

***For Immediate Release***

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**Delta Dental of Virginia Donates \$3 Million to Help Dentists Safely Reopen**

**ROANOKE, Va.** — As dentist offices across Virginia reopen with new and costly health and safety protocols, Delta Dental of Virginia and the Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation are donating \$3 million to help alleviate the financial burden on practices and their patients and to increase patients' confidence in seeking oral health care. The funds will be distributed directly to the more than 4,500 dentists in the Delta Dental of Virginia network. Dental practices may use these donated funds to cover operating expenses associated with safety guidelines including acquiring Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

On March 17, the American Dental Association (ADA) issued guidance to its members recommending the postponement of elective procedures, and on March 25, Gov. Ralph Northam issued an executive order to postpone elective dental procedures. Since May 1, Virginia dentists have begun opening their offices for routine dental care. Now that dentist offices are reopening, dentists are wondering how to manage costs related to new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the ADA. "We know dentists need access to funds as soon as possible to meet new safety precautions," said Frank Lucia, president and CEO of Delta Dental of Virginia. "We're empathetic to dentists and patients alike who remain concerned about how and when to safely return to the dentist office. Quickly supporting dentists is crucial to ensuring patients receive the oral health care they need, when they need it."

The ADA and the CDC have provided guidance to dentists regarding infection prevention, the proper use of masks, how to navigate patients through an office visit and other health and safety-related protocols. Some of this guidance includes limiting the number of patients in the office at one time, requesting patients wear a mask and have their temperature taken, adding protective barriers and wearing additional protective equipment during procedures.

Dental appointments may be different as patients return for the first time since restrictions were in place. For more information about what dental patients can expect, visit Delta Dental's website at [DeltaDentalVA.com/members/covid-dentist-appointment](https://www.DeltaDentalVA.com/members/covid-dentist-appointment).

#### **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, subsequently, 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. For more information, visit [DeltaDentalVA.com/foundation](https://www.DeltaDentalVA.com/foundation).

#### **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, the DDPA has worked to improve oral health nationally. Delta Dental member companies serve more than 80 million people in more than 141,000 groups across the nation.

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