



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation Seeking Applications for \$100,000 Wisdom Tooth Award

*Eligible (Name) County organizations looking to impact children's oral health in Illinois encouraged to
apply by May 26*

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (March 20, 2017) – Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation, the 501(c)(3) charitable arm of Delta Dental of Illinois, is now accepting applications for its annual Wisdom Tooth Award. The \$100,000 grant will support a nonprofit organization that works to improve the oral health of Illinois children and plans to expand or enhance an existing children's oral health program in Illinois. Eligible organizations must have a physical presence in Illinois, benefit children and have an established program that provides oral health education and/or access to oral health resources and care.

In 2016, Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation, Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation and Michael Reese Health Trust funded the *Oral Health in Illinois* report, the first comprehensive statewide oral health assessment ever completed. The report, available at oralhealthillinois.org, highlights inequities in dental care in Illinois and shows that tooth decay disproportionately affects poor and rural residents of the state. The report also further reinforces the need for better access to dental care in the state and the need for oral health education and awareness. Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation works to meet both of these needs every year through its Wisdom Tooth Award program.

"Poor oral health is prevalent among Illinois children and one of the most serious, unmet health care issues facing children in our state," said Lora Vitek, director of philanthropy and community

relations for Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation. “The Wisdom Tooth Award allows us to meet the need for better oral health care in Illinois by providing support to an organization that improves the oral health of Illinois children. Since poor oral health and tooth decay affect a child’s overall well-being, impacting their ability to eat, smile, talk and concentrate, our mission is to improve children’s oral health by ensuring they receive the dental care they need and learn how to maintain a healthy smile for a lifetime.”

The recipient of the 2016 Wisdom Tooth Award was Crusader Community Health. Located in Rockford, Crusader Community Health is using the Wisdom Tooth Award to help expand dental services for more than 3,000 school children in the Rock River Valley area. Grant funds are being used to hire an additional full-time dentist who will work at Crusader Community Health’s school-based health center at Auburn High School and Crusader Community Health’s West State Street location. Funds were also used to purchase a digital sensor for the organization’s digital X-ray system. With these additions, Crusader Community Health expects to serve 400 more children each month.

The 2017 deadline for applications is May 26 at 5 p.m. CST. The 2017 Wisdom Tooth Award recipient will be announced this summer. The organization that receives the grant has up to two years to use the funding.

The application and criteria are available at deltadentalil.com/ddilfoundation/wisdomtoothaward. Illinois public charities that are classified as exempt from federal income taxes under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and public or governmental entities, such as public schools or health departments, are eligible and encouraged to apply.

To learn more about Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation and its programs, please visit deltadentalil.com/ddilfoundation.

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About Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation

The Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation was formed in March 2008 by Delta Dental of Illinois, a not-for-profit dental service corporation with a mission to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation is the 501(c)(3) charitable arm of Delta Dental of Illinois and works to support and improve the oral health of people in Illinois. In the past decade, combined efforts of Delta Dental of Illinois and Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation have provided more than \$3 million to programs and organizations in Illinois that improve the oral health of the residents of Illinois.