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Delta Dental
Community Benefit Annual Report
2008





Promoting Happier People Through Better Oral Health

As a national system of dental service organizations and the nation's largest dental benefits carrier, we are proud of our large and growing commitment to improving the quality of life in the communities we serve.

We're on a mission to improve oral health.

We support programs that focus on preventing dental disease, expanding access to care, advancing dental science and understanding the connections between oral and overall health.

Each of our 39 independent member companies and their affiliated foundations work actively within their communities to advance solutions for better oral health. Nationally, we all work together within a framework that helps put our ideals into action.

We're pleased to share with you information about our commitment to communities and some examples of how we're promoting healthier people through better oral health. But this is only a small part of our story. To learn more about what we're doing in your community, go to deltadental.com and locate the member company nearest you.



Addressing an Urgent Need

Among Children

- Tooth decay remains one of the most common diseases of childhood – 5 times as common as asthma and 7 times as common as hay fever.¹
- Tooth decay affects more than one-fourth of U.S. children aged 2–5 and half of those aged 12–15.²
- Poor children suffer twice as much dental caries (tooth decay) as more affluent children.¹
- Untreated cavities are five times more likely in children from low-income communities than high-income areas.⁴
- More than 51 million school hours are lost each year due to dental-related illness.⁴

Among Adults

- Employed adults lose more than 164 million hours of work each year due to dental disease or dental visits.¹
- More than 40 percent of poor adults (20 years and older) have at least one untreated decayed tooth compared to 16 percent of non-poor adults.¹
- About one-fourth of seniors have untreated dental cavities.⁴
- About 25 percent of adults (60 years and older) no longer have any natural teeth.⁵
- Most adults show signs of gum disease. Severe gum disease affects about 14 percent of adults aged 45 to 54 years.⁶
- Oral and pharyngeal cancers, which are diagnosed in some 31,000 Americans each year, result in about 7,400 deaths each year. The five-year survival rate for Caucasian patients is 56 percent and for African American patients is only 34 percent.⁶

¹ Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in America

² CDC: Oral Health: Preventing Cavities, Gum Disease, and Tooth Loss

³ AHRQ News and Numbers report

⁴ CDC fact sheet: Oral Health for Adults

⁵ NIDCR: Dental Caries in Seniors Aged 65 and Older

⁶ CDC fact sheet: Oral Health and Older Adults



A National Partnership to Improve Children's Oral Health: Delta Dental and the National Head Start Association

Our special alliance with the National Head Start Association aims to improve the oral health of some of our nation's youngest children at a critical time in their development.

Cavities and other oral health problems are almost entirely preventable. Millions of children suffer needlessly from poor oral health, which can impact their physical development, social interaction and their ability to learn. Together, Delta Dental and the National Head Start Association are working to improve oral health and provide Head Start children the best chance to succeed in school.

At the national level, we're exploring ways to help Head Start and Early Head Start fulfill their charge to provide dental screenings, assessments and referral services to their students. Within communities, many of our member companies are helping to coordinate and provide oral health curriculum, supplies, screenings and preventive care.

“Our educators have seen firsthand how oral health issues impact a child's ability to learn, concentrate and interact with others ... this partnership brings together two organizations that value children's oral health and feel a responsibility to make a real difference.”

– Michael McGrady, interim president and CEO of National Head Start Association



Waukesha County Community Dental Clinic is one of several clinics across Wisconsin that are able to provide diagnostic and restorative services to low-income patients as a result of financial support from Delta Dental of Wisconsin.



Fighting Dental Disease

While oral diseases such as cavities, periodontal (gum) disease and oral cancer are progressive, the good news is they can often be stopped and even reversed. Better yet, most oral diseases can be prevented entirely – which is why we feel such an urgent need to promote prevention and early intervention.

In some communities, we sponsor programs that provide preventive, diagnostic and treatment services to reduce the incidence of dental disease. In other areas, our member companies invest in programs that deliver information about the importance of oral health and empower people to lead healthier lives.

Through community outreach, education and services, we're helping fight dental disease and promote our belief that everyone deserves good oral health.

Preventing Oral Cancer

African-American men in Detroit have one of the highest rates of oral cancer in the United States. Education, awareness and early detection can dramatically decrease the mortality rate and disfigurement that affects many of the 30,000 Americans diagnosed each year. **Delta Dental of Michigan** supports a multi-year program to promote early detection and education. As of 2007, more than 1,000 people have been screened and four people have been diagnosed with oral cancer.

