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Motivated by Results, Delta Dental of Wisconsin Continues to Invest in Children's Oral Health

Delta Dental provides more than \$775,000 in grants dedicated to improving the oral health of Wisconsin's children in recognition of Children's Dental Health Month

STEVENS POINT, Wis., February 1, 2017 – School-age children without sealants have almost three times more cavities than those with sealants, according to the Center for Disease Control. But Delta Dental of Wisconsin is working to ensure more children receive sealants through a renewed commitment to the Wisconsin Seal-A-Smile program, an innovative school-based sealant program targeting students at high risk for decay.

The Seal-A-Smile program provides oral health screenings, fluoride varnish, and sealants when necessary to school-age students around the state at no cost to their family. It is a result of a unique public-private partnership between the State of Wisconsin, Children's Health Alliance and Delta Dental of Wisconsin. The innovative partnership targets schools where 35 percent or more children receive free or reduced meals. Last year, the Seal-A-Smile program provided dental screenings and oral health education to 52,000 children, more than 26,000 of whom required sealants. Delta Dental of Wisconsin provided an additional \$125,000 to expand participation in the sealant programs for the 2016-2017 school year. This is in addition to an annual \$350,000 commitment to co-fund the program with the state.

"According to the latest study by Wisconsin Department of Health Services, less than 18 percent of the third graders screened in Wisconsin need treatment, far better than the national average," said Ann Boson, Director, Charitable Fund & Community Relations at Delta Dental of Wisconsin. "This remarkable trend illustrates the significant impact that school-based sealant programs can have on oral health. These positive results will be felt for decades to come and is why Delta Dental will continue our commitment to co-fund the Seal-A-Smile program."

In recognition of Children's Dental Health Month, the company also announced the recipients of several other oral health grants for organizations focused on improving outcomes and access to care for some of the state's most vulnerable populations. Delta Dental has so far awarded \$776,500 in children's oral health grants for 2017.

"We've already seen the successful impact that dental intervention can have on the prevention of cavities in children," said Boson. "Delta Dental of Wisconsin is committed to the oral health of all Wisconsin residents. We will continue to support intervention, education, and restoration, as well as the dentists who provide these much-needed services."

Awardees so far include:

Marquette University School of Dentistry Fellowship Program

The grant will fund three dental fellows who will provide much needed dental care for the communities around Eau Claire and Appleton. They will work out of Chippewa Valley Technical College and Tri-County Community Dental Clinic, where they will provide dental care to primarily low-income children. The fellowship program offers essential experience in providing public-health dentistry.

Brown County Oral Health Partnership West Children's Clinic

This grant will enable the Brown County Oral Health Partnership to open an additional clinic in the county equipped with six dental operatories. Funding will also create two more school-based sealant teams to address the severe need for dental care among vulnerable populations.

Columbia St. Mary's Foundation Dental Programs

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Dental clinic provides free dental care for the uninsured in Milwaukee, many of whom are below poverty level. In addition, their sealant program served more than 10,000 children in the 2015/2016 school year. This year's grant will fund the creation of Ascension Smart Smiles Mobile Dental Clinic, a bus that will deliver dental care to students at schools and ensure more children receive urgent and restorative dental care.

Door County Medical Center Dental Clinic

The Door County Medical Center Dental Clinic is the only clinic in the area providing care to low-income families and those with Medicaid coverage. The grant from Delta Dental will allow them to increase the size of the clinic and purchase a digital X-ray, simultaneously making their new clinic fully functional and decreasing the wait list.

Tri-County Community Dental Clinic

This grant will fund the Focus on Children program, a preventive care and treatment program aimed at reaching children at a young age with dental screenings, preventive maintenance, and restorative services. The program serves 67 schools through its school-based and mobile bus programs and has led to a 37 percent increase in sealants placed and a more than 10 percent decrease in emergency or urgent cases.

Madison Dental Initiative: Boys & Girls Club of Madison at Allied Family Center

The Madison Dental Initiative provides urgent and ongoing dental care to the uninsured or those on Medicaid in Dane County. The Boys and Girls clinic site will offer a more comfortable location for children to receive dental care. The grant will cover construction costs of the new clinic.

As the state's largest dental insurer, Delta Dental is committed to the oral health of all Wisconsin residents. The organization is accepting applications for 2017 oral health grants that focus on improving access to dental care and programs that help prevent dental caries in vulnerable populations. Eligibility requirements are available on the company's website, www.deltadentalwi.com/charitable-fund.

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About Delta Dental of Wisconsin

For more than 50 years, Delta Dental has been working to maintain healthy communities and healthy teeth. We provide dental benefits and services to more Wisconsin companies, subscribers, and their family members than any other insurance carrier. Our mission is to improve oral health and wellness by extending access to care, advancing science, and supporting an effective oral-health workforce. Through Delta Dental of Wisconsin's Charitable Fund, we are committed to *advancing solutions* for Wisconsin's oral health.