



 **DELTA DENTAL<sup>®</sup>**

Our purpose,  
Our people,  
Our promise

2019 Community Impact Report

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# A message from our CEO and Board Chair

## Our purpose, our people, our promise

Caring for our community has been a core part of the Delta Dental mission for over 65 years. We were formed as a not-for-profit, a reflection of our commitment not only to increasing access to dental services, but to improving the well-being of the people we serve. Over the years, our size and impact have grown significantly, but our purpose has remained the same: advancing the oral and overall health of our communities.

Across the 39 Delta Dental companies, our employees and community partners have been tireless in pursuing that purpose. That's part of what makes us so proud of the work described in this report. From efforts to expand oral health care access to our most vulnerable citizens, to programs that empower patients and providers through oral health education, to volunteerism and grants that enrich our communities—our people are a constant force for good. The need for deep community engagement has become even more urgent in recent months, as communities navigate the impacts of COVID-19. While the work highlighted in this report focuses on 2019, it represents a continued commitment to supporting the oral and overall health of the communities we serve, no matter what comes our way.

Guided by our purpose and powered by our people, we commit to our promise: to expand the cause of good oral health to all, because we believe that everyone deserves a healthy smile. The outstanding programs highlighted in this report are a powerful testament to our vision of better oral health for everyone—in addition to serving our existing 80.5 million members, we supported more than 1,700 community programs across the country in 2019, affecting more than 12 million lives and donating over \$76.3 million. To deliver even greater impact, we also launched the Delta Dental Institute, a first-of-its-kind national organization dedicated to shining a new spotlight on oral health and pursuing innovative solutions to oral health issues.

To the Delta Dental companies and foundations that work tirelessly to embody our purpose and live up to our promise, we thank you. We look forward to sustaining our legacy through your continued support and the work of our community partners across the nation.



**Steven R. Olson**  
President & CEO, Delta Dental  
Plans Association



**Rodney A. Young**  
Chair, Delta Dental Plans  
Association Board of Directors  
President & CEO, Delta Dental of  
Minnesota

# Acknowledgements

Across the country, Delta Dental companies and foundations are proud to invest in the health of their communities. This report highlights the giving and engagement efforts of the following entities that comprise the Delta Dental System. Without the passion and commitment of these organizations, their leaders, and their teams, none of this would be possible.

## Delta Dental System leadership

Delta Dental of Arizona  
Allan Allford, President &  
Chief Executive Officer

Delta Dental of Arkansas, Inc.  
Ed Choate, Chief Executive  
Officer

Delta Dental of California  
Michael Castro, President &  
Chief Executive Officer

Delta Dental of Colorado  
Helen Drexler, President &  
Chief Executive Officer

Delta Dental of Idaho  
Gregory Donaca, President &  
Chief Executive Officer

Delta Dental of Illinois  
John Maples, President &  
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Delta Dental  
Insurance Company  
Michael Castro,  
Chief Executive Officer

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Delta Dental of Wisconsin  
Doug Ballweg, President &  
Chief Executive Officer

Delta Dental of Wyoming  
Kerry Hall, President &  
Chief Executive Officer;  
Patti Guzman, Vice President

Hawaii Dental Service  
Mark Yamakawa, President &  
Chief Executive Officer

## Delta Dental community benefit leadership

Delta Dental of  
Arizona Foundation  
Barb Kozuh, Director of  
Community Benefit

Delta Dental of  
Arkansas Foundation  
Chrissy Chatham, Executive  
Director

Delta Dental Community  
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Vice President of Foundation  
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Social Responsibility

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Colorado Foundation  
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Executive Director

Delta Dental Foundation, an  
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Director, Oral Health and  
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Lora Vitek, Executive Director

Delta Dental of  
Iowa Foundation  
Suzanne Heckenlaible,  
Executive Director

Delta Dental of Kansas  
Sarah Patterson,  
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Marketing and Innovation

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Brian Hart,  
Chief Revenue Officer

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Massachusetts, Inc.  
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Minnesota Foundation  
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Executive Director

Delta Dental of Missouri  
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Community Outreach

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Delta Dental of New Mexico  
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Foundation Director

Delta Dental of  
Rhode Island Fund  
Dara Chadwick, Director of  
Corporate Communications

Delta Dental of  
South Dakota Foundation  
Connie Halverson,  
Vice President, Public Benefit

