



Dental Aid Receives 3-Year Grant to Fund Oral Health Services in Boulder Valley School District Schools

Program offers dental services to high needs low income, uninsured, and under-insured preschool through high school students in Boulder Valley School District.

Lafayette, CO — January 16, 2018 – Dental Aid, Inc. is pleased to announce they have received a grant from Rose Community Foundation for \$118,240 over three years. Dental Aid specializes in providing affordable, high quality dental care and education to the low-income, uninsured, and under-insured residents of Colorado’s Boulder and Broomfield counties. Its clinics are located in Boulder, Longmont and Louisville, CO.

The grant will be used to further develop Dental Aid’s teledentistry program for high needs, low income and uninsured preschool, elementary, middle and high school students in the Boulder Valley School District. A Dental Aid registered dental hygienist will travel to the schools and provide basic services such a screenings, cleanings, and the application of sealants to children who would not normally seek, or have access to high quality dental care. Children in need of further dental care will be referred to their dentist or to Dental Aid clinics for services. The Rose Community Foundation makes grants to organizations and institutions serving the seven county greater Denver community.

“In this high-risk population, about one in four kids will have a cavity by the time they’re two,” says Dennis Lewis, President and CEO of Dental Aid. “And low-income children miss nearly twelve times more school due to poor oral health than children from higher-income families.”

“In the end, more people get access to dental care who otherwise would not have received it,” says Whitney Gustin Connor, Rose Community Foundation Senior Program Officer for Health. “And by reaching them when they’re young, we can help prevent future oral health issues.”

One overarching goal of the program is to develop best practices for the delivery of dental care to low income children. Prevention and early intervention are the most cost effective ways to manage any child’s oral health care. Every dollar invested in prevention saves \$50 in future restorative services such as fillings and extractions.

About Dental Aid

Dental Aid provides compassionate, affordable, high quality dental care and education to low-income, uninsured and under-insured individuals in Colorado’s Boulder and Broomfield counties.

The long term clinical focus of Dental Aid follows a chronic disease management model directed at prevention, education and treatment in the early stages of disease. In addition to direct clinical care, Dental Aid prioritizes education and outreach to high-risk patients including:

- Families and children of all ages
- Pregnant women
- People with chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and HIV/AIDS; and

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- People with physical, mental or emotional disabilities

Dental Aid was one of the first stand-alone, nonprofit, complete-care dental clinics in the United States. The organization was founded in 1974 as a referral organization and opened its first full-service clinic in 1980. Today, Dental Aid provides dental care to more than 8,000 children and adults annually. It provides services through three clinics (Boulder, Longmont and Louisville, CO) and through its hygiene outreach programs. Its mission is to make high quality oral health care accessible to low income, uninsured and under-insured individuals who would otherwise be unable to access oral health care. For more information, visit www.dentalaid.org.

For more information about this grant program, please contact:

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Additional Information About the Importance of Oral Health Care for Children:

Tooth decay is a serious contagious bacterial infection resulting in cavities and requires risk based preventive measures. Although almost 100% preventable, it remains the most common chronic disease in children. Tooth decay in children can be painful and adversely affect a child's ability to eat, speak, learn, and socialize, and their long-term health. Poor oral health is the number one health related reason grade school children miss school. Dental disease is the most common childhood disease; it is five times more common than asthma. An estimated 7.8 million hours of school are lost annually in Colorado due to acute oral pain and infection. Many students attend school but are unable to concentrate effectively and learn due to poor dental health. Greater rates of decay occur in low income and minority children, and low-income children suffer nearly twelve times more lost school time due to poor oral health than do children from higher-income families. Improving the oral health of low income children is an important part of our work to combat the growing achievement gap between higher and lower income children. Early preventive oral health care is effective in preventing children from developing more serious oral health problems. Fluoride varnish prevents the development of decay. Sealants are also very effective in preventing oral disease. Dental Aid seeks to bring preventive care and early detection and treatment of dental disease to under-served children in the schools.

The oral health of a child is important to their future well-being. Poor oral health can result in increased absences from school and lower self-esteem which contributes to the achievement gap between low income minority students and their higher income non-minority peers. The oral health of a child impacts their health as an adult. Poor oral health is related to heart disease, Alzheimer's, osteoporosis, respiratory infections, and diabetes. Poor oral health also impacts one's ability to interview for, obtain and retain a job. A recent study from the found that 19% of Colorado's low income residents reported that the appearance of their mouth and teeth affects their ability to interview for a job and 10% indicate that they have taken time off of their jobs due to poor oral health. Improved oral health and appearance helps clients to have the confidence and demeanor to interview for and keep a job. Investments in children's health may boost their future earnings for decades. The taxes they pay on higher incomes may result in a return on investment which will help pay the government back for some of its investments.

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