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Delta Dental Foundation Awards \$3,400 Smiles for Kids Grant to Toe River Health District

Bakersville, NC (June 7, 2018) – Toe River Health District received a \$3,400 Smiles for Kids grant from the Delta Dental Foundation (DDF) to implement a strong, sustainable dental education model that will reach children in early years of development. The program will address childhood oral health issues within Toe River Health District’s three counties: Avery, Yancey, and Mitchell.

Toe River Health District’s three counties experience high levels of poverty. This affects numerous children in the area who cannot afford proper oral health care and often go to school with undetected dental conditions. This dental education program will provide dental screenings, parent and child oral health education, and fluoride varnishes to this underserved population.

“Toe River’s Counties suffer from rural area oral health disparities due to geographic isolation, lack of adequate transportation, high rates of poverty, acute provider shortages and lack of fluoridated community water supplies,” said Toe River Health District Health Promotion Supervisor Jessica Farley. “The grant will help alleviate the disparities for some of our youngest residents and give them a brighter, healthier future. Limited access to dental services has been a longstanding issue in our area. Providing affordable, accessible education and preventative care to children and families is a great way to avoid costly and painful dental disease. We are extremely grateful to Delta Dental Foundation for awarding us with the chance to make our children happy and healthy at a very young age. This region is fortunate to have strong community partnerships with the enthusiasm shown for this project. We look forward to sharing these activities together!”

The Delta Dental Foundation focuses on ensuring that children and adults in North Carolina receive high-quality oral health education and dental care. The grant received by Toe River Health District is one of 19 grants totaling \$65,800 that DDF is donating to North Carolina oral health organizations and programs. This is the second year that Toe River Health District has received a Smiles for Kids grant. Grant recipients were selected based on criteria that included the number of at-risk children served, the uniqueness of the program, the level of community involvement in the program and the ability to measure results.

“We are pleased that the Delta Dental Foundation is providing funding to Toe River Health District,” said Curt Ladig, president and CEO of Delta Dental of North Carolina. “Children miss 51 million hours of school every year because of oral health related issues, and tooth decay is the most common chronic

childhood disease today. Supporting the work of this organization can help ensure that more children receive the care they need to grow up healthy and be successful in school and in life.”

About Toe River Health District

The mission of Toe River Health District is to assure the conditions allowing the people of Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey counties to be healthy. Their mission is accomplished through an organized community effort focusing on: health promotion, disease prevention, education and awareness, access to and provision of care, and quality and value. For more information, visit: www.toeriverhealth.org.

About the Delta Dental Foundation

The Delta Dental Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization established in 1980, which serves as the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina. The foundation’s goals are to support education and research for the advancement of dental science, and to promote the oral health of the public through education and service activities, particularly for those with special needs. For more information, visit www.deltadentalnc.com.

About Delta Dental of North Carolina

Delta Dental of North Carolina is a nonprofit dental service corporation created in 1970 to provide dental benefits throughout the state. Its mission is to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. It does so by providing affordable access to oral health care with the largest network of providers, including two out of every three dentists, in North Carolina.

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