



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Delta Dental of Kentucky Funds United for Kids' Smiles With \$200,000 Grant**

*Delta Dental of Kentucky and Norton Children's Prevention & Wellness to provide oral health solutions to children in the Louisville region.*

**LOUISVILLE, Ky.** (April 16, 2018) – A grant from Delta Dental of Kentucky will help improve oral health among children throughout Louisville and surrounding counties.

Delta Dental of Kentucky, through a partnership with Kentucky Youth Advocates, developed the Louisville Regional Oral Health Coalition, which is led by Norton Children's Prevention & Wellness. The region's initiative, United for Kids' Smiles, will help improve oral health outcomes in children ages 0-6, by bridging the gap between medical and dental providers, education on preventative care, and expanding fluoride varnish utilization in pediatric primary care settings.

This program is the result of state research findings published in the *Making Smiles Happen™: 2016 Oral Health Study of Kentucky's Youth*. Based on these findings, Delta Dental of Kentucky expanded its commitment to oral health across the state and provided \$1 million to launch five regional networks to develop oral health solutions across the state. Delta Dental of Kentucky partnered with Kentucky Youth Advocates to develop the five regional networks.

In the Louisville area, it was found that socioeconomic status was a significant factor in oral health, and children covered by Medicaid rarely had professional dental care. United for Kids' Smiles was created to help improve the oral health of children living in south and west Jefferson County, as well as in Shelby and Bullitt counties. The program will accomplish its goals through improved access to care, ease in obtaining oral health services and literacy, and education on preventative care.

"Delta Dental of Kentucky is thrilled to announce the creation of United for Kids' Smiles, a program that will impact the dental health of so many kids in our area." Delta Dental of Kentucky CEO Jude Thompson said. "We believe that the implementation of these regional programs will drive the action necessary to improve the oral health of Kentucky's children. We are proud to help fund these wonderful programs, which will have a lasting impact on children statewide."

In the Louisville area, United for Kids' Smiles plans to expand the number of pediatric patients who receive fluoride treatment, assist families in need of a dentist, and educate families on the importance of preventative care, such as brushing, flossing, and avoiding sugary drinks.

A portion of the grant will go to the Children's Hospital Foundation to hire a part-time dental hygienist, led by Norton Children's Prevention & Wellness. The hygienist will work to establish a fluoride treatment program at nearly 20 Norton Children's Medical Associates practices, as well as partnering clinics, throughout the region.

"This is a tremendous opportunity to improve the oral health of children in our community," said Lynn Meyer, chief development officer, Norton Healthcare. "We appreciate Delta Dental of Kentucky for teaming up with Norton Children's Prevention & Wellness to make a difference."

"Norton Children's Prevention & Wellness aims to educate kids and families about creating healthy habits that last a lifetime," said Jenita Lyons, manager, Norton Children's Prevention & Wellness. "This program should make a significant impact for decades to come."

Additional partners that helped with the development of United for Kids' Smiles include the Louisville Dental Society, Louisville Water Company, Shawnee Christian Health/Dental Center, and Home of the Innocents.

United for Kids' Smiles is one of four Kentucky programs developed through the partnership between Delta Dental of Kentucky and the Kentucky Youth Advocates.

The full scope of work for each region's project, along with video, is now available at [www.kentuckyoralhealth.com/](http://www.kentuckyoralhealth.com/).

**About Delta Dental of Kentucky and Making Smiles Happen®**

Delta Dental of Kentucky is a not-for-profit company that is committed to bright smiles and healthy lifestyles for its 700,000 enrollees and the communities we serve. Delta Dental of Kentucky is part of a family of companies that collectively are among the largest, most experienced dental plan administrators in the nation. Our network of providers gives our customers access to high-quality, affordable dental care.

Making Smiles Happen® is Delta Dental of Kentucky's promise to serve our communities and residents one smile at a time. Aimed with the task of promoting oral health to the citizens of Kentucky, this initiative supports many non-profit partners. Giving back is a core component of our culture at Delta Dental, and Making Smiles Happen enables this support to be given to organizations that champion a better quality of life for citizens throughout our Commonwealth.

**About Kentucky Youth Advocates:**

Kentucky Youth Advocates believes all children deserve to have a safe and loving family, have access to quality education and health care, and have opportunities to help them thrive. As THE independent voice for Kentucky's children, we work to ensure policymakers create investments and policies that are good for children.

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