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BridgeValley Dental Hygiene Students Participated in the West Virginia Oral Health Coalition during Educational Advocacy Day on February 10th

South Charleston, W.Va.— BridgeValley Community and Technical College Dental Hygiene students joined other members of the Student Chapter of the American Dental Hygienists' Association from across West Virginia for the West Virginia Oral Health Coalition during Educational Advocacy Day. Attendees were provided an overview of the legislative process and earned basic lobbying skills from a variety of healthcare and governmental relations professionals. Also, students toured the West Virginia Capitol and witnessed the reading of a proclamation for Dental Hygienists' Day.

Over 100 students met with legislators to discuss dental health in West Virginia, specifically, the importance of tooth decay— a contagious bacterial infection. The major symptom of tooth decay is a cavity. Cavities and abscesses, which to some may seem routine, can cause more serious problems and even lead to death if timely treatment is not received.

Students also spoke out in support of the 'A Few Cents Makes Sense' initiative aimed at improving the health of West Virginian's by reducing sugar consumption. West Virginia has the highest consumption of sugary drinks in the country, ranks 1st in the nation in hypertension, 2nd in diabetes, and more than 1 in 2 children (56%) enter school with a history of cavities. Sugar-sweetened beverages are still the top source of added sugars for West Virginia children and cause unhealthy weight gain and poor oral health.

This event was presented through a partnership between The West Virginia Dental Hygienists' Association and the West Virginia Oral Health Coalition. Educational Advocacy Day was fully funded by a grant from the DentaQuest Foundation.

BridgeValley Community and Technical College serves a six-county region including Fayette, Raleigh, Nicholas, Clay, Putnam and Kanawha counties. The college operates two campuses in Montgomery and South Charleston, along with the addition of the new Advanced Technology Center

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