**Dubai Health Authority signs agreement with Green Crescent Insurance Company**

The Dubai Health Authority signed a service level agreement with Green Crescent Insurance Company today, at the DHA headquarters making Green Crescent the first insurance company in UAE to have direct billing access to the DHA Public Hospitals and Primary Health Care Centers. The agreement was signed by His Excellency Khalid Al Sheik Mubarak, Deputy Director General of the DHA and Carl J. Sardegna CEO of Green Crescent Insurance Company.

The agreement provides 110,000 Green Crescent insurance card holders with access to all DHA hospitals and health centers.

**Saudi Arabia seeks designers for medical cities**

The Saudi health ministry has approached seven expert international firms to design the five medical cities ordered by King Abdullah, the Saudi Gazette has reported. In addition to the medical cities, which will be operational within five years, the number of beds at the ministry’s hospitals will be increased by 70% in the next four years, from 34,200 to 54,000 beds at more than 349 hospitals and 2,750 primary care centers.

**Qatar set for new oral health strategy**

Qatar’s Supreme Council of Health (SCH) is creating a national oral health strategy. The strategy is expected to be formulated after completing a nationwide survey on oral health among children and teenagers. Dental caries and periodontal diseases are the most prevalent among schoolchildren and teenagers in the Gulf state. The study, which will begin in the last quarter of this year, will help improve the existing oral health services and programmes in the country as well as assist to monitor the trends of oral and dental diseases in the country, SCH said.

**Opening of Al Barsha Medical Centre**

Qadhi Saeed Al Murooshid, Director General of the Dubai Health Authority (DHA) laid the foundation stone for the state-of-the-art Al Barsha Health Centre. The centre, which is located in Al Barsha 2, has a built up area of 70,000 sq ft, will be constructed with an investment of Dh50m. The project will be completed by mid 2012 and will serve a population of approximately 60,000 people living in the vicinity.
Iraqi doctors meet in Sharjah

WAHM Sharjah, Sheikh Mohammed bin Saqr Al Qasimi, Assistant Undersecretary of Ministry of Health, opened the 6th conference of the International Iraqi Medical Association (IIMA) in collaboration with Sharjah Medical District under the auspices of UAE Health Minister Dr. Hanif Hassan and participation of Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland.

Addressing the medical gathering of 700 doctors of diverse specialisations, Sheikh Saqr said the three-day conference provides an ideal platform for sharing latest medical developments, knowledge and experiences.

About 75 speakers delivered 95 presentations through 18 panel of discussions. IIMA is a non-government organization (NGO) registered with the United Nations and seeks to raising awareness and increasing international exposure of Iraqi physicians and their contributions and services to the global medical profession, working and cooperating with prominent international scientific figures in the medical and healthcare industry.

Daniel Zimmermann

LONDON, UK / LEIPZIG, Germany: Orthodontic retainers are a potential source of harmful microbes if not properly cleaned, scientists in the UK have warned.

In a series of tests conducted at the UCL Eastman Dental Institute in London at least 50 percent of all tested retainers contained species of Candida and Staphylococcus micro-organisms, including MRSA, a multidrug-resistant bacterium that can be fatal to patients with a compromised immune system.

The Candida yeast, found universally on human skin and other areas, can also cause infections. Amongst other conditions, it has been associated with oral candidiasis, a condition often related to ill-fitting dentures.

Both species do not normally occur in the oral cavity.

The researchers said that the high number of harmful bacteria found in retainers is most likely the result of poor cleaning, allowing microbes to build up a resistant biofilm and spread to other areas of the oral cavity such as interior cheeks and tongue. The potential for transmission is also high, as retainers are frequently removed and replaced in the mouth by the person who uses them, they added.

They recommend wearers wash their hands thoroughly before and after inserting their retainers. Proper dental hygiene through tooth brushing and the use of mouthwash also helps to keep harmful bacteria from entering the mouth.

Bugs threaten health of orthodontic patients

may be linked to different medical problems including low birth weight, preterm birth and long-term development delays, as bacteria released during treatment may enter the mother’s bloodstream and harm the baby. According to research, pregnant women are prone to gingival bleeding, which is caused by a hormonal imbalance that encourages the growth of certain oral bacteria.

If the new data is verified, pregnant women throughout the US could have their gum conditions treated, confident in the knowledge that it will not have a clinically significant effect on their child’s development, the researchers said. A spokesperson of the American Academy of Periodontology said that although the data remains inconclusive, the organisation generally recommends women to maintain their periodontal health during pregnancy.

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