Helping Patients Stop Smoking

Cigarette smoking has been well established as a primary risk factor for a number of health problems, among them oral cancer and other oral health issues. **Delta Dental of California** is currently conducting a study examining how dentists may provide tobacco cessation counseling to their patients who smoke. The results are expected to yield valuable insights about tobacco cessation counseling by dentists and dental paraprofessionals.

Sealing Smiles

Delta Dental of Wisconsin helps fund the local component of their state's Seal a Smile Program. This project aims to prevent decay and promote oral health by placing sealants on children's teeth. The program is the collaborative effort of a number of public and not-for-profit groups, as well as the volunteer efforts of school nurses, technical college students and faculty and many others.



Serving the Underserved

Accessing dental care is a challenge for millions of Americans who can't afford treatment. Many others find it difficult to get the care they need because they deal with chronic illness, medical or cognitive disabilities or live in medically underserved areas.

With the help of our community partners and dedicated volunteers, a number of member companies sponsor programs that offer free dental services. Many administer grant programs that provide financial support to clinics serving patients with government-sponsored or no insurance. Based on community needs, some member companies have also invested in on-site and mobile dental clinics that bring care to those in need.

Since 2004, more than 200 dental professionals and many others have volunteered their services with Delta Dental of South Dakota's mobile dental program. Pictured with a patient are volunteers Ed Choate, CEO of Delta Dental of Arkansas, and Dr. Jim Johnston from Arkansas.



Special Olympics athletes in Wisconsin can receive free dental screenings through the Healthy Athletes Program, thanks to the work of volunteer dentists and hygienists and financial support from Delta Dental of Wisconsin.

Delivering Care On the Road

A modern dental office on wheels, the Delta Dental Dakota Smiles Mobile Dental Program brings oral health services year-round to children from limited-income families who would not otherwise have access to dentistry. Done in partnership with Ronald McDonald House Charities and other organizations, **Delta Dental of South Dakota** manages and operates the program, working with community site partners to target those children who are most in need of care. A second mobile care unit has been added to expand services to reach a broader geographic area and include care for qualifying adults.

Leading a Statewide Coalition for Better Oral Health

Delta Dental of Massachusetts has joined with other oral health advocates to form a statewide coalition to address disparities in oral health care. The coalition is producing a plan for eliminating barriers and increasing access to care for all Massachusetts residents. This effort follows the release of a report, issued by the Catalyst Institute and funded by Delta Dental of Massachusetts, that revealed significant disparities in the status of children's oral health care among racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups in the state.

Expanding the Reach of Safety Net Clinics

In 2007, the Kansas Legislature appropriated funding for the innovative Dental Hub Grant program, designed to address both the economic and geographic barriers to care that many residents of Kansas experience. In collaboration with the Legislature and other foundations, the **Delta Dental of Kansas Foundation** is providing a significant investment in the program to help eight safety net clinics expand oral health services for more people across the state. The program will increase the number of dental professionals at selected clinics and use additional professionals at off-site satellite areas such as schools and senior centers to offer more basic services.



Doing More for Kids

A child's smile is a spectacular thing. The value of preserving that smile is something we take very seriously.

As early as a baby's first toothless grin, it's important to set the foundation for a lifetime of good oral health. Our member companies are passionately engaged in this objective, working with children to promote oral health knowledge and remove barriers to care for disadvantaged and at-risk children. A number of our member companies also work in partnership with government agencies to administer public insurance programs such as Medicaid and the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

Encouraging Interaction

Several children's museums around the country feature exhibits sponsored by Delta Dental member companies. The interactivity allows children to learn about taking care of their teeth in an engaging and memorable way.

For example, more than 50,000 children each year visit the Museum of Discovery in Little Rock, which is home to the state's largest oral health educational exhibit called "Totally Tooth." **Delta Dental of Arkansas** funded the display with an initial donation – and continues to provide upkeep donations on an annual basis.



Smile-a-Bration mascot Chopper shares warm hugs with Colorado children.

Visiting Schools

Learning about good oral health habits is great fun for young children, thanks to a number of school-based educational initiatives sponsored by our member companies. In some areas, costumed superheroes such as Captain Supertooth, the Tooth Wizard and Marshall Molar make presentations to school children about the importance of healthy smiles.

