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## **TOOTH FAIRY GIFTS CONTINUE CLIMB, AVERAGE UP 20 CENTS**

*Survey Indicates 2004-05 Gifts Range from 10 Cents to \$25*

**(EAGAN, MINN.) March 4, 2005** — U.S. children have reason to cheer as the nation's economy rebounds from recession – the Tooth Fairy is now paying more for teeth. According to a survey conducted by Securian Dental plans, the average “gift” a young child's tooth receives went up by 20 cents to \$1.78 from \$1.58 last year — an increase of 12.5 percent.

“The increase in the Tooth Fairy’s payment was significant compared to some of the increases in the stock market indices over the past year,” said Marty Weiland, research analyst at DeCare Dental\*, administrator of Securian Dental plans. “However, it was interesting to note that ‘gifts’ ranged from a low of 10 cents to a high of \$25 this year.”

The Dow Jones Industrial Average and NASDAQ have enjoyed an increase as well, although considerably smaller than their winged counterpart. The Dow and NASDAQ indices have increased 1.98% and 1.72% , respectively, over this period. The average tooth fairy gift increased just four cents last year, from \$1.54 to \$1.58, and payment slid 3.75 percent, to \$1.54 from \$1.60, in 2002-03.

According to the survey, which is conducted as part of **Children’s Dental Health Month** in February, a child’s first visit to the dentist took place on average between 2-4 years of age. Additionally, 88 percent of parents surveyed reported that at least one of their children had fluoride treatments and 68 percent reported that their children had sealants.

“The American Dental Association currently recommends that you schedule a visit to your dentist by your child’s first birthday,” said Dr. Dick Hastreiter (DDS), vice president and Dental Director at DeCare Dental. “This will give your child an opportunity to become familiar with the dentist and a chance for the provider to evaluate their needs.”

According to the *Textbook of Pediatrics*, tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease, affecting 5-8 times as many children as asthma. Additionally, children

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suffering from dental problems lose an estimated 52 million school hours annually, according to the *American Journal of Public Health*.

“The Tooth Fairy is a rite of passage and provides an ideal opportunity for parents to instill good oral health habits in their kids,” said Hastreiter. “By providing proper instruction, monitoring, encouragement and a positive personal example, parents and caregivers can help children develop and maintain a healthy attitude about the importance of oral health. By having regular dental checkups, getting sealants if needed, flossing and brushing with fluoride toothpaste, drinking fluoridated water, and eating a balanced diet, children can learn to attain and maintain good oral health for a lifetime.”

Observation of children’s dental health began as a one-day event in 1941. In 1981, the event was extended to a month-long celebration, known today as National Children’s Dental Health Month.

Securian Dental plans offer indemnity and PPO dental benefit products. The products, sold under the “Securian Dental” brand name, target small to mid-size employer groups and can be purchased on an employer-sponsored or voluntary basis. For more oral health tips check out the Securian Dental Web site at [www.securiandental.com](http://www.securiandental.com).

\*Securian Dental plans are underwritten by Securian Life and administered by DeCare Dental Health International, LLC (DDHI). Securian Life is authorized to conduct business in 44 states and in the District of Columbia, and is recognized by A.M. Best with an A (Excellent – third highest of 16 categories) rating. Securian Life is part of the Minnesota Mutual Companies. DDHI is an affiliate of DeCare Dental, LLC, a global leader in oral health care management, serving 3.9 million individuals in 13,775 companies nationwide.

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