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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

### **Iowa CareGivers Awarded Polk County Community Betterment Grant**

Iowa CareGivers, (IC) is pleased to announce that it was recently awarded a \$3,500 Polk County Community Betterment grant from the Polk County Board of Supervisors. Grant funds will support Mouth Care Matters (MCM) educational programs for licensed nurses and others who supervise direct care workers such as certified nurse aides (CNAs), Home Care and Hospice Aides, and others. The ultimate goal is to ensure that Polk County residents who are aging or have a disability have access to good oral care.

There is a general lack of awareness about the importance of oral health. It is often viewed as merely cosmetic rather than something that is vital to one's overall health and well-being. Poor oral health can lead to aspiration pneumonia, heart disease and other more serious and even life-threatening conditions. Proper daily oral care can help to detect and prevent situations that could otherwise lead to an inability to eat, weight loss, frailty, and even falls.

Mouth Care Matters (MCM) is a one-day, multi-disciplinary, oral health training originally designed for direct care staff such as home care aides and nursing assistants. It has since been found to be a good program for licensed nurses, social workers, dietitians, and other staff. The curriculum was developed and tested through a grant from Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation (DDIAF) and vetted by the Lifelong Smiles Coalition. Other funders were Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, and the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Polk County Supervisor, Matt McCoy said, "the Polk County Supervisors place a high priority on the health of Polk County residents. Mouth Care Matters (MCM) has been proven to be a good approach to increasing awareness about the importance of oral health as well as a means to enhance the knowledge and skills of those who provide direct care to Polk County residents who are aging or have a disability. We are happy to partner with Iowa CareGivers in serving those in our community."

For more information about the Polk County Mouth Care Matters program contact Mary Ann Young [maryann@iowacaregivers.org](mailto:maryann@iowacaregivers.org).

Polk County Board of Supervisors Mission: *Polk County exists to serve the public. We are committed to service excellence, fiscal responsibility and enhancing the quality of life. We will be the most effective, productive, and responsive local government in Iowa.*

The mission of Iowa CareGivers is *to enhance care and support of Iowans by providing education, research, recognition, and advocacy for those who provide direct care.* Visit [www.iowacaregivers.org](http://www.iowacaregivers.org) for more information or call 515-223-2805.

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