

Delta Dental Community Benefit Annual Report

2009



Caring About Oral Health

As a national system of not-for-profit dental service organizations and the nation's largest dental benefits provider, we are proud of our dedication to improving the oral health and quality of life in the communities we serve.

Everyone deserves good oral health. It's a belief that is at the heart of our organization, and it shows in the 50 years we've committed to improving the oral health of Americans.

In 2008, our 39 member companies and their affiliated foundations once again contributed to community programs that focus on preventing dental disease, expanding access to care, advancing dental science and understanding the connections between oral and overall health.

Working together with our community partners, we are able to improve oral and overall health. Several examples follow. To find out more about what your local Delta Dental member company is doing in your community, visit deltadental.com and check out our new community benefit section.



Recognizing Room for Improvement



Among Children

- Children living below the poverty line (annual income of \$17,000 for a single family of four) have considerably more severe and untreated tooth decay than children living above the poverty line.¹
- Medicaid has not been able to fill the gap in providing dental care to poor, young children. Fewer than one in five Medicaid-covered children received a single dental visit in a recent year-long study period.¹
- By age 17, more than 7 percent of children have lost at least one permanent tooth to decay.¹
- Nearly half of all cavities among low-income children go untreated.²
- Tooth decay affects nearly 20 percent of 2- to 4-year-olds, more than 50 percent of 8-year-olds and more than 75 percent of 17-year-olds.²
- Nearly 40 percent of Mexican-American children aged 6 to 8 have untreated decay, compared with 25 percent of non-Hispanic whites.³
- Tobacco-related oral lesions are common in teenagers who use spit (smokeless) tobacco. The lesions occur in 35 percent of snuff users and 20 percent of chewing tobacco users.⁴

¹ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Oral Health in America: A Report of the Surgeon General, 2000.

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Oral Health: Preventing Cavities, Gum Disease and Mouth and Throat Cancer, 2003.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Oral Health: Preventing Cavities, Gum Disease and Tooth Loss, 2009.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Factsheets, 2004.



Among Adults

- Tooth decay affects more than 90 percent of adults over age 40.³
- Nearly 46 percent of adults 65 years old and older have lost six or more teeth due to tooth decay or gum disease.⁵
- Severe periodontal disease affects about 14 percent of adults aged 45 to 54.¹
- More than one in three people age 30 and older have periodontal disease.¹
- Pregnant women with periodontal disease are seven times more likely to give birth to a low-weight or pre-term baby. Almost 20 percent of pre-term and low-weight births can be linked to periodontal disease.⁶
- Advanced gum disease affects 4 percent to 12 percent of adults.³
- At any given time, about 5 percent of Americans aged 65 and older are living in long-term care facilities where dental care is problematic.¹

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Oral Health Surveillance System, 2006.

⁶ American Academy of Periodontology.

Preventing Dental Disease

Many oral diseases can be reversed if detected early – and most are entirely preventable. This is why we feel such an urgent need to promote prevention and early intervention.

Routine dental checkups and oral health care are vital tools for early detection and prevention of oral diseases. Through various programs across the nation, Delta Dental member companies support programs that provide dental services to the public, educate children and adults about the dangers of dental disease and fund research to advance treatment.



Children in Arizona are able to receive free education about how to prevent cavities through proper oral health care thanks to support from Delta Dental of Arizona.

This is one of many classrooms of children in Arizona learning how to brush their teeth properly through the Varnish Today, Vanish Decay program.



A report released in May 2008 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shows that preschool-aged children are the only age group whose tooth decay is increasing. **Delta Dental of Arizona**, along with a number of schools and not-for-profit groups, fund the *Varnish Today, Vanish Decay* program, which helps reduce early childhood cavities in preschool kids through preventive care and oral health education.

Educating About Dental Disease

Delta Dental of Idaho launched the *Healthy Mouth Healthy Body* campaign to inform Idahoans about the connection of oral health to overall health and the role they can take in preventing dental disease. The 2008 campaign topics included the connection of gum disease to heart disease and diabetes, the benefits of dental sealants and the oral health dangers of smokeless tobacco.