Delta Dental of Tennessee -  
Smile180 Foundation  
Shanda Brown, Vice President,  
Corporate & Community  
Engagement

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Virginia Foundation  
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Vice President, Strategy &  
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Delta Dental of Washington  
Arcora Foundation  
Vanetta Abdellatif, President &  
Chief Executive Officer

Delta Dental of Washington  
Diane Oakes, Chief Mission  
Officer

Delta Dental of  
Wisconsin Foundation  
Dennis Peterson, President

Delta Dental of  
Wyoming Foundation  
Kerry Hall, President;  
Patti Guzman, Vice President

Hawaii Dental  
Service Foundation  
Shere Saneishi-Kim, Director



We are especially grateful to the members of the Delta Dental Institute's Community Benefit Task Force, who contributed to the development of this report:

Shanda Brown, Delta Dental of Tennessee  
Chrissy Chatham, Delta Dental of Arkansas  
Suzanne Heckenlaible, Delta Dental of Iowa  
Amy Hughes, Delta Dental Plans Association  
Barb Kozuh, Delta Dental of Arizona  
Jennifer McGrath, Northeast Delta Dental  
Diane Oakes, Delta Dental of Washington  
Holli Seabury, Delta Dental of Michigan  
Vivian Vasallo, Delta Dental Institute

### About Delta Dental Plans Association

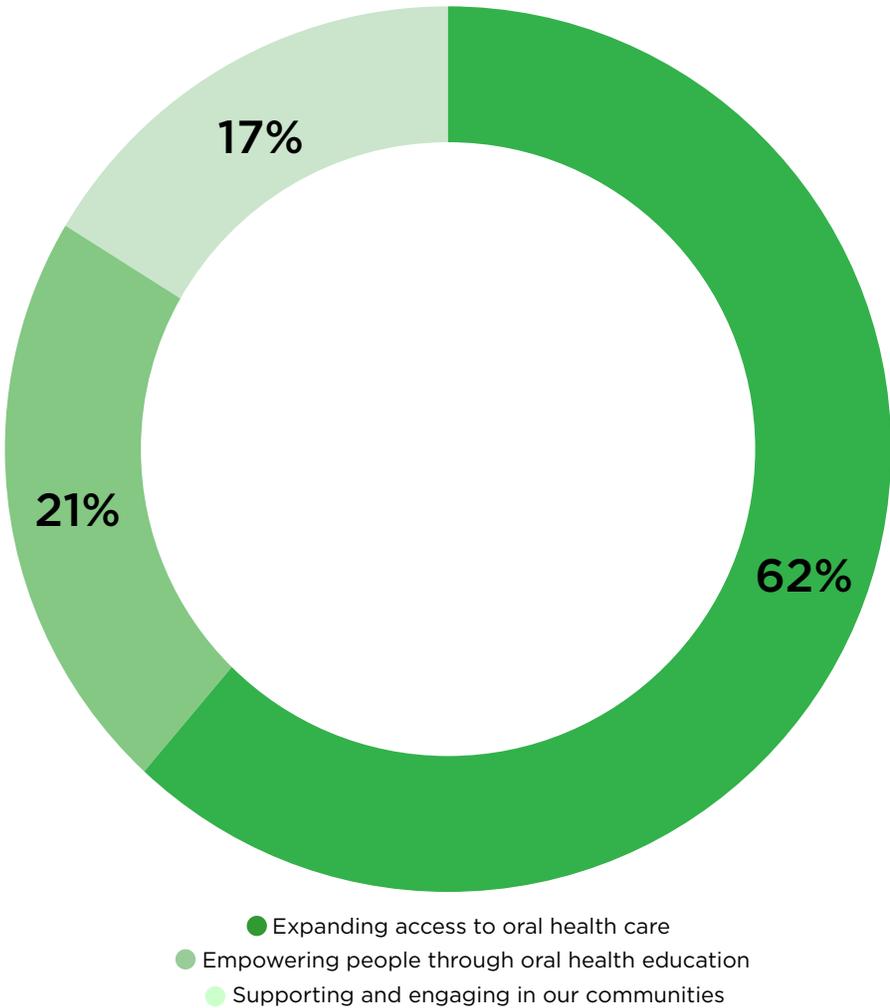
Delta Dental Plans Association, headquartered in Oak Brook, Illinois, is the not-for-profit national association of the 39 independent Delta Dental companies. Through these companies, Delta Dental is the nation's largest provider of dental insurance, covering more than 80 million Americans, and offering the country's largest dental network with approximately 156,000 participating dentists. Learn more: [www.deltadental.com](http://www.deltadental.com)

