Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation Names
2016 Innovation Grant Recipients

Five Colorado-based organizations receive a total of $220,000 in funding to advance innovative approaches to improve oral health

DENVER – Five Colorado-based organizations will work to develop next-generation medical devices and new approaches to expand access to quality oral care with support from Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation.

Recipients of the 2016 Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation Innovation Grants include researchers, nonprofits and high-tech companies throughout the Front Range:

- **Colorado School of Mines'** Krebs Research Group, based in Golden, Colo., will work to advance regenerative materials for teeth. This new approach for treating a cavity would restore a tooth to its original condition, eliminating the need for a traditional filling.
- **Sharklet Technologies**, a biomedical device company based on the Fitzsimons Innovation Campus in Aurora, Colo., will apply its technology to a dental setting for the first time to produce bacteria-resistant retainers and other devices.
- **Quadric BioMed**, a medical technology company based in Colorado Springs, Colo., will work to bring to market a new type of dental implant that could significantly reduce bacteria build-up common with traditional implant devices.
- **Dental Aid**, a nonprofit dental clinic serving low-income and uninsured individuals in Boulder, Longmont and Louisville, seeks to reduce emergency department visits and overall cost of care by directing patients to dental providers and establishing dental homes for patients.
- **Clinica Family Health Services**, a network of community health clinics that offers medical and dental care in the Denver and Boulder counties, will develop new practice management tools to improve dental care quality at its clinics.

"We are proud to support these innovators in developing new technologies and approaches to improve the oral health of Coloradans," said Allison Cusick, executive director of the Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation. "These projects hold tremendous promise, addressing head-on some of the most pressing oral health challenges Coloradans face."

The Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, in partnership with Delta Dental of Colorado, awarded a total of $220,000 to support these projects. The funding will be used to develop and test new approaches for improving access to quality oral health care and new technologies to improve health outcomes.

The Krebs Research Group in Chemical & Biological Engineering at Colorado School of Mines will pursue a project to restore cavities back to healthy teeth. "We have developed a biopolymer product that is first of its kind, where the incorporated calcium phosphate mineral phase is readily tuned to mimic bone or teeth," said Melissa Krebs, an assistant professor who leads the team of a dozen graduate and undergraduate researchers. They will work to develop a material that can fill cavities and degrade away as the tooth rebuilds itself. This project was selected among all 2016 applicants as the Delta Dental of Colorado Employee Choice for its innovation.

The medical devices being developed by Sharklet and Quadric BioMed are designed to reduce bacteria and inflammation in the mouth, a root cause of a growing list of more than 100 health conditions and systemic diseases including heart disease, diabetes and stroke.

Sharklet developed a patented bacteria-fighting surface coating for medical devices inspired by microscopic textures of shark skin. The technology has proven to reduce bacterial contamination on clinical surfaces, including catheters. Now Sharklet will apply it to orthodontia, such as retainers, to reduce bacteria in the mouth.

Quadric BioMed recently completed its first human trial of a new implant device designed to reduce bacteria build-up commonly associated with tooth implants. The company's design more accurately matches the shape of a tooth, eliminating pockets where bacteria can thrive.

Two nonprofits that serve northern Denver, Boulder and Broomfield counties will explore new approaches to improving access to affordable and quality dental care.

Dental Aid will develop a new way to direct patients to more appropriate treatment settings when they present to emergency departments with non-traumatic dental pain. Clinica Family Health Services will develop new data tools to improve quality of dental care, including new approaches for tracking care goals.

"It is inspiring to see so much innovation happening in oral health right here in Colorado," said Dr. Cheryl Lerner, vice president of professional services for Delta Dental of Colorado. "We are thrilled to support these efforts and excited to see these ideas come to life."

For more information about the Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation Innovation Grants, visit DeltaDentalCOFoundation.org/initiatives-grants/innovation-grants/.

About Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation
Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation's mission is to improve the state's oral health by eradicating childhood tooth decay. For more than15 years, the Foundation has been solely funded by Delta Dental of Colorado. Its initiatives have included educational programs targeting low-income, high-risk families; support of dental health education for medical and dental students as well as providers; and opportunities to teach good dental habits and cavity prevention to pregnant women and children. As a 501(c)(3) organization, the Foundation works to make good dental health a community priority. A core belief is that, because dental disease is almost 100 percent preventable, efforts to improve child oral health will result in a healthier Colorado overall. To learn more about Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation, please visit DeltaDentalCOFoundation.org.

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