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Dental Care Now Available for Pediatric Patients During Regular Medical Visits at Valley-Wide Health Systems' La Junta Clinic

LA JUNTA, Colo. – November 16, 2015– Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc., (Valley-Wide) is now offering a variety of preventive dental health services to pediatric patients during regular medical visits at its La Junta Clinic.

Under the direction of Registered Dental Hygienist (RDH), Charlene Pariera and dental support employee, Lisa Bensley, the services provided include oral health assessments and education, regular cleanings, x-rays, fluoride varnishes and referrals for more comprehensive dental treatment. Dental care is available for children and adolescents Monday – Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. at the La Junta Clinic, located at 1012 Belmont Avenue. Valley-Wide plans to expand dental care at the La Junta Clinic to include pregnant women over the next few months.

Integrating dental care into regular medical visits allows Valley-Wide's La Junta dental support team to collaborate with the medical team to immediately assess children's oral health during well-child checkups or provide education to pregnant women during prenatal visits. If needed, patients will be referred to Valley-Wide's Las Animas Dental Clinic, its Rocky Ford Dental Clinic or other community dental providers for restorative or emergency services.

Valley-Wide has provided comprehensive medical and dental care to Coloradans living in Canon City, the Arkansas Valley and the San Luis Valley since 1976. As a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), Valley-Wide's 19 clinics deliver care to all residents, regardless of their ability to pay for services. Valley-Wide offers a sliding fee discount program for all services delivered that assists with affordability for low-income patients.

Valley-Wide is able to offer integrated dental care at its La Junta Clinic through funding the organization received from Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation's



(DDCOF) Colorado Medical-Dental Integration (CO MDI) Project. The first initiative of its kind in the U.S., CO MDI will integrate dental hygienists in 16 Colorado primary care clinics over five years in an effort to increase access to preventive dental health services.

“Many people living in the Arkansas Valley have limited access to regular dental care and it’s even more difficult for children to get the preventive care they need,” stated the Valley-Wide leadership team. “CO MDI is filling a great need in our community. Now we are able to immediately address children’s dental needs and offer education that will hopefully result in healthy oral health habits at home. Best of all, we’re providing this dental care at a location our community is familiar with in a manner that fulfills our mission of being respectful and inclusive of everyone we treat.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among U.S. children ages 6 to 11. CO MDI is designed to improve the dental health of Colorado’s youngest residents and reach families who have limited access to dental care due to geographic barriers, lack of insurance or transportation difficulties. DDCOF has awarded approximately \$2.1 million in funding to the CO MDI clinics to hire hygienists, purchase equipment and deliver care.

To make an appointment at the VWHS La Junta Clinic, please call (719) 383-5900. For a complete list of the CO MDI clinics as well as more information on the initiative, visit www.deltadentalcofoundation.org/initiatives.

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About Valley-Wide Health Systems, Inc.

Valley-Wide is a private, non-profit 501(c)(3) Community/Migrant Health Center (C/MCH), serving multiple counties and regions in rural southern Colorado. Established in 1976, Valley-Wide provides safe and effective comprehensive primary and oral health care through a service delivery model that offers seamless services to all patients regardless of their circumstances, including their ability to pay for services. Emphasis is placed on assisting the patient, reducing barriers such as cost, culture, language, literacy, and transportation that may hinder use of appropriate health care services. Twelve primary health clinics and seven dental clinics are strategically located geographically serving 10 counties throughout southern Colorado.

About Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation

Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation’s mission is to improve the state’s oral health by eradicating childhood tooth decay. Over the past 15 years, the Foundation has been solely funded by Delta Dental of Colorado. Its initiatives have included educational programs targeting low-income, high-risk families; support of dental health education for medical and dental students as well as providers; and opportunities to teach good dental habits and cavity prevention among pregnant women and



children. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Foundation works to make good dental health a community priority. A core belief is that, because dental disease is almost 100 percent preventable, efforts to improve oral health will result in a healthier Colorado overall. To learn more about the Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, please visit www.deltadentalcofoundation.org.