

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To learn more, contact:

Kelly Harris or Monica Green
The Hauser Group Delta Dental of Missouri
314-436-9090 314-656-2669
Kelly@HauserGroupPR.com Monica.Green@deltadentalmo.com

DELTA DENTAL OF MISSOURI AWARDS \$1 MILLION GRANT TO THE MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES TO FUND STATEWIDE DENTAL SEALANT INITIATIVE

ST. LOUIS, MO (August 1, 2016) ... The state's leading dental benefits provider Delta Dental of Missouri today announced its agreement to invest \$1 million over the next five years to help fund a new Missouri Dental Sealant Program administered by the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). This funding further underscores Delta Dental of Missouri's commitment to the oral health needs in the communities it serves and addresses concerns surrounding the state's nationally recognized void in statewide, school-based sealant programming.

According to DHSS, tooth decay is one of the most common chronic diseases among children. An estimated 51 million hours of school time is lost every year due to tooth related problems. Children from a specific subset of the population are at particular risk as 80 percent of all cavities are said to be concentrated in 25 percent of school-aged children who either come from low income families, live in rural areas or don't have dental insurance. Dental sealants play a key role in cavity prevention and Missouri currently does not have a statewide, school-based sealant program in place.

"We are very enthusiastic about the funding from Delta Dental of Missouri and the role it will play in helping to improve the oral health of those most at risk for dental decay," commented Dr. John Dane, Missouri State Dental Director. "School-based programs are very effective in removing barriers to children receiving dental care. The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services already has a successful Preventive Services Program in schools that provides dental screenings, fluoride varnishes, educational materials and oral health care supplies. We will use existing infrastructure to seamlessly add the much needed school-based dental sealants service to the mix of what is offered to qualifying students statewide."

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Acting Director Peter Lyskowski added, "Providing dental sealants in areas where children may not have access to regular dental care will go a long way towards improving the oral health of these young Missourians. I am pleased Delta Dental decided to partner with the department to make this much needed sealant program available."

The new Missouri Dental Sealant Program is looking to reach 15,000 high-need children at as many as 268 public schools throughout the state. The new initiative is set to roll out in early 2017. The terms of Delta Dental of Missouri's five year, \$1 million agreement to fund the Missouri Dental Sealant Program includes full funding for the first three years of program implementation. Support of the final two years will be subject to positive clinical results.

-more-

Delta Dental of Missouri Awards \$1M to Dental Sealant Program First and Final Add

Robert Butler, DDS, Chairman of the Board for Delta Dental of Missouri, commented on the unique nature of Delta Dental's board and its commitment to this funding. "Our board make up is different from other dental insurance companies, in that we have six practicing dentists from across the state representing the dentist's perspective on our board. These professionals understand, first hand, the benefits of sealants and school-based programming designed to meet the needs of those most at risk. Delta Dental is committed at a mission level to reinvest its resources into the communities it serves. We essentially put our money where our mouth is in an effort to positively influence the dental health of Missouri children. We look forward to following the success of this initiative," stated Dr. Butler.

In addition to Delta Dental of Missouri's \$1 million contribution of the Missouri Dental Sealant Program, the company also demonstrates its commitment to improving the oral and overall health of Missouri children through its Land of SmilesSM educational touring theatre program. Tooth WizardSM, his sister Tooth Fairy, and their archenemy PlaqueManSM have been traveling Missouri roadways for more than a decade on a mission to motivate Missouri kids to adopt healthy life habits through this fun, interactive program. Since the inception of the program in 2002, the company has reached 750,000 Missouri kids through 3,600 school-based performances. Delta Dental of Missouri also proudly sponsors Give Kids A Smile's free bi-annual dental clinics, the new HealthWorks! Kids' Museum St. Louis and Missouri Missions of Mercy events.

To learn more about Delta Dental of Missouri, or to gain access to helpful oral health news and information, visit the company's website at www.DeltaDentalMO.com, or find them on Facebook and Twitter @DeltaDentalMO.

Delta Dental is the dental benefits leader in Missouri and the U.S. Ninety-four percent of Missouri dentists participate in a Delta Dental network and 4 out of 5 dentists participate nationally. In Missouri, more than 1.6 million members in nearly 1,700 companies, large and small, choose Delta Dental. Nationally, nearly 1 in 3 families with dental benefits choose Delta Dental - 56 million members from nearly 96,000 companies. Delta Dental is also committed to improving the oral health and overall health of the children in our community and therefore proudly supports the Delta Dental Land of SmilesSM educational touring theater program, Delta Dental Health Theatre and Give Kids A Smile.

###