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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Delta Dental of Virginia is Helping Overcome Language Barriers to Accessing Dental Care

\$100,000 Grant from Delta Dental of Virginia is helping CrossOver Ministries address oral health disparities among Richmond's Latino community

The Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation is making it easier for Spanish-speaking Virginians to access dental care through a \$100,000 grant to support a Spanish-speaking dental care coordinator at Richmond's CrossOver Healthcare Ministry. Brady Garrison, the ministry's new high-risk dental care coordinator, is hoping to remove the language barrier and help local Spanish-speaking patients navigate the health system, educate them on the connection between dental health and overall health, and help them access the dental care they need. For some, this may mean they will be seeing a dentist for the first time in their lives.

Access to dental care is vital because it not only addresses immediate issues such as dental disease but regular, preventive visits may also help with the detection of serious health issues, such as diabetes, that disproportionately affect the Latino community.

"About 13.5% of our patients are diabetic, which is a little higher than the national average for patients from Latin America — so there is a great need in our community for dental resources for native Spanish speakers," explains Garrison. "The pandemic also increased health risks, and we're seeing patients that went without their medication or dealt with food insecurity and are now experiencing serious consequences that make care coordination all the more important."

Delta Dental's grant was part of more than half million dollars donated through the company's foundation in 2021 to support organizations working to improve oral health for the uninsured in Virginia. And that's just a fraction of what Delta Dental is doing in communities nationwide. Delta Dental of Virginia is part of a much larger, national group of collaborative Foundations. In June, the national Delta Dental Institute released its [2020 Community Impact Report](#), highlighting more than \$102.5 million in community impact initiatives, supporting more than 2,400 programs nationwide.

Collectively, Delta Dental Foundations across the country provided funds to:

- Serve communities' oral health needs by supporting direct dental treatment in underserved communities, implementing water fluoridation initiatives and providing oral health education,
- Respond to COVID-19 by delivering loans to safety net dental clinics, enabling dental offices to acquire personal protective equipment, and supporting local safety nets such as food banks, and
- Reach underserved communities of color with oral health programs, and support scholarships and training for dentists of color.

“2020 brought to light the value of community partnerships and how we can enhance access to dental care for the people who need it most,” said Frank Lucia, president and CEO of Delta Dental of Virginia. “We were humbled to deliver much-needed support across the Commonwealth to help sustain Virginia’s safety net during a uniquely critical time, to safeguard frontline dental providers, and to contribute to the overall health of our communities,” said Lucia.

Delta Dental's 2020 Community Impact Report features a digital story component with an interactive map showcasing the Delta Dental community impact work in all 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. The full report is available online at <https://www.deltadental.com/institute/community-benefit/>

For more information about the Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation, visit [DeltaDentalVA.com/foundation](https://www.deltadental.com/institute/community-benefit/).

About Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation

Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation was founded in 2012 by Delta Dental of Virginia to help improve the oral health and, ultimately, the overall health of all Virginians. The foundation focuses its support on initiatives that improve oral health through improved access to oral care, oral health education and oral health research.

About Delta Dental of Virginia

Established in 1964, Delta Dental of Virginia is the largest dental benefits provider in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Delta Dental of Virginia provides high-quality, cost-effective dental plans to more than two million members. Through its foundation, Delta Dental of Virginia has donated millions of dollars to improve the oral health of Virginians.

Delta Dental of Virginia is a member of the national Delta Dental Plans Association (DDPA). For more than 50 years, DDPA has worked to improve oral health nationally. Delta Dental member companies serve more than 80 million people in more than 148,000 groups across the nation.

About Delta Dental Plans Association

Based in Oak Brook, Illinois, Delta Dental Plans Association is the not-for-profit national association of the 39 independent Delta Dental companies. Through these companies, Delta Dental is the nation's largest dental insurance provider, covering more than 80 million Americans and offering the country's largest dental network with approximately 153,000 participating dentists. Over the last decade, Delta Dental companies provided over \$1.75 billion in direct and in-kind support to improve the oral health of our communities across the country. Visit [deltadental.com](https://www.deltadental.com) for information on individual dental insurance plans and group dental insurance plans.

About the Delta Dental Institute

The Delta Dental Institute is dedicated to advancing oral health for all Americans in partnership with the Delta Dental companies and dedicated partners across the country. With expertise rooted in Delta Dental's rich history of oral health leadership, we engage in and support oral health research, community outreach, and advocacy, striving to ensure everyone understands the importance of oral health to overall health and has access to the care that they need.