### About the Delta Dental Institute

The Delta Dental Institute launched in 2019 to advance oral health for all Americans in partnership with Delta Dental companies and community partners across the country. With expertise rooted in Delta Dental's rich history of oral health leadership, the Delta Dental Institute engages in and supports oral health research, community engagement, and advocacy, striving to ensure all Americans can have the healthy smile they deserve and live their healthiest lives. Learn more: [www.deltadentalinstitute.com](http://www.deltadentalinstitute.com)

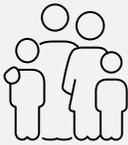
# For more than 65 years,

Delta Dental has established and supported programs across the country that expand access to oral health care, advance oral health education, and positively impact local communities. Building on our history and depth of oral health expertise, our companies are committed to expanding the cause of oral health to all.



Note: The data in this report is self-reported from an annual survey conducted by Delta Dental Plans Association of all Delta Dental companies and covers the time period 1/1/2019 to 12/31/2019. Dollar amounts correspond to funds disbursed within that time period. Community water fluoridation programs account for 3.7 million of total lives impacted.

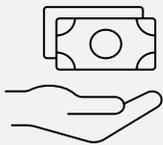
## In 2019



12.8 million lives were impacted



1700+ programs were funded



\$76.3+ million was donated



50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico received donations



Expanding access  
to oral health care

# Expanding access to oral health care

Oral health is critical to overall health. Tackling barriers that prevent or delay access to oral health care is a priority across the Delta Dental System. **More than 56 million Americans live in federally-designated dental health professional shortage areas**, meaning the needs of the community exceed the capacity of local oral health professionals. Even in areas with an adequate number of dentists, barriers remain. About 74 million people lack dental insurance—more than double the percentage of Americans who lack health insurance.

Beyond proven links between oral disease and other health problems, such as hypertension, heart disease, and diabetes, oral health is a vital indicator of general well-being, and gaps in access to oral health care disproportionately occur in low-income communities—regardless of age. **Children with poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school**, and about a quarter of children from low-income families have cavities—twice as many as children from high-income families. Among older adults, one in five live with untreated dental decay, and income is the strongest predictor of good oral health.

At Delta Dental, we recognize that the importance of oral health goes beyond physical health. Two times as many low-income adults say the appearance of their teeth has affected their ability to interview for a job, compared to high-income adults. To truly achieve better outcomes for all of America's families, efforts to improve comprehensive health care must include oral health—and it starts with access.

Delta Dental companies and their foundations proudly support and lead programs across the nation to expand access to care, helping provide quality oral health care to people of all ages who need it most.



## 2019 highlights from our support

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Supporting **700+ programs** in **48 states** that help low-income and uninsured patients get quality oral health care, impacting more than **3 million lives**.

Providing nearly **\$4.4 million** to support programs that help older adults access oral health care.

Donating **\$3.3+ million** to help **more than 260,000** children access sealants and screenings in their schools.

Funding nearly **\$1.5 million** for mobile dental clinics, helping **tens of thousands** of people living in rural or underserved areas.



Tooth BUDDS sends affiliated practice dental hygienists to dental deserts to provide screenings and treatment to nearly 550 children a year.

### Delta Dental of Arizona

Delta Dental of Arizona supports Tooth BUDDS, a nonprofit that delivers teledentistry and school clinic services to underserved rural areas. Services like these are especially crucial in Arizona, where the closest dentist in some counties is over 90 miles away. In addition to providing remote virtual access, Tooth BUDDS sends affiliated practice dental hygienists to these dental deserts to provide screenings, fluoride varnish, sealants, and silver diamine fluoride (SDF). They have expanded to help nearly 550 children a year, using new technologies to bring oral health care where it is needed most.

### Delta Dental of Idaho

Delta Dental of Idaho's GrinWell for You provides free dental care to at risk, income-qualified older adults who do not have access to any other dental insurance. The program creates an avenue for continued care and recently expanded to include funding for dentures. GrinWell for You helps 800 uninsured seniors each year—some of whom have not visited a dentist in years—get the treatment they need to smile, and improve their overall health and quality of life.

