ability to eat, speak, foster self-esteem and affect their ability to learn, as it can lead to school absenteeism. And in the most extreme cases, can cause infections, hospitalizations and other long-term health issues.

“Developing good oral health and hygiene habits is a vital part of a comprehensive approach to ensuring overall health care,” said Dennis White, president and CEO of MetLife Foundation. “The earlier children and families begin to learn about dental hygiene and receive preventive care, the better equipped they will be to develop healthy habits that last a lifetime.”

MetLife Foundation will provide \$500,000 to Children's Health Fund (CHF) to support CHF's national oral health initiative, Healthy Kids, Healthy Smiles. With the funding, CHF programs will provide oral health care to low-income and homeless children and families primarily via mobile dental clinics in New York City, Los Angeles, Dallas and Washington, D.C. The donation will increase CHF's mobile dental clinic services in these cities by 65 percent over the previous year.

“Many children living in poverty lack access to oral health care services due to transportation, insurance and other barriers,” said CHF Executive Director Karen Redlener. “MetLife Foundation's generous gift allows CHF to bring comprehensive and quality dental services directly to children, helping to prevent painful and potentially dangerous oral health conditions.”

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MetLife Foundation will provide an additional \$600,000 to Sesame Workshop, the nonprofit educational organization behind *Sesame Street*, to develop *Healthy Teeth, Healthy Me*, a bilingual (English/Spanish) multimedia outreach initiative which leverages the power of the beloved *Sesame Street* characters to motivate children 2 to 5 years of age, their parents, and caregivers to care for children's oral health...*early*. This initiative will emphasize the easy everyday routines and habits to keep your teeth, mouth, and therefore, bodies healthy and strong. The outreach kit, which will launch early next year, will include an original *Sesame Street* DVD, a guide for families, public service messages, community health providers guide and online games and resources.

The grant will also support the development, production and dissemination of booklets aimed at parents, caregivers and adults to help them support and maintain their children's oral health.

"This is an opportunity for *Sesame Street* to continue to use its influence to help families and their children make healthy decisions about oral health at a time when nurturing children's overall development is so critical and the subsequent positive effects can last a lifetime," said H. Melvin Ming, President and CEO of Sesame Workshop. "We are excited to partner with MetLife Foundation, bringing these much needed resources to families with young children."

#### **About MetLife Foundation**

MetLife Foundation was established in 1976 to carry on MetLife's longstanding tradition of corporate contributions and community involvement. The Foundation is committed to building a secure future for individuals and communities worldwide. Through programs focusing on empowering older adults, preparing young people and building livable communities, MetLife Foundation increases access and opportunities for people of all ages. Since it was established, MetLife Foundation has made more than \$500 million in grants and \$75 million in program related investments. For more information visit [www.metlife.org](http://www.metlife.org)

#### **About Children's Health Fund**

Founded in 1987 by singer/songwriter Paul Simon and pediatrician/advocate Irwin Redlener, MD, Children's Health Fund (CHF) is the nation's leading pediatric provider of mobile-based health care for homeless and low-income children and their families. CHF's mission is to bring health care directly to those in need through the development and support of innovative medical programs, response to public health crises, and the promotion of guaranteed access to health care for all children. CHF currently has 50 mobile clinics serving hundreds of locations across the country. Over the past 24 years, the organization has supported more than two million health care visits for disadvantaged children, often in places where doctors and health care providers are in short supply. For more information about CHF, visit [www.childrenshealthfund.org](http://www.childrenshealthfund.org).

#### **About Sesame Workshop**

Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit educational organization that revolutionized children's television programming with the landmark *Sesame Street*. The Workshop produces local *Sesame Street* programs, seen in over 150 countries, and other acclaimed shows to help bridge the literacy gap including *The Electric Company*. Beyond television, the Workshop produces content for multiple media platforms on a wide range of issues including literacy, health and military deployment. Initiatives meet specific needs to help young children and families develop critical skills, acquire healthy habits and build emotional strength to prepare them for lifelong learning. Learn more at [www.sesameworkshop.org](http://www.sesameworkshop.org).

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