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Delta Dental of Kentucky Funds Northern Regional Oral Health Coalition With Grant of Nearly \$150,000

Delta Dental of Kentucky and the Northern Kentucky Health Department to provide oral health solutions to children in northern Kentucky

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (April 16, 2018) – A \$149,968 grant from Delta Dental of Kentucky will help improve oral health among children throughout northern Kentucky. Delta Dental of Kentucky, through a partnership with Kentucky Youth Advocates, developed the Northern Regional Oral Health Coalition, which is led by the Northern Kentucky Health Department. The Northern Regional Oral Health Coalition will help improve oral health outcomes in children, by utilizing fluoride varnish treatments, and aiding in increasing oral health literacy in the community.

This program is the result of state research findings published in the *Making Smiles Happen[®]: 2016 Oral Health Study of Kentucky's Youth*. Based on these findings, Delta Dental of Kentucky expanded its commitment to oral health across the state and provided \$1 million to launch five regional networks to develop oral health solutions across the state. Delta Dental of Kentucky partnered with Kentucky Youth Advocates to develop the five regional networks.

In research findings, it was determined that more than 50 percent of children in northern Kentucky hadn't utilized oral health services, although they were covered by Medicaid. The Northern Region Oral Partnership was created to help improve the oral health of underserved or at-risk children in the area. The program will accomplish its goals

through improving oral health literacy, providing education on preventative care, and aiding in access to oral health services.

“Delta Dental of Kentucky is thrilled to announce the creation of the Northern Region Oral Health Partnership, a program that will impact the dental health of so many kids throughout northern Kentucky,” Delta Dental of Kentucky CEO Jude Thompson said. “We believe that the implementation of these regional programs will drive the action necessary to improve the oral health of Kentucky’s children. We are proud to help fund these wonderful programs, which will have a lasting impact on children statewide.”

Throughout northern Kentucky, the Northern Region Oral Health Partnership plans to expand fluoride varnish programs into the school districts of Owen and Pendleton counties, as well as the North Central Health Department. Oral health literacy and educational programs will also be established to teach preventative care to children, parents and school administration. Additionally, the program plans to provide resources to local community partners that will improve communication between schools, dental providers and referring resources. These resources will include informational items such as an area listing of dental providers, and their Medicaid and private insurance statuses.

“Thanks to the vision and support of Delta Dental of Kentucky, we’re bringing innovative and creative health solutions to patients in the northern Kentucky area,” Linda Poynter, PHRDH, BS, facilitator of the Northern Region Oral Health Partnership said. “We have an opportunity to address the needs of Kentucky’s children, and we’re looking forward to the positive outcomes this program will provide.”

Poynter is the current Oral Health Program Manager at the Northern Kentucky Health Department, where she helps manage successful prevention programs that champion dental health in low income elementary schools. Poynter also serves as a registered dental hygienist, and helps aid the community in accessing oral health services and literacy.

Additional partners that helped develop the Northern Regional Oral Health Partnership include the Three Rivers Health Department, North Central Health Department, Buffalo Trace Health Department, representatives from area school districts, a local Federally Qualified Health Center, northern Kentucky’s hospital and healthcare network, early childhood representatives, and fiscal court representatives.

The Northern Region Oral Health Partnership is one of four Kentucky programs developed through the partnership between Delta Dental of Kentucky and the Kentucky Youth Advocates.

The full scope of work for each region’s project, along with video, is now available at <http://www.kentuckyoralhealth.com/>.

About Delta Dental of Kentucky and Making Smiles Happen®

Delta Dental of Kentucky is a not-for-profit company that is committed to bright smiles and healthy lifestyles for its 700,000 enrollees and the communities we serve. Delta Dental of Kentucky is part of a family of companies that collectively are among the largest, most experienced dental plan administrators in the nation. Our network of providers gives our customers access to high-quality, affordable dental care.

Making Smiles Happen® is Delta Dental of Kentucky's promise to serve our communities and residents one smile at a time. Aimed with the task of promoting oral health to the citizens of Kentucky, this initiative supports many non-profit partners. Giving back is a core component of our culture at Delta Dental, and Making Smiles Happen enables this support to be given to organizations that champion a better quality of life for citizens throughout our Commonwealth.

About Kentucky Youth Advocates:

Kentucky Youth Advocates believes all children deserve to have a safe and loving family, have access to quality education and health care, and have opportunities to help them thrive. As THE independent voice for Kentucky's children, we work to ensure policymakers create investments and policies that are good for children.

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