



**Massachusetts Delta Dental Foundation Awards Over \$400,000
in Grants to Nine Organizations in Massachusetts Working to
Improve Access to Dental Care for Needy Populations**

Boston, MA, November 27, 2000 -- The Massachusetts Delta Dental Foundation today announced that it has selected nine organizations to receive over \$400,000 in grant money to provide accessible dental care to needy populations across Massachusetts. Created and funded by Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts, the Foundation has pledged \$1.5 million over the next three years to organizations that are working towards reducing oral health disparities in minority and disadvantaged populations across the state.

The Foundation was launched earlier this year with the goal of funding programs that meet one or more of its three priorities: providing access to appropriate dental care, promoting models of preventive care, and offering needed education and training for oral health professionals serving at-risk populations. The largest amount of grant money is being given to programs that focus primarily on improving access to dental care, since this is where the greatest need is. These are the first grant awards that the Foundation has made.

“Massachusetts is in the midst of a major dental crisis with the unmet need for dental care at an all-time high,” said Dr. Robert Hunter, president of Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts. “These nine grant recipients are going to make a huge difference in the communities across the state that have been strongly affected by the lack of dental care, and we are proud to be supporting their hard work and diligent efforts.”

The grant recipients include: Boston University Program for Refugee Oral Health in Boston, \$37,500; Community Health Network Area 12 in Haverhill, \$67,500; Dorchester House Multi-Service Center, Inc. in Dorchester, \$75,000; Hillcrest Educational Centers, Inc. in Pittsfield, \$48,000; Lynn Public Schools in Lynn, \$25,000; Massachusetts Coalition for Oral Health, Inc. in Boston, \$75,000; Northeast Hospital Corporation in Beverly, \$34,000;

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O'Neill Health Center, Inc. in Hyannis, \$41,000; and Tufts University Sharewood Clinic in Boston, \$17,000. The grant money will be used to fund the following initiatives:

- *Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine in Boston*, will use its \$37,500 grant to establish a pilot dental screening initiative for newly arriving refugees through its new Program for Refugee Oral Health. The program will include oral health screenings, assessment of the need for dental sealants, and referrals for follow-up dental care, in addition to collecting data about the oral health status of the refugee population as a means to increasing the use of preventive oral health services by refugees in Massachusetts. Services will be provided at the International Clinic of Boston Medical Center (BMC), which the Goldman School collaborates with through BMC's Boston Center for Refugee Oral Health and Human Rights, and through the Refugee and Immigrant Health Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health.
- *Community Health Network Area 12 in Haverhill*, which serves the homeless, elderly, and uninsured or underinsured populations in Amesbury, Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury, and West Newbury, will use its \$67,500 grant to provide dental screening and cleaning services for over 3,000 people. The screenings will be held in area Councils on Aging. The money will also be used to provide transportation to the Tufts Dental School Clinic at Middlesex Community College in Lowell, which is providing restorative services to those needing additional dental services.
- *Dorchester House Multi-Service Center in Dorchester*, which provides accessible health care to people in-need regardless of their ability to pay, will be able to nearly double the capacity of their Child and Adolescent Mobile Oral Health Program with the help of its \$75,000 grant. The Mobile program, which has been in operation for over 20 years and targets children and adolescents who have been denied previous dental care due to poverty and system failures, will be able to reach close to 6,000 young people at 75 different sites in the coming year.

- *Hillcrest Educational Centers in Pittsfield*, which offers accessible dental care to special needs and MassHealth patients throughout the western part of the state, will use its \$48,000 grant to renovate an additional treatment room and purchase new equipment for their dental office. By adding these facilities, the Hillcrest dental office will be able to reduce patients' waiting time for appointments by 50 percent and increase the number of patients being given dental care by nearly ten a day.
- *Lynn Public Schools in Lynn*, which serves 15,000 students of which many are at high-risk for dental problems (54 percent of the population are minorities, one-third are from homes where English is not the primary language, over 60 percent are eligible for free or reduced lunch, and 16 percent are in special education), will hire a dental hygienist with its \$25,000 grant. The new dental hygienist will work closely with school nurses to provide oral screenings, teach preventive education in the classrooms, and to develop a referral system of local dentists.
- *Massachusetts Coalition for Oral Health in Boston*, will create a pilot program for a statewide dental sealant program with the \$75,000 grant it receives. The sealant program will target 3,400 low-income and minority students in the communities of Ashfield, Beverly, Boston, Buckland, Cambridge, Charlemont, Chelsea, Colrain, Hanson, Hawley, Heath, New Bedford, Plainfield, Shelburne, Rowe, and Whitman. Dental sealants, which are known to reduce tooth decay risk, will be placed on high-risk children at both dental clinic sites as well as at elementary schools across the state.
- *Northeast Hospital Corporation in Beverly* will use its \$34,000 grant to fund a new project called "Super Dental Status: Improving Access To Oral Health Services for Children and Youth," which is targeting school-aged children living in Beverly and Gloucester who have limited access to preventive and primary care dental care. The money will be used to expand the preventive and primary dental care services currently offered to Beverly and Gloucester public school students, to assess the children's dental health needs in the two communities, to integrate dental health services in a new school-based health center, and to determine viable ways to assist students without dental insurance coverage.



- *O'Neill Health Center in Hyannis*, which provides accessible primary healthcare and dental care to MassHealth, homeless, and other uninsured, at-risk adult populations in the mid-Cape area, will use its \$41,000 grant to fund additional medical and administrative staff so that it can extend its dental clinic's hours from one day a week to two full days, once a second site has opened. This will allow the clinic to increase the number of individuals it serves and reduce the waiting time for appointments.
- *Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Boston* will use its \$17,000 grant to fund a new dental division for the Sharewood Clinic, a student-managed health clinic in Chinatown sponsored by Tufts University School of Medicine. The new oral health clinic will provide examinations, screenings, preventive and general oral health education, and referrals for needed dental care to local residents. Patient care will be provided by volunteer dental students from Tufts, Harvard, and Boston University working under faculty supervision from Tufts University.

The Massachusetts Delta Dental Foundation was launched by Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts in January 2000. Delta Dental's gift of \$1.5 million to form the Foundation is the largest financial contribution the company has ever made. The Foundation will be giving away the \$1.5 million in grants over the next three years to organizations that are working to improve the oral health of uninsured and underinsured people across the state. Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts is the largest provider of group dental benefits in the state. The company is committed to finding innovative oral medicine solutions to preventing and curing dental disease. The company is involved in numerous research studies and community-based fluoridation programs to make dental care affordable and accessible to everyone. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, Delta Dental is a member of the national Delta Dental Plans Association, the nation's largest provider of group dental benefits.

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