



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Delta Dental Foundation Awards \$150K in Community Oral Health Grants**

*Forty-four North Carolina nonprofits receive funding to support oral health services and education for 56,000 children*

**RALEIGH, NC:** The Delta Dental Foundation (DDF), the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of North Carolina (DDNC), today announced \$150,000 in grants it is awarding to 44 North Carolina nonprofits through the Smiles for Kids program. Smiles for Kids funds dental education initiatives and programs designed to promote children’s oral health—and this year, 56,000 children will benefit.

“February is National Children’s Dental Health Month, and so there’s no better time to spread awareness that tooth decay is the most common chronic childhood disease. According to recent data from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, the rate of cavities among kindergartners in our state is the highest it’s been in five years,” said Curt Ladig, president and CEO of DDNC. “This year’s grants will provide more access to dental services and education for children who may not otherwise have it, allowing them to show up to school healthy and ready to learn. After all, everyone deserves a healthy smile.”

In North Carolina, nearly one in five kindergarten students already have untreated tooth decay. Through the Smiles for Kids program, the DDF strives to educate the public on the importance of preventative oral health care and to help fund initiatives and programs designed to promote children’s oral health. Smiles for Kids supports safety-net dental clinics and North Carolina nonprofits, which provide critical dental services and education to local residents, especially to children in systemically disadvantaged areas.

Since the inception of the program in 2011, the DDF has invested more than \$910,000 through the program, which has touched the lives of more than 506,000 children and families in more than half of North Carolina counties. This is the program’s largest year of giving to date. To view the full list of this year’s grant recipients, visit: <http://www.deltadentalnc.com/smilesforkids>.

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**About Delta Dental of North Carolina**

For more than 50 years, Delta Dental of North Carolina has championed healthy smiles across the state as North Carolina's leading dental insurer. A member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, DDNC is part of the largest dental insurance network in the nation, covering more than 80 million Americans. DDNC is pleased to provide both dental and vision insurance administered by VSP® Vision Care to businesses as part of their employee benefits, and directly to individuals and families. Our mission is to improve the oral health and the overall wellbeing of the communities we serve. Learn more about Delta Dental of North Carolina at [www.deltadentalinc.com](http://www.deltadentalinc.com) and DeltaVision® at [www.deltadentalinc.com/deltavision](http://www.deltadentalinc.com/deltavision).

**About the Delta Dental Foundation**

The Delta Dental Foundation (DDF) is a nonprofit, charitable organization established in 1980, which serves as the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina. The DDF is dedicated to developing and enhancing partnerships and programs to improve oral and overall health and health equity. For more information, visit [www.deltadental.foundation](http://www.deltadental.foundation).

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