Researching Oral Cancer Prevention

Every year, more than 35,000 Americans are diagnosed with oral cancer.⁷ **Delta Dental of Michigan** awarded a grant to the Ohio State University's James Cancer Hospital and the Solove Research Institute Program to support research to assess the potential of black raspberries in the prevention of oral cancer in current and former patients. This is the only research project of its kind in the country.

⁷ American Cancer Society, Cancer Facts & Figures, 2009.



Expanding Access to Oral Care

Access to quality dental care helps improve oral health. But while 176 million Americans have dental benefits, 130 million children and adults are still without this valuable coverage.⁸ And even those with coverage may have trouble finding care in their area, can't afford treatment or have special needs that make it difficult to get care.

To narrow the gap between those who need and receive dental care, some Delta Dental member companies provide free care to the uninsured and underserved populations. Free care includes regular dental check-ups, badly needed treatment, oral health education and even transportation to and from dental appointments.

⁸ NADP Dental Benefits Joint Report, Enrollment Report, June 2009.



Mission of Mercy

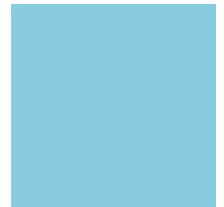
In 2008, seven member companies supported their state's Mission of Mercy event and helped provide free dental care to thousands of uninsured and underserved individuals. With employee volunteers and a grant from **Delta Dental of Oklahoma**, the first annual Oklahoma Mission of Mercy event is planned for 2010.

Providing Free Care to the Homeless

The Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless, Inc. provides health care to the homeless population in Albuquerque. **Delta Dental of New Mexico** provides funding to offer dental clinic services including routine oral exams and preventive care to the homeless.

Serving the Underserved

To help address the high incidence of oral disease and limited access to dental services experienced by young children covered by Medicaid in Washington, **Washington Dental Service Foundation** supports the *Access to Baby and Child Dentistry* program. The program's goals are to increase young children's access to prevention and early treatment and to improve lifelong oral health. Services are provided through private dental practices to children from birth to age 6, with an emphasis on starting dental visits by age 1.



A dentist in Washington teaches a young child how to improve his lifelong oral health as a part of the Access to Baby and Child Dentistry program.



Improving Children's Oral Health

Caring for children's teeth is important to their well-being and lifelong oral health. Healthy teeth help children chew properly to maintain good nutrition, are involved in speech development and help them feel good about the way they look.

Unfortunately, tooth decay is the number one chronic disease of early childhood – it is five times more common than asthma and seven times more common than hay fever.⁹

The good news is that most tooth decay is preventable. That's why our member companies support programs that provide the tools, care and education to help prevent and treat children's oral health problems.



A child plays dentist to "patient" Pearl E. White, at a museum exhibit funded by Delta Dental of Tennessee.

⁹ Surgeon General's Report on Oral Health in America, 2000.



Left: Tooth Wizard and PlaqueMan teach kids good oral health habits at a school in Illinois.

Above: The Tooth Fairy hands a child-size dental floss to a young girl during HDS Tooth Fairy Fun Day.

The oral health of Hawaii's children ranks at the bottom in the nation. As a fun way to improve the oral health of Hawaiian children and their families, **Hawaii Dental Service** started the *HDS Tooth Fairy Fun Day*, which is celebrated during National Children's Dental Health Month in February. The event features a number of educational games designed to teach children and their parents the causes of tooth decay and value of preventive care. Oral health screenings are provided to children.

Educating Children with Superheroes

A number of school-based initiatives are making learning about good oral health habits fun for children. Some member companies are teaming up with costumed superheroes, such as Captain Supertooth and Marshall Molar, to make presentations to children about the importance of a healthy smile.

Originally developed by **Delta Dental of Missouri** and adopted by a number of other member companies, the *Land of Smiles* program educates school children about good oral health habits. The Tooth Wizard and his rival PlaqueMan show kids how to get rid of what they refer to as that "icky, sticky, grimy, gunk," also known as plaque, and they explain proper brushing and flossing techniques. During the past eight years, over 600,000 children in over 70 percent of Missouri elementary schools have enjoyed the show. **Delta Dental of Illinois** adopted the show and has entertained and educated nearly 100,000 children in 300 schools across Illinois.

