

DELTA DENTAL COMMUNITY CARE FOUNDATION EXPANDS ITS MULTI-YEAR SENIOR ORAL HEALTH COALITION PROGRAM WITH A \$5 MILLION, FIVE-YEAR GRANT TO TWO NEW CALIFORNIA HEALTH CARE PARTNERS

Northern California-based Dientes Community Dental Care and Salud Para La Gente Join Washington, D.C. Coalition Partners to Address Oral Health Care Crisis Among Older Adults in U.S.

SAN FRANCISCO – March 22, 2023 – The Delta Dental Community Care Foundation, the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of California, today announced the addition of two Northern California-based health care partners, [Dientes Community Dental Care](#) (Dientes) and [Salud Para La Gente](#) (Salud), to its Senior Oral Health Coalition Program. The multi-year program launched in April 2022 to address the oral health crisis among older adults in the U.S. The new California partners join existing Washington, D.C. coalition members, [Howard University College of Dentistry](#) and [Mary's Center](#), to promote the connection between oral health and overall health, improve access and create greater equity in the care and treatment older adults receive.

A December 2021 [report](#) by the National Institutes of Health cited adults aged 65 years and older as the most critically underserved for oral health care in the U.S. A [recent survey](#) commissioned by Delta Dental further underscores this health crisis and found that 80 percent of older American adults do not get to the dentist as often as recommended, with access being one of the main barriers. The number is even lower in Santa Cruz County, California, which Dientes and Salud serve, where a 2022 oral health needs assessment revealed that only one in four seniors with Medicaid were able to get the dental care they needed.

“With a growing senior population across the country and in the communities we serve in Santa Cruz County, access to quality and affordable dental care for a diverse population of low-income seniors is an important part of our mission to provide dignity through dentistry,” said Laura Marcus, chief executive officer, Dientes. “This partnership with the Community Care Foundation and our colleague in health, Salud, will create a model that other communities can use to expand access to dental care for our seniors so they count their lives by smiles, not by tears.”

As community health centers, Dientes and Salud are longstanding partners of the Community Care Foundation and provide comprehensive dental and health care services for the underserved in Santa Cruz County. As members of the Senior Oral Health Coalition Program and co-founders of Santa Cruz County's Oral Health Access coalition, Dientes and Salud will collaborate with the Community Care Foundation to establish transformative programs that focus on improving health equity and the oral health of older adults, particularly those of color.

“We are thrilled the Community Care Foundation has provided Salud and Dientes with generous funding to support our Senior Oral Health Coalition Program, which will go a long way to expand our work to ensure seniors in our region can access the oral care they badly need,” said Dori Rose Inda, chief executive officer, Salud. “We intend to decrease the disparities and barriers seniors face in receiving oral health care by keeping equity at the center of our work. With this significant grant, and in partnership with Dientes, we are eager to ensure all seniors have access to the quality dental care they deserve and need to live healthy lives.”

Since the launch of the inaugural Senior Oral Health Coalition in Washington, D.C. last year, Howard University College of Dentistry and Mary's Center, a Federally Qualified Health Center, have collectively provided nearly 900 older adults with affordable, high-quality oral health care services and managed

more than 4,250 dental treatment encounters, including 532 restorative procedures and 207 oral surgeries, and supplied 133 sets of prosthodontics.

“The dedication and hard work of our partners have already had a profound and positive impact on the lives and health of many underserved older adults in the Washington, D.C. metro area,” said Kenzie Ferguson, vice president of foundation and corporate social responsibility for Delta Dental of California. “We are excited to see the ways in which Dientes and Salud will bring similar benefit to the oral health of older adults throughout Santa Cruz County.”

The broader goals of the Community Care Foundation’s Senior Oral Health Coalition Program include identifying, assessing and addressing the socioeconomic and systemic causes of poor oral health among older adults, particularly those living in poverty; creating a replicable model for community-driven oral health solutions; and improving quality of life for seniors by reducing oral care disparities. Coalition partners collect data on patient pathology, treatment, barriers to access and social determinants of health. The information is utilized to identify effective interventions and inform the Delta Dental Senior Oral Health Care Model, which will be replicated as the program develops. The integration of an academic partner will also enable the development of the future oral health care workforce who will be treating the senior population. The Community Care Foundation will expand the program to other communities and partnerships over the next three to five years.

About Delta Dental Community Care Foundation

The Delta Dental Community Care Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of California and its affiliated companies including Delta Dental Insurance Company, Delta Dental of Pennsylvania and Delta Dental of New York, Inc. Since 2011, the Community Care Foundation has awarded more than \$100 million in funding and support to increase access to quality dental care, oral health education, and to advance scientific research across the company’s 15-state service area and the District of Columbia. For more information about the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation, please visit <https://www.deltadentalins.com/foundation.html>

About Delta Dental of California

Since 1955, Delta Dental of California has offered comprehensive, high-quality oral health care coverage to millions of enrollees and built the strongest network of dental providers in the country. The Delta Dental of California enterprise includes its affiliates Delta Dental Insurance Company, Delta Dental of Pennsylvania, Delta Dental of New York, Inc., as well as the national DeltaCare USA network, and provides dental benefits to more than 44 million people across 15 states and the District of Columbia*. All are members of the Delta Dental Plans Association based in Oak Brook, Illinois, the not-for-profit national association that through a national network of Delta Dental companies collectively covers millions of people nationwide. For more information about Delta Dental of California, please visit www.deltadentalins.com

*Delta Dental of California’s operating areas encompass Alabama, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Montana, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, West Virginia and the District of Columbia.

#

For More Information, Contact:

Tom Sarris
Director, Corporate Communications

Delta Dental of California
tsarris@delta.org

Caitlin Dong
Senior Corporate Communications Consultant
Delta Dental of California
cdong@delta.org