

# Spring dental checkups in Norwood School April 8-9

**Skippy program makes it easy**

**Skippy is a free program.  
A letter to the editor is  
being submitted to  
correct this statement.**

By **REGAN TUTTLE**  
*Editor*

**T**his is the season for spring cleaning, and that's also true for local children's teeth. Through the Telluride Foundation, Tri-County Health Network, in cooperation with the area schools, is making dental checkups easier than ever with the Skippy Program.

TCHN will provide its Skippy spring dental clinic April 8 and 9 during school hours for infant to 12 years old as they return from their spring break to Norwood School.

"It's a really great program we do," said Candace Kjome, TCHN enrollment navigator. "I cover the Paradox and Naturita schools too, and kids seem to enjoy it."

The Skippy program occurs twice a year, and according to Kjome, if a child attended the clinic in the fall of 2013, they will automatically be enrolled in the upcoming clinic. However, TCHN is planning for additional students to add in to the program.

"We also accept drop-ins," she said.

A dental hygienist will be onsite at Norwood School to perform an oral screening, dental cleaning and administer a sealant, if necessary, as well as a fluoride treatment, unless the parent declines the latter procedure. The program gives the parents necessary information about their child's dental development.

TCHN is requesting to see the younger children first.

"We encourage parents of kids ages 0 to 3 to come the first day, drop in and just come to the climbing room of Prime Time. That's what we encourage, but we are flexible," Kjome said.

The Colorado initiative Cavity Free at Three program in conjunction with the American Dental Association recommends that a child begin having dental check-ups starting at age 1 or when their first tooth appears.

The preschool and elementary students will be pulled out of class for their checkups according to a schedule.

"All the kids actually like it," said Kjome. "It gives them the opportunity to get their teeth checked, and parents don't have

to take off work, and if the hygienist finds anything, we call the parent to make decisions about calling a dentist."

The Skippy program is not free, but TCHN bills Medicaid, CHP-Plus or the insurance provider a child has. However, under the new Affordable Care Act, preventative health and dental appointments are often free of charge.

"A dental health checkup is just as important as exercise and diet for kids," Kjome said.

Parents can call Kjome at 970-708-4638 or email her at [ee-westend@tchnetwork.org](mailto:ee-westend@tchnetwork.org) for more information on the program and to get the required registration form.

Dates for the Paradox Valley Charter School and Naturita Elementary School Skippy spring dental clinic are April 14 and April 30, respectively.

"This is such an important part of a child's development and learning. A healthy mouth, like a healthy body, has been proven to be critical to a child's learning," Kjome said.