



## NEWS RELEASE

### DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HOSTS THE SECOND CARIBBEAN ORAL HEALTH SUMMIT

**SANTO DOMINGO, DOMINICAN REPUBLIC**—Hosted in the Dominican Republic with the objective of improving oral health across the Caribbean, the second Caribbean Oral Health Initiative Summit was held on October 9th and 10th, 2015 at the Hilton Santo Domingo Hotel under the theme “**Moving towards Oral Health equity in the Caribbean: Empowering actions through networking**”.

The Summit included a two-day comprehensive scientific program focused on developing a working agenda that will include future programs and efforts to promote oral health in the Caribbean Region through prevention, health promotion and health care. Delegations from Puerto Rico, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada, Guyana, Cuba, Haiti and Dominican Republic actively participated in the Summit.

The **Caribbean Oral Health Initiative (COHI)**, which started in 2013 as a collaborative effort between the school of Dental Medicine of the University of Puerto Rico and Colgate-Palmolive<sup>R</sup> and seven participating countries, welcomed other countries to this second Summit to expand the impact of these efforts. "The purpose is to identify the priorities, best practices, challenges, and opportunities for education and research collaboration in the Caribbean Region to improve the oral health delivery system," said Dr. Augusto R. Elías Boneta, president of the steering committee and assistant dean of research at the University of Puerto Rico School of Dental Medicine.

This Summit gathered professional associations, international speakers, members of the academia and oral health professionals from the different Ministries of Health. Mr. Bernal Saborío, General Manager and Vice President of Colgate-Palmolive for Caribbean Region, stated that "the company is committed to improve the oral health of the Caribbean population and to facilitate the access of disadvantaged families to education and dental care services." Mr. Saborío also emphasized on the importance of collaborative efforts between the private sector, the government and the academia to help improve the people quality of life.

Amongst the distinguished speakers were Dr. Madeline Reyes from Puerto Rico, Dr. Ileana Grau from Cuba, Dr. Lina Garcia, Dr. Maria Beatriz Ferro, both from Colombia and Dr. Eugenio Beltran from Atlanta, Georgia. They all shared successful models of collaborative, preventive and oral health promotion programs.

According to research conducted increased costs and less investment in dental public health programs are prominent signs of the growing health crisis in the Caribbean countries. Therefore, the findings, the collaborative agreements and research projects generated will be vital in establishing programs to meet the challenges of oral health in the Caribbean Region, declared Dr. Elías Boneta.