### Delta Dental of Kansas

The Smile Kit program enables more Kansans to have access to the toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss needed for good oral hygiene. The kits are assembled with help from Starkey, Inc., a community based nonprofit in Sedgwick County that serves people with disabilities. Through the Smile Kit program, Delta Dental of Kansas was able to provide employment for approximately 500 people with disabilities and donate more than 200,000 Smile Kits to schools, nonprofit organizations, health departments, and other charitable groups across the state.

### Delta Dental of Kentucky

The Red Bird Mission Dental Clinic works with drug and alcohol recovery patients in rural, Eastern Kentucky in the Appalachian Mountains to improve oral and overall health. This work is largely made possible through partnerships with local oral surgeons and dental practices as well as the hundreds of volunteers who donate their time to ensure the recovery patients are free of disease and pain. With the support of Delta Dental of Kentucky, the clinic was able to work with nearly 600 patients to improve their quality of life through better oral health.

### Delta Dental Foundation, an affiliate of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina

The Michigan Initiative of Mother and Infant Oral Health (MIMIOH) program, administered by the University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry in conjunction with the Michigan Primary Care Association, embeds a dental hygienist in OB/GYN offices at federally-qualified health centers. When expectant mothers come in for regular prenatal check-ups, they are screened by a dental hygienist to help improve outcomes for both the mother and child. Last year, MIMIOH, in partnership with the Delta Dental Foundation, served hundreds of mothers.

### Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation, Inc.

The Annual Smiles for Our Heroes event provided free dental screenings and treatments, such as dentures and fillings, for veterans and their families at Zufall Health in New Jersey. Events like these are especially important given that veterans are generally not eligible for dental care through the Department of Veterans Affairs unless they have a service-related disability. In its third year, volunteers were able to provide critical oral healthcare services for 220 low-income veterans and their families. This event was co-sponsored by the Delta Dental of New Jersey Foundation, Zufall Health, and the New Jersey Dental Association.

### Delta Dental of New Mexico

The Happy Smiles School-Based Dental Clinic was able to open its doors for the first time in 2019. The clinic is run by the Doña Ana Community College and primarily funded by Delta Dental of New Mexico, enabling students living in high-poverty areas to receive free preventive dental services, such as cleanings, sealants, and fluoride treatments. Last year, 190 patients in the Las Cruces, New Mexico region were able to receive treatment.



With the support of Delta Dental of Kentucky, the Red Bird Mission Clinic was able to work with nearly 600 patients to improve their quality of life through better oral health.



With Delta Dental of Rhode Island's support, the Rhode Island Free Clinic expanded services to include comprehensive oral health care.

### Delta Dental of North Carolina

Delta Dental of North Carolina partnered with Triangle Residential Options for Substance Abusers (TROSA), a residential substance abuse recovery center. Substance abuse contributes to dental problems and many of TROSA's residents have not seen a dentist in years. Treating their dental issues and reducing mouth pain allows residents to focus on their treatment.

### Delta Dental of Oregon

The Tooth Taxi travels all across the state to deliver dental services to underserved and uninsured children. A 38' state-of-the-art dental office on wheels with two dental chairs and a full-time dentist and staff, the Tooth Taxi

spends up to a week at a school providing services like cleanings as well as teaching kids about the importance of oral health. Since the Tooth Taxi launched in late fall 2008 with the support of Delta Dental of Oregon, it has visited over 400 sites across Oregon, and served more than 29,000 children.

### Delta Dental of Rhode Island

The Rhode Island Free Clinic has provided free health care for uninsured Rhode Island adults for years, yet dental care remained out of reach. With Delta Dental of Rhode Island's support, the clinic expanded services to include comprehensive oral health care. With its volunteer corps of 20 dentists, oral surgeons, and hygienists, the Clinic

provided 785 dental visits to 319 new patients during the dental clinic's first year of operation.

### Delta Dental of South Dakota

Delta Dental of South Dakota's New Smile Kit program provides new mothers with take-home oral health kits that include an adult toothbrush for mom, an infant toothbrush, literature about oral health, and reminders to take the baby to the dentist by age one. By providing these materials at the hospital post-birth, the program hopes to increase positive oral health outcomes in young children. In 2019, 95% of South Dakota hospitals that deliver babies participated in the New Smile Kit program.

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“

I finally have hope that I will be out of pain and will be able to smile again. Having a nice smile will improve my life so much.