Originally developed by **Delta Dental of Rhode Island** and adopted by a number of member companies, "Teeth on the Go" is another popular school-based program. Designed for use in elementary schools, it's a traveling book bag program that incorporates a number of teaching tools and is based on statewide curriculum requirements.

Providing Free Care

Delta Dental of Colorado's Foundation has provided free care to uninsured children through its Smile-a-Bration program. Formerly accomplished through events held a few days each year, the program has been expanded to offer free care year-round to qualifying children through six grantee clinics.

In partnership with the Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs of Virginia, **Delta Dental of Virginia** provides significant funding in support of the Smart Smiles program. Boys and Girls Club members who are uninsured or underinsured can receive regular dental check-ups, treatment, oral health education and transportation to dental appointments.



Advancing Dentistry

We're committed to advancing the science and practice of dentistry, while also helping to develop a dental workforce that is prepared to meet the needs of patients.

Many of our member companies provide research funding that supports continued improvements in prevention, treatment and diagnostics. We're also active in sponsoring studies that explore the associations between oral health and systemic conditions.

Through programs that target new and practicing dental professionals, we help to shape a highly qualified and diverse workforce for the future. We offer support to young professionals and their schools through donations, scholarships, endowments, grants and student awards. A number of member companies also sponsor continuing education credits and ongoing professional development for practicing dentists and hygienists.



Addressing the Dentist Shortage

Each year, **Delta Dental of Iowa** awards a \$50,000 grant to a graduating dental student to help them repay their educational debt. In return, the dentist agrees to practice in one of the designated dentist shortage areas of the state, and must dedicate at least 35 percent of patient services to underserved populations such as the elderly, the non-insured and Medicaid patients.

Promoting a Diverse Workforce

Delta Dental of California, Pennsylvania and their affiliates contribute sponsorship support to the Hispanic Dental Association (HDA) to promote and encourage oral health careers among Hispanics. The hope is that more Hispanic dental professionals in the workforce will result in greater access to care for the Hispanic population.

Learning More About Diabetes

Associations between oral health and diabetes are well accepted by the medical and dental communities, but there is still much to learn. With a grant from the Delta Dental Foundation (the philanthropic arm of **Delta Dental of Michigan**), researchers are examining this association and disease management approaches. Early findings suggest that diabetics with periodontal disease who receive more frequent professional teeth cleanings are better able to manage their blood glucose levels.



Making a Meaningful Difference

As long as preventable oral diseases continue impacting children and families, we'll remain a leader in advancing solutions for healthier people through better oral health. It's a commitment that defines our organization and inspires us to continue our work.

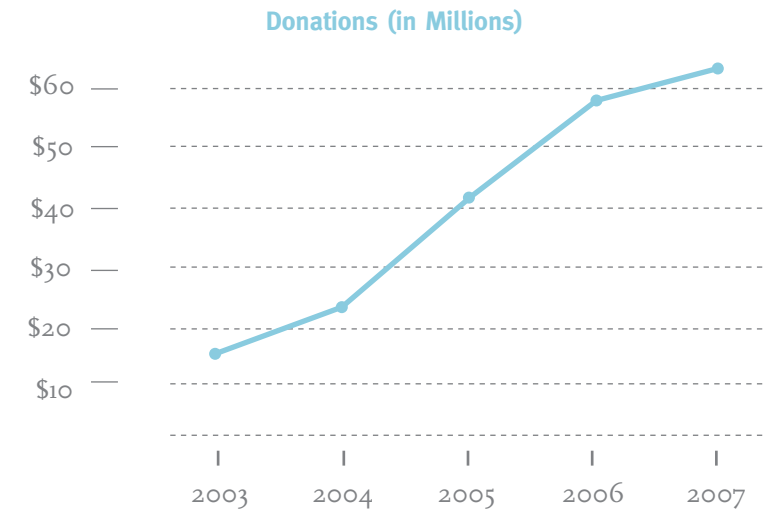
The examples we've outlined represent just a small selection of the many ways our member companies invest in their communities. They provide just a glimpse of how we work to connect to our neighbors and understand their needs.

Our member companies also contribute to general health and wellness initiatives, cultural events and community activities, all supported by a corporate culture that promotes and values employee volunteerism.

All of this work couldn't be done without the dedication of our employees and support from the many community partners, dental professionals and volunteers who help us realize our vision and make things happen.



Our Growing Commitment



Figures include donations made by Delta Dental member companies either to directly support initiatives, or donations made to their affiliated foundations to carry out public benefit work.

