



**NEWS RELEASE**  
**For Immediate Release**

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**IOWA CAREGIVERS ACCEPTS GRANT TO SUPPORT MOUTH CARE MATTERS PROJECT**

**Johnston, IA (September 20, 2016)** —Iowa's senior residents are keeping their natural teeth longer than any previous generation due to advances in oral health care. With these improvements, however, come changes in the continuing dental needs of seniors, particularly frail and functionally dependent older adults. Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation has committed \$150,000 over a two-year period, partnering with Iowa CareGivers, to ensure direct care workers are trained in "Mouth Care Matters."

"Iowa CareGivers is thrilled that its continued partnership with Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation through this grant will support the ongoing efforts of the Mouth Care Matters project." said Di Findley, the executive director of Iowa CareGivers. "This project helps ensure caregivers have the appropriate training needed to provide day-to-day oral hygiene care to nursing home and homebound older Iowans."

**What is Mouth Care Matters?**

There are over 450,000 adults over the age of 65 living in Iowa. Three in four adults over the age of 65 do not have dental insurance and 1/3 of these adults have untreated tooth decay (cavities).

Mouth Care Matters is a major initiative of the Lifelong Smiles Coalition, a statewide coalition formed to increase access to oral health care for older Iowans. Supported by Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, the Coalition consists of 19 members including state agencies, advocacy organizations, trade associations, health professionals, academic institutions and funders.

Mouth Care Matters is administered by Iowa CareGivers and enhances oral care skills of the direct care workforce, one of the largest workforces in Iowa, and is recognized as the first specialty under the state's "Prepare to Care" program. Participants provide positive feedback on the additional training received from the program. "This training really made a difference

for our agency and for our clients,” said Rhonda Shoafstall, home health supervisor for Dallas County Public Health Nursing Services. “Mouth Care Matters encouraged us to address oral health within the daily care each of our clients receives. We would recommend this training for all direct care providers.”

Partners of this project include:

- Iowa Dental Hygienists' Association
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Des Moines Area Community College
- The University of Iowa Colleges of Nursing and Dentistry and Dental Clinics
- The University of Iowa National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice

This project is made possible with renewed support from Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation, Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, and Iowa Department of Public Health through a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement (#DP13-1307).

"Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation is proud to support this effort that is focused on the dental health of older adults," said Jeff Russell, president of the Delta Dental of Iowa. "By engaging direct care workers with dental health education and resources, we can ultimately increase the overall health of older Iowans."

For more information about the Mouth Care Matters initiative and Lifelong Smiles Coalition, visit [www.LifelongSmilesCoalition.com](http://www.LifelongSmilesCoalition.com).

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#### **About Delta Dental of Iowa**

*Delta Dental of Iowa is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. As a not-for-profit insurance company, Delta Dental of Iowa invests in oral health and wellness projects through the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation that focus on access to care, prevention, education and research. Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation's mission is to support and improve the oral health of Iowans.*