



**Media Contact**

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**DELTA DENTAL OF VIRGINIA FOUNDATION OFFERS FREE,  
VIRTUAL EDUCATION PROGRAM  
IN HONOR OF CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH MONTH**

**Roanoke, Virginia (February 1, 2020)** – Dental disease is the number one unmet health need facing Virginia's children. Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation is working to reduce the impact of untreated oral health problems and the long-lasting and serious implications they have on Virginia's communities. To combat lifelong dental issues, the Foundation is offering Virginia educators free resources to teach K-5 children healthy dental habits.

The Delta Dental of Virginia Foundation has reimaged its *Smart Smiles*® curriculum — currently used by more than 900 schools across the state — as a fully virtual toolkit, including teaching tools, discussion guides, activities and videos to help communicate the basics of dental care. The goal of the program is to help prevent lifelong complications, particularly for un- or underinsured students and children from low-income households.

"There are immediate and lasting effects of poor oral health in children and we know there is a correlation between childhood dental disease and graduation rates," explains Polly Raible, Delta Dental of Virginia's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager. "We need to do all we can to educate children that adopting healthy dental habits early is a proven way to reduce the risk of physical, mental and social challenges in the future."

One in five elementary-age kids have at least one untreated cavity, sometimes causing discomfort which can lead to distractions while learning. If left untreated, cavities and other oral health complications may make children prone to more serious problems that result in missed school days. Children from low-income households are also twice as likely to experience tooth decay due to limited access to dental care.

Smart Smiles is aligned with Virginia's Standards of Learning for disease prevention and health promotion and addresses three primary learning themes: positive health impacts of healthy teeth and gums, the link between healthy teeth and healthy nutrition and adoption of healthy daily dental care habits.

"Smart Smiles is a simple, fun and effective way to make a difference in our children's future," adds Raible.



For more information about Smart Smiles, or to download the free curriculum and learning tools, visit [DeltaDentalVA.com/smart-smiles](http://DeltaDentalVA.com/smart-smiles).

**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.*

**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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