



**Shriners Hospitals**  
for Children™



## Masonic Organizations Partner to Give Children with Cleft Lip and Palate a Healthy Smile



Shriners Hospitals for Children is partnering with the Humanitarian Foundation of the Grottoes of North America, a Masonic-affiliated fraternal organization, to provide its cleft lip and palate patients with financial assistance for routine dental care.

“This partnership will help us ensure that the dental needs of our patients are taken care of between their visits to our hospitals,” said Douglas E. Maxwell, president and CEO of Shriners Hospitals for Children. “We are very appreciative of the Grottoes’ assistance.”

Approximately 70 percent of members of the Grottoes of North America are also members of Shriners International, the organization that founded and continues to support Shriners Hospitals for Children. The Grottoes of North America began its dental program in 1970. The goal is to provide the funds needed to improve the dental health of special needs children, who are often excluded from normal childhood dental care. Any child under age 18 with cerebral palsy, muscular dystrophy,

mental retardation or organ transplant is eligible for their services.

“We’re excited about expanding our dental program to include the cleft lip and palate patients at Shriners Hospitals for Children,” said Charles H. Ferguson, 33rd, chairman of the Humanitarian Foundation of the Grottoes of North America. “This is just one example of the many opportunities that exist for Masonic charities to work together for a cause.”

At Shriners Hospitals for Children, treating cleft lip and palate often requires several types of surgeries, including lip and palate repair, nasal reconstruction, facial work and dental procedures.

Many of these surgeries are not possible unless the patient has healthy gums and teeth. Since cleft lip and palate patients are at a higher risk of dental diseases, routine visits with a pediatric dentist greatly maximizes their treatment. The partnership with the Grottoes of North America will help ensure that patients receive the financial assistance, when needed, to make these routine visits possible.

Staff at a number of Shriners Hospitals for Children have referred special needs patients to the Grottoes of North America for years. In November 2007, the first formal agreement between the two organizations was created. Shriners Hospitals for Children — Chicago was selected as the pilot facility and will continue to serve as a resource as more Shriners Hospitals for Children become involved in the Grottoes’ dental program during the next year.

The care coordinators at Shriners Hospitals for Children will help families who may benefit from the

Grottoes’ dental program. They will consult with the patient’s treatment team about the dental needs of the child, and the dentist or surgeon on the team will let the care coordinator know what surgeries may be necessary, and what dental care will be needed to help ensure the best surgical outcomes.

If the patient already has a qualified dentist back home, the care coordinator can provide necessary information that will make it possible for their dentist of choice to receive payment from the Grottoes’ dental program. If a family has difficulty finding a dentist willing to treat their child, the Shriners Hospitals for Children care coordinator will work with the Grottoes of North America to assist them.

The Grottoes’ dental program is the secondary carrier when the patient already has insurance and acts as the primary carrier if no insurance is available. Very few pediatric dentists accept Medicaid; however, there are Medicaid resources available to help find a dentist. Patients with Medicaid can be referred to the Grottoes of North America if a dentist is not available in their area.

For more information, please contact Jane Valentine, corporate director of nursing at Shriners Hospitals for Children, at (813) 281-7171 or [jvalentine@shrinenet.org](mailto:jvalentine@shrinenet.org), or Dianna Bristle, administrative director of the Grottoe’s Humanitarian Foundation, at (614) 933-0711 or [dianna.bristle@hfgrotto.org](mailto:dianna.bristle@hfgrotto.org).

**[www.hfgrotto.org](http://www.hfgrotto.org)**  
**[www.shrinershospitals.org](http://www.shrinershospitals.org)**