”

### Delta Dental of Tennessee Smile 180 Foundation

The Church Health Center is a community space and a recipient of Smile180 Foundation support that provides Memphis residents with a place to improve both their physical and mental wellness. From what was once an abandoned Sears warehouse, the Church Health Center now offers both a medical and dental clinic, as well as a cooking institute, community gardens, and a performing arts stage for all to enjoy.

### Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation

Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation supports the Middlesex Free Health Clinic, which helps low-income, uninsured and under-insured community members receive necessary health services, including dental care, to improve their quality of life. One recipient, who lives on

less than \$14,000 per year, was able to receive an evaluation, a treatment plan, 14 teeth extractions, and a full set of dentures for less than 10% of the cost.

### Delta Dental of Washington Arcora Foundation

The DentistLink program is a free referral service that connects Washingtonians with dental care providers in their community. Through DentistLink, one veteran was able to make a dental appointment with Sea Mar Community Health Centers, a community dental clinic that offered him affordable payment options. “Thanks to [the] Arcora Foundation, I finally have hope that I will be out of pain and will be able to smile again,” he said. “Having a nice smile will improve my life so much.”

### Delta Dental of Wyoming

Delta Dental of Wyoming’s Wyoming Smiles Senior Dental Program helps Wyoming seniors maintain healthy smiles in their golden years. Wyoming Smiles Senior Dental Program provides free dental insurance to more than 300 low-income seniors across the state each year who wouldn’t have dental insurance otherwise. In 2019, the program was able to cover more than 420 seniors, allowing them to access necessary preventive and restorative dental services that would otherwise be out of their reach.

### Hawaii Dental Service

The Sealants in Schools program was developed in partnership with Hawaii Keiki and Hawaii Dental Service to bring critical oral health services, such as screenings and sealants, to second graders in Hawaii public schools across the islands. These services are especially critical in Hawaii, where more than 60% of children lack sealants on their permanent molars, increasing their risk of dental decay.



Empowering  
people through  
oral health  
education



Knowledge is power when it comes to good health. A recent [white paper](#) from the Delta Dental Institute explored this further, finding that **low overall health literacy is associated with poorer outcomes and lower-than-average use of health care services**. It is critical that all Americans not only understand the need to maintain good oral health, but also feel empowered to take practical steps to achieve a healthy smile. Education of both patients and dental health professionals is an increasingly important part of the community impact work of Delta Dental companies and foundations.

While oral health education is important for all ages, programs teaching good oral health habits are especially important for children, since the most common chronic illness in children is tooth decay. Many of the programs Delta Dental companies and foundations support or lead focus on making learning fun and memorable, building knowledge that keeps children healthy throughout their lives.

In 2019, Delta Dental companies and their foundations donated more than \$10.5 million to programs addressing oral health education, teaching Americans of all ages about good oral health and providing scholarships and training to the next generation of the dental workforce.



## 2019 highlights from our support

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Funding **\$11.4+ million** through more than **100 programs, scholarships, and trainings** for dental students and professionals.

Supporting more than **30 school-based programs** in **19 states** to teach children how to make healthy choices and care for their teeth.

Helping **400,000+ new parents** learn how to care for their baby's teeth and get to the dentist by age one.



The CARTI Foundation, a nonprofit cancer center, provides oral care rescue bags to patients undergoing head and neck radiation. Photo credit: CARTI Foundation

### Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation

The CARTI Foundation, a nonprofit cancer center, provides oral care rescue bags to patients dealing with painful dry mouth as a side effect of head and neck radiation. The rescue bags contain carefully researched products to help educate CARTI Foundation patients on how taking charge of their oral health will improve their overall well-being, so that they can focus on beating cancer. The program was able to deliver over 100 rescue bags last year thanks to the Delta Dental of Arkansas Foundation.