Exhibiting Good Oral Health

A number of member companies help fund oral health exhibits at local museums. For instance, **Delta Dental of Tennessee** provides funding for the care and upkeep of Pearl E. White, a large resin "patient" in the "dental office" at Smiles, Inc. in the Children's Museum of Memphis. Children who visit can wear lab coats and be the dentist for Pearl, checking her teeth and cleaning them with an oversized toothbrush.

Advancing Dentistry

As a leader in oral health, Delta Dental is committed to helping advance dentistry – which we do in a number of ways.

Our member companies support research projects that advance the prevention and treatment of many oral health diseases. Since more than 120 disease symptoms can be detected through a routine oral exam¹⁰, we also fund research projects that examine the connection between oral health and systemic conditions.

Many parts of the country are experiencing dentist and dental hygienist shortages. We fund programs that train hygienists and dentists and encourage them to practice in underserved areas. We also offer scholarships and grants to help strengthen and diversify the workforce.



*Delta Dental Plan of Maine and the Northeast
Delta Dental Foundation are funding a new
dental school at the University of New England
in Portland, Maine.*



Creating Dental Education Programs

In 2008, **Delta Dental of Kansas** and its Foundation made a donation to fund the first ever dental education program in Kansas through the Wichita State University Advanced Education in General Dentistry program. The program is a one-to-two year residency program for dentists desiring to expand their clinical and practical knowledge and will encourage practicing dentists to stay in Kansas.

Addressing the Dental Assistant Shortage

Addressing the critical shortage of dental assistants in New Jersey, a number of high schools across the state provide programs that teach students dental assisting skills they can use to find employment in the profession after graduating from high school. Some of the programs also allow students to transfer their credits to a dental school. **Delta Dental of New Jersey** donates money to provide scholarships, equipment and supplies that make the programs possible.



Addressing the Dentist Shortage

In 2008, **Delta Dental of Iowa** received a federal earmark for the *Fulfilling Iowa's Need for Dentists* (FIND) project, created to help alleviate the critical shortage of dentists in Iowa by awarding \$100,000 loan education grants to dentists who agree to practice in underserved areas and allocate 35 percent of services to the underserved population.

Funding New Dental Schools

Currently there is no dental school in northern New England. Recognizing the need to train more dentists, **Delta Dental Plan of Maine** and the **Northeast Delta Dental Foundation** made donations to help open a dental school through the University of New England. The university plans to open enrollment to students living in the Northeast Delta Dental states of Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont.



Dr. Gene Napoliello, president of the Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation, teaches dental assisting skills to a student in a new dental classroom at Central High School in Newark that was funded by the foundation.

¹⁰ Bricker, S., Langlais, R., Miller, C., Oral Diagnosis, Oral Medicine and Treatment Planning, 1994.



Kids in a Washington Head Start program enjoy learning how to prevent dental disease through the Cavity Free Kids program, supported by Washington Dental Service Foundation.

Giving Kids a Head Start on Oral Health

In 2007, Delta Dental Plans Association and the National Head Start Association joined to improve the oral health of some of our nation's youngest children at a critical time in their development. At the national level, we're exploring ways to help Head Start and Early Head Start fulfill their charge to provide oral care and education to students and their teachers and families.

In 2008, 16 Delta Dental member companies and foundations representing 18 states supported programs that benefit Head Start and Early Head Start within their local communities. Several member companies support more than one Head Start-related activity and are helping to coordinate and provide an oral health curriculum, supplies and preventive care to children across the nation.

For example, **Washington Dental Service Foundation** created the *Cavity Free Kids* program, a comprehensive curriculum to educate Head Start and Early Head Start teachers, students and their parents about the importance of preventing dental disease. The program has materials available in seven languages and is taught in Washington and 15 other states.

Together, Head Start and Delta Dental helped improve the oral health of more than 3,800 uninsured children in 2008.

Making Communities Healthier

We're committed to providing advanced solutions for healthier children and families in our communities across the country. That's why we've made it our mission.

Aside from the oral health-specific programs we've outlined, we 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.

We wouldn't be able to reach and help as many people as we do without our employees and the many community partners, dental professionals and volunteers who help us make our communities healthier and better places to live.





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