



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Delta Dental Foundation Awards \$1,500 Smiles for Kids Grant to Shelter Health Services to Support Homeless Women and Children in Mecklenburg County**

**Charlotte, NC (March 28, 2019)** – Shelter Health Services received a \$1,500 Smiles for Kids grant from the Delta Dental Foundation (DDF) to provide free, comprehensive dental care, hygiene, and prevention services to homeless women and children at the Salvation Army Center of Hope shelter.

Shelter Health Services provides a unique service model that removes common barriers to care. A state-of-the-art mobile dental van is brought to the clinic quarterly to provide cleanings and basic dental services such as fillings and extractions for those in need. Fluoride treatments are applied for children younger than 3 ½. Those that receive care also are given instruction on the importance of proper oral health habits through quarterly children’s health fairs and discussion groups.

Michael Sowyak