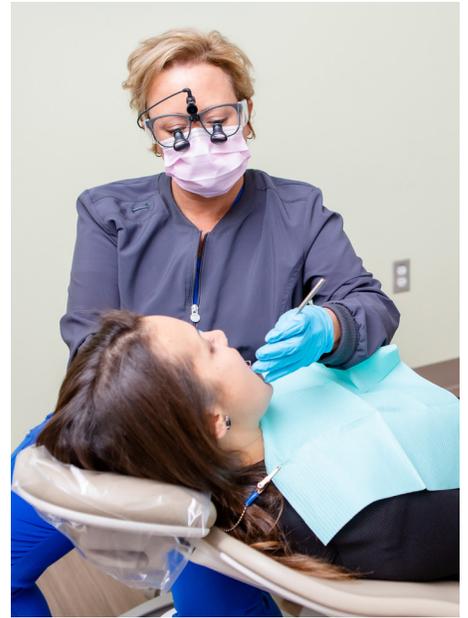
### Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation

The Dentist by One program trains dentists to treat infants and toddlers and offers free preventive care to families

of young children through a community oral health care event, supported by Delta Dental of Illinois and its Foundation. Most American children don't visit the dentist until they are three years old, but cavities can appear as early as six months of age. To combat early tooth decay, Dentist by One delivered free dental care to 42 children in Elgin County, Illinois—62% of whom had never been to a dentist before.

### Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation

Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation's Rethink Your Drink program increases awareness and education about the oral health benefits of drinking water through programming in schools. One of the biggest culprits of youth dental decay is sugary soda and juice, but the



addition of a water filling station in 143 schools across the state through Rethink Your Drink encourages healthy choices for 77,100 students and staff members while saving 1.4 million plastic water bottles from going to landfills.



Students refilling their water bottles at a Rethink Your Drink water-filling station

### Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation

The Smiles@Schools first-grader program, led by Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation, provides the tools and resources to make learning about oral health fun for kids. The program integrates oral health education into first-grade classrooms via animated videos, engaging workbooks, and oral health supplies at no cost to the schools. Nearly 42,000 first-graders in 517 schools across the state participated in Smiles@Schools in 2019.

### Delta Dental of Missouri

Delta Dental of Missouri's Land of Smiles oral health education touring program has been hitting the road in Missouri and South Carolina since 2012. Colorful characters like the Tooth Wizard, Tooth Fairy, and Plaqueman travel to schools across both states to teach children in kindergarten

through third grade about how to take good care of their teeth with lessons about brushing, flossing, and using mouthwash. Last year, the program visited nearly 400 schools, educating close to 84,000 students.

### Northeast Delta Dental

Northeast Delta Dental is working to close the gap in unmet dental needs in Maine's rural and underserved areas by providing grants to community practices like Kennebec Valley Family Dentistry (KVFD) in Augusta, Maine, which serves more than 13,000 patients across the state. A grant to help KVFD move into a much needed larger space enabled the practice to participate in the UNE College of Dental Medicine's extern program. In 2019, three externs helped serve their patient base, including 2,400 new patients.

### Delta Dental of Wisconsin

The Chippewa Valley Technical College's dental clinic, supported by Delta Dental of Wisconsin and its Foundation, provides restorative dental care to community members with a focus on serving low-income, elderly, and veteran populations. The clinic not only provides essential dental care to vulnerable populations, but it also offers Chippewa Valley Technical College dental hygienists and assistants-in-training and Marquette University-School of Dentistry dental students an opportunity for hands-on experience working with each other and patients. Each year, the clinic provides critical dental care to more than 5,200 individuals.

### Delta Dental of Oklahoma

MouthScience™ is Delta Dental of Oklahoma's experiment-based clinic that provides third through sixth graders with a hands-on opportunity to learn about the importance of good oral hygiene and the effect personal choices have on their oral health. During the 2018-19 academic year, more than 3,500 students from 25 different public schools across the state used their math and science skills to observe, chart, and hypothesize the positive outcomes from making smart oral health choices.



In 2019, three externs helped serve their patient base, including 2,400 new patients.



Supporting and  
engaging in our  
communities



From volunteering with food banks to sponsoring school supply drives to helping rebuild neighborhoods after natural disasters, **Delta Dental companies, foundations, and individual employees engage with local communities across the country to help them thrive, no matter what comes their way.**

While we support many local organizations, Delta Dental companies and their foundations also partner with local affiliates of national organizations, including the American Heart Association, American Red Cross, Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, March of Dimes, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, United Way Worldwide, and many others. Additionally, Delta Dental companies support employee volunteering and giving efforts through matching donations and corporate contributions to local charities.



## 2019 highlights from our support

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Supporting the arts through nearly **40 programs** and more than **\$1.4 million** focused on local museums, theaters, and libraries.

Donating **\$728,000+** to food banks and food drives, helping nourish communities.

