

**Massachusetts Delta Dental Foundation Awards Over \$450,000
in Grants to Ten Organizations in Massachusetts Working
to Improve Access to Dental Care for Needy Populations**

Boston, MA, April 2, 2002 -- The Massachusetts Delta Dental Foundation today announced that it has selected ten organizations to receive over \$450,000 in grant money to provide accessible dental care to needy populations across Massachusetts. The Foundation awards grants annually to organizations that are working towards reducing oral health disparities in minority and disadvantaged populations across Massachusetts.

The Foundation was launched in January 2000 with the goal of funding programs that meet one or more of its three priorities: providing access to appropriate dental care, promoting models of preventive care, and offering needed education and training for oral health professionals serving at-risk populations. The largest amount of grant money is being given to programs that focus primarily on improving access to dental care, since this is where the greatest need is. This is the second year that the Foundation has awarded grants.

Massachusetts is in the midst of a major dental crisis with the unmet need for dental care at an all-time high,” said Dr. Robert Hunter, president of Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts. “These ten grant recipients are going to make a huge difference in the communities across the state that have been strongly affected by the lack of dental care, and we are proud to be supporting their hard work and diligent efforts.”

The grant recipients include: Boston University Program for Refugee Oral Health in Boston, \$73,500; Cambridge Health Alliance in Somerville, \$50,000; Cape Cod Child Development Program, Inc. in Hyannis, \$20,000; Central Massachusetts Oral Health Initiative, Inc. in Worcester, \$80,000; Harvard School of Dental Medicine and Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc. in Boston, \$28,000; HealthFirst Family Care Center, Inc. in Fall River, \$56,000; Hilltown Community Health Centers, Inc. in Worthington, \$58,000; O’Neill Health Center, Inc. in Hyannis, \$46,500; Super Dental Status in Beverly and

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Gloucester, \$34,000; and Tufts University School of Dental Medicine Sharewood Clinic in Malden, \$16,500. The grant money will be used to fund the following initiatives:

- *Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine in Boston* will use its \$73,500 grant to expand its Program for Refugee Oral Health to include a second treatment site at Whittier Street Health Center in Roxbury. The program provides oral health screenings, assessment of the need for dental sealants, and referrals for follow-up dental care to newly arriving refugees. Services are provided at the International Clinic of Boston Medical Center (BMC), which B.U. collaborates with through BMC's Boston Center for Refugee Health and Human Rights, and through the Refugee and Immigrant Health Program of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Bureau of Communicable Disease Control. Last year, the organization received a \$37,500 grant from the Foundation.
- *Cambridge Health Alliance in Somerville*, a network of hospitals, primary care sites, and the Cambridge Department of Public Health, will use its \$50,000 grant to fund a full-time position to coordinate all aspects of a comprehensive school-based dental health preventive program for children in public and parochial elementary schools and head start classrooms in Somerville. The program is supported by school nurses, the city's Health Department, and the Somerville Community Health Agenda Children's Dental taskforce.
- *Cape Cod Child Development Program in Hyannis* will use its \$20,000 grant to increase preventive dental services for children in childcare or in one of the school systems of the mid-upper Cape Cod region. The funds will also be used for oral health education in schools and community-based settings, improved access to dental care through a dental screening and referral system, and the expanded collaboration with WIC and the VNA Mobile Health Van. Volunteer students at Cape Cod Community College help provide patient care.
- *The Central Massachusetts Oral Health Initiative (CMOHI) in Worcester*, which is administered by the University of Massachusetts Medical School, will use its \$80,000 grant to fund dental outreach programs for uninsured and MassHealth individuals in central

Massachusetts. A community wide initiative with major funding from the Health Foundation of Central Massachusetts, the CMOHI will spend its grant money to purchase portable equipment for treating children on-site in schools and at outreach clinics, and to expand the Great Brook Valley Health Center's capacity.

- *Harvard School of Dental Medicine in Boston*, in partnership with Bridge Over Troubled Waters, Inc., an organization that provides health care services to runaway teens, will use its \$28,000 grant to fund Project Bridge, which will work to improve the availability, quality, and continuity of dental care and oral health education at Bridge's dental clinic. The funding will allow the clinic to be open additional nights, to expand its dental and preventive services, and to better collect data to identify the dental needs of homeless teens.
- *HealthFirst Family Care Center in Fall River*, which provides accessible health care to people in need, will use its \$56,000 grant to expand its "Healthy Smiles" dental outreach program. The Healthy Smiles program provides oral health services on-site to at-risk, underserved schoolchildren at Head Start programs and elementary schools in the greater Fall River/New Bedford area. Volunteers from dental training programs at Bristol Community College, Diman Regional Technical Vocational High School, and New Bedford Vocational High School provide additional staffing for the program.
- *Hilltown Community Health Centers in Worthington*, which provides health care services to low income and uninsured individuals in Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Plainfield, Russell, Westhampton, Williamsburg, and Worthington, will use its \$58,000 grant to purchase dental equipment and increase staffing to meet patient demand and expand the services provided to needy patients.
- *O'Neill Health Center in Hyannis* provides accessible primary healthcare and dental care to MassHealth, homeless, and other uninsured, at-risk adult populations in the mid-Cape area. The \$46,500 grant will be used to fund the Duffy Center, a second treatment site, which will allow the organization to extend its dental clinic's hours to increase the number of

individuals served and reduce the waiting time for appointments. Last year, the organization received a \$41,000 grant from the Foundation.

- *Super Dental Status in Beverly and Gloucester* targets public school students in those communities who have limited access to dental care. The Beverly Board of Health, the Gloucester Health Department, and Northeast Hospital Corporation are partnering to expand the “Super Dental Status: Improving Access To Oral Health Services for Children and Youth” project. The \$34,000 grant will be used to complete renovation of the Gloucester Dental Center and to expand Beverly Dental Clinic services. The project’s goals include increasing preventive and primary dental services, assessing dental health needs, integrating school-based dental health services planning, and evaluating ways to sustain dental care for children and youth. Last year, the organization received a \$34,000 grant from the Foundation.
- *Tufts University School of Dental Medicine in Boston* will use its \$16,500 grant to expand the dental division of its Sharewood Clinic, a student-managed health clinic in Malden sponsored by Tufts University School of Medicine, which provides examinations, screenings, preventive and general oral health education, and referrals for comprehensive dental care for local residents. Patient care is provided by volunteer dental students from Tufts, Harvard, and Boston University working under faculty supervision from Tufts University. Last year, the organization received a \$16,500 grant from the Foundation.

The Massachusetts Delta Dental Foundation was launched by Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts in January 2000. The Foundation is giving away \$1.5 million in grants over three years to organizations that are working towards reducing oral health disparities in disadvantaged populations across Massachusetts. In March 2001, Delta Dental pledged an additional \$10 million endowment to the Foundation to ensure that the organization will be self-sustaining and able to continue making annual grants once the company’s initial \$1.5 million contribution has been dispersed. Headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, Delta Dental Plan of Massachusetts is the largest provider of group dental benefits in the state.