



11/28/18

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**29 NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS TO IMPROVE ORAL HEALTH IN COLORADO  
WITH FUNDING FROM DELTA DENTAL OF COLORADO FOUNDATION**

***\$3.4 million will be distributed over three years to support projects that advance oral health equity.***

**DENVER – November 28, 2018** – Today, Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation (DDCOF) announced that it will provide \$3.4 million in funding over three years to 29 Colorado nonprofit organizations to support projects designed to advance oral health equity in local communities.

Social determinants – such as race and ethnicity, income, geography and age – impact Coloradans’ oral health and their ability to access regular dental care. The DDCOF grantees were selected because they serve populations that have been historically overlooked and experience significant oral health disparities. They also demonstrated proven or innovative solutions to overcome barriers with accessing oral health care or preventing tooth decay, two of the foundation’s strategic focus areas. Of the 29 grantees, 14 are located in urban areas of Colorado, 11 in rural areas and four provide services statewide.

“Our inaugural open funding created an opportunity for organizations to share what they needed to improve health in their communities. The 62 applications submitted revealed a significant need for dedicated oral health funding statewide,” said Allison Cusick, executive director of Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation. “According to the Colorado Health Institute, just 63 percent of low-income Coloradans report good physical and oral health. Thousands of Coloradans live in dental health professional shortage areas. Disparities like these result in oral health inequities. By funding innovative projects designed to improve community oral health, we will better understand what Coloradans need to be healthy and help achieve the foundation’s mission of advancing oral health equity.”

The newly funded organizations and their projects include:

- **Aurora Health Alliance (Aurora)** – Support for the Aurora Smiles program to conduct strategic planning and capacity building to sustain and expand oral health services (screenings, fluoride varnish) in Adams and Arapahoe counties.
- **Aurora Public Schools/APS Action Zone (Aurora)** – Implement Book, Brush, Bed programming at three schools in northwest Aurora to help families establish a nighttime routine, prioritize literacy and improve oral health through toothbrushing.



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- **Chaffee Oral Health Program (Salida)** – Reach children and pregnant women living in Chaffee, Fremont, Lake and Saguache counties through oral health screenings, care coordination and education on the value of fluoridated water.
- **Colorado Coalition for the Homeless (Denver)** – Expand dental outreach for Colorado’s homeless and vulnerable families to new locations including the Samaritan House, Renaissance Children’s Center and the mobile Health Outreach Program.
- **Community Health Services/Bright Star Smiles (Aspen)** – Expand preventive oral health services to children in childcare and preschool and their parents, as well as pregnant mothers, who are experiencing significant socioeconomic barriers in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin counties.
- **Dental Lifeline Network (Statewide)** – Support the organization’s work to serve more patients who are elderly, disabled or medically fragile through donated dental services.
- **Denver Health and Hospitals Foundation (Denver)** – Hire a pediatric dental patient navigator to work with Denver Public Schools’ School-Based Oral Health Program.
- **Dolores Health Association (Dove Creek)** – Open a new dental clinic in Montezuma County.
- **Dominican Home Health Agency, Inc. (Denver)** – Expand access to oral health care among low-income senior patients participating in wellness clinics and in-home nursing care programs.
- **Family & Inter-cultural Resource Center (Frisco)** – Increase dental insurance enrollment through an enrollment and literacy program serving low-to-middle-income individuals and families.
- **Florence Crittenton Services of Colorado (Denver)** – Begin providing dental health services for teen mothers and their children at the Florence Crittenton School-based Health Center.
- **Grand Beginnings/Meeting Milestones Initiative (Hot Sulphur Springs)** – Provide oral health screenings and education to children and pregnant women living in Grand and Jackson counties.
- **Gunnison Dept. of Health and Human Services (Gunnison)** – Expand the Gunnison Dental Initiative and Gunnison Prenatal Program to serve more children and non-English speaking residents.
- **Kids First Health Care (Commerce City)** – Provide dental equipment to deliver care at school-based health centers in Adams City and Brighton High schools and offer tele-dentistry services in partnership with Salud Family Health Centers.
- **La Clinica Tepeyac, Inc. (Denver)** – Hire a full-time dental hygienist to serve primarily Spanish-speaking, uninsured patients.
- **Marillac Health (Grand Junction)** – Support for the federally qualified health center (FQHC) to become the first in the state to integrate a denture technician into the care team.
- **Mercy Housing Mountain Plains (Denver)** – Provide oral health education and care coordination at two housing communities serving low-income families, seniors and people with special needs.
- **Metro Community Provider Network (Denver)** – Hire a registered dental hygienist to deliver care to more patients living in under-served communities.
- **Mission Medical Center (Colorado Springs)** – Support to provide dental care to residents of El Paso and Teller counties experiencing financial barriers.
- **Northeast Colorado Health Foundation (NE Colorado)** – Support for a rural health department to provide school-based oral health services, oral health education for pregnant women and integrate oral health resources into birthing classes for pregnant women and other public programs such as SNAP and WIC.



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- **Northwest Colorado Health (Steamboat Springs)** – Hire a bilingual dental care coordinator to implement outreach strategies to increase the number of patients accessing care.
- **One Colorado Education Fund (Statewide)** – Train health care providers on oral health disparities faced by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer (LGBTQ) individuals and educate LGBTQ individuals and advocates to champion for quality oral health care.
- **Project Worthmore (Denver)** – Support to upgrade dental equipment used to provide culturally responsive oral health care to refugees living in Denver and Aurora.
- **Tri-County Health Network (Rural/Midwestern Colorado)** – Expand preventive and restorative oral health services for children and adults and begin offering preventive services in preschools.
- **Valley-Wide Health Systems (SW Colorado)** – Hire a dental outreach coordinator to provide oral health education to Women, Infants & Children (WIC) and Nurse Family Partnership clients and direct them to available dental care.
- **Center for Immigrants and Immigration Services (Denver)** – Support to provide education, screenings and restorative care to four African communities in partnership with the University of Colorado School of Dentistry.
- **Colorado Health Network (Fort Collins)** – Open a dental clinic in Fort Collins to provide care to patients living with HIV/AIDS in northeast Colorado.
- **Dental Aid, Inc. (Denver/NE Colorado)** – Expand access to care for the under-insured and uninsured who experience barriers to accessing dental care due to cost.
- **Family Star (Denver)** – Integrate oral health education into Head Start and Early Head Start programs.

In addition to this group of grantees, DDCOF funds a variety of projects that address oral health disparities. This includes the Colorado Medical-Dental Integration (CO MDI) Project, funding the Frontier Center 4 Health at the University of Colorado School of Dental Medicine and partnering with other foundations to fund Cavity Free at Three, a program at the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment.

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**About Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation:**

For more than 20 years, Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation (DDCOF) has been working to make good dental health a community priority. As a 501(c)(3) organization funded by the nonprofit Delta Dental of Colorado, we believe our efforts will improve the health of all Coloradans. We partner with communities and provide grant funding specific to three main oral health focus areas: access to care, prevention and connections to overall health. Together with our partners, we implement innovative programs and projects intended to reach people that have been historically overlooked. To learn more about Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, visit [www.deltadentalcofoundation.org](http://www.deltadentalcofoundation.org).