



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DELTA DENTAL OF COLORADO FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES GRANTS TO 10 COLORADO NONPROFIT MEDICAL PRACTICES TO PROVIDE DENTAL SERVICES**

*New funding is part of Wave II of the foundation's Colorado Medical-Dental Integration Project.*

**DENVER – April 9, 2018** – Today, Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation (DDCOF) announced that it will provide \$3.3 million in funding over four years to 10 Colorado nonprofit medical practices to integrate a dental hygienist into their medical teams to provide dental services. This funding is part of Wave II of DDCOF's [Colorado Medical-Dental Integration \(CO MDI\) Project](#), which seeks to improve the oral health of underserved Coloradans. Twenty-six medical practices have received funding from DDCOF through the CO MDI Project since it launched in 2015.

Initial evaluation data for the CO MDI Project indicate greater access to dental care for underserved Coloradans. However, access to care continues to be an issue for many people statewide. According to the Colorado Health Institute, just 63 percent of Coloradans with incomes at or below 133 percent of the federal poverty level report both good physical and oral health status. Fifty-seven of Colorado's 64 counties are designated a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area by the U.S. Health Resources & Services Administration.

DDCOF issued a request for applications for Wave II of CO MDI funding in November 2017. The medical organizations selected to receive funding as Wave II grantees include:

- Denver Health Westside Women's Clinic (Denver)
- Sheridan Health Services (Metro Denver/Sheridan)
- Peak Vista Community Health Center (Colorado Springs)
- SET Family Medical Clinics (Colorado Springs)
- Summit Community Care Clinic (Frisco)
- Mountain Family Health Centers (Glenwood Springs)
- Axis Health System (Durango)
- The PIC Place (Montrose)
- River Valley Family Health Center (Olathe)
- Melissa Memorial Hospital (Holyoke)

"While the state's average dentist to patient ratio is one to 1,350, Phillips County sits at one to 4,363," said Trampas Hutches, chief executive officer of Melissa Memorial Hospital. "According to data from the Colorado Health Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the people of Holyoke and surrounding areas have 70 percent less access to care than their urban counterparts. Melissa Memorial's



selection as a CO MDI grantee means that more people in our community will now have the opportunity to improve their oral health.”

To expand oral health access, DDCOF awarded funding to 16 medical practices as part of CO MDI Wave I in 2015. These practices integrated a hygienist into their practice to provide full scope dental hygiene services – oral health education, cleanings, fluoride varnishes, sealants, debridement, scaling and root planning and x-rays – during regular medical checkups. Wave I grantees have seen more than 42,000 patients. Of these, 71 percent have public dental coverage through Medicaid or Child Health Plan *Plus*. The remaining 32 percent are uninsured (paying via other mechanisms such as a sliding fee scale, for example) and 2 percent have commercial insurance.

“We are honored to partner with 10 new medical practices as part of the CO MDI Project,” said Allison Cusick, executive director of DDCOF. “The Wave II CO MDI grantees will serve a majority of patients in communities where there are few dental providers. By expanding the CO MDI Project through the work of these grantees, we hope to improve oral health equity and reduce disparities throughout the state.”

The 10 practices were selected to receive funding because of their ability to demonstrate:

- Potential for sustainability in providing a medical home to Coloradans experiencing oral health disparities, with an emphasis related to poverty or geography;
- a clear desire to expand patient services to include full scope preventive dental care; and
- a readiness for medical-dental integration.

The overarching goal of the CO MDI Project is to reach families with limited access to dental care due to transportation issues, geography, lack of access to providers who accept their insurance or other socio-economic factors. Its impact is being evaluated by the [University of Colorado’s ACCORDS – Adult and Child Center for Health Outcomes Research and Delivery Science](#). Once completed, DDCOF will have invested more than \$6.8 million in the CO MDI Project. The foundation is funding Wave II of the CO MDI Project in partnership with The Colorado Health Foundation.

More information about Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation can be found at [www.deltadentalcofoundation.org](http://www.deltadentalcofoundation.org).

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**About Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation:**

For more than 20 years, Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation (DDCOF) has been working to make good oral health a community priority. As a 501(c)(3) public charity solely funded by the nonprofit Delta Dental of Colorado, we believe our efforts together will improve the health of all Coloradans. We partner with communities and provide grant funding specific to three main oral health focus areas: access to care, prevention and connections to overall health. Through collaboration, we intend to reach communities that have been historically overlooked. To learn more, visit [www.deltadentalcofoundation.org](http://www.deltadentalcofoundation.org).