Bringing smiles to more than **30,000 people** through programs with local Special Olympics affiliates in **17 states.**



Raising awareness for National Children's Dental Health Month by breaking the Guinness World Record for longest line of toothbrushes.

### Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation

**Change Gangs: Virtual Giving Circles** brings individuals together to support worthy causes, such as raising awareness for National Children's Dental Health Month by breaking the Guinness World Record for longest line of toothbrushes. Over 60 volunteers joined Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation to create a 3.5-mile chain of 41,769 toothbrushes, bringing attention to the 56% of Colorado children six and younger who have not visited a dentist in the last year. The toothbrushes, along with 16,000 tubes of toothpaste, were then donated to 28 community organizations throughout Colorado.



By the end of this Smiling it Forward Fall challenge, employees from across the country logged 5,180 hours helping support the community through activities like park cleanups.

### Delta Dental Community Care Foundation

To promote our core value of service and increase employee participation in our volunteer program, the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation (the philanthropic arm for Delta Dental of California and its affiliates) launched an employee volunteer challenge. By the end of this Smiling it Forward Fall challenge, employees from across the enterprise logged 5,180 hours with 238 different organizations and opportunities, bringing overall volunteer hours for the year to more than 11,700 for 2019. That is a 530% increase from 2018.

“

Over 60 volunteers joined Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation to create a 3.5-mile chain of 41,769 toothbrushes, bringing attention to the 56% of Colorado children six and younger who have not visited a dentist in the last year.

”

### Delta Dental of Massachusetts, Inc.

The Special Smiles program provides important oral health services to athletes with special needs at the Massachusetts Special Olympics Summer Games, helping support their overall health. In partnership with volunteer dental school students and faculty, this Delta Dental of Massachusetts program provided screenings, mouthguards, and other oral health services to more than 300 athletes.

### Delta Dental of Puerto Rico

Nestlé's Global Healthy Children's Day, in partnership with the Puerto Rico Department of Education and Delta Dental of Puerto Rico, promotes nutrition, physical activity, dental hygiene, and other healthy habits in children ages six through twelve years old in Puerto Rico public schools. In 2019, more than 24,600 students and teachers in 123 public schools across Puerto Rico participated.



In 2019, more than 24,600 students and teachers in 123 public schools across Puerto Rico participated in Nestlé's Global Healthy Children's Day.

# Looking Ahead

## A letter from the Executive Director of the Delta Dental Institute

For 65 years, Delta Dental has been guided by our purpose, powered by our people, and committed to our promise of advancing oral health. As policies and technology have transformed access to oral health services, our understanding about the importance of oral health to overall health has deepened, the needs of our communities have shifted, and Delta Dental companies have evolved to meet them. We've kept—and will continue to keep—our promise by listening carefully and offering innovative solutions and impactful community outreach.

Amid these transformations, the dialogue around the national health care system shifted to become more comprehensive, focusing on how social determinants such as education and zip code affect health outcomes. We launched the Delta Dental Institute because we recognized the critical need for oral health to be included in this evolving national conversation. Our mission is simple: **advance oral health for all Americans to ensure everyone can have the healthy smile they deserve and live their healthiest lives.**

To achieve this, we must recognize the persistent disparities in access to care in our nation. The public health crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic exposed these vulnerabilities and made the need to elevate oral health in the broader health policy conversation even more important. This year's Community Impact Report reflects only a fraction of the meaningful work Delta Dental companies and their foundations do to address these disparities by listening to, learning from, and supporting their communities.

The Delta Dental Institute is committed to continuing this effort by identifying and implementing research and policy solutions. In 2019, we convened a nationwide tour, hearing from local policymakers, academics, and business and health care leaders about the challenges facing their communities. Each region has its own unique story, but the clear need to expand access to care, strengthen oral health education, and deepen community engagement binds them together.

Looking ahead, these conversations and the programs included in this report are powerful examples of the progress we can make together by harnessing the power of our communities, tapping into innovation in oral health care, and focusing on our shared goal. I am proud of the positive impact the Delta Dental Institute has made over the past year in partnership with Delta Dental companies, and I look forward to helping every one of us achieve our healthiest and happiest smiles.



**Vivian Vasallo**  
Executive Director,  
Delta Dental Institute

# References

- <sup>1</sup>“Dental Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs),” [Kaiser Family Foundation](#), 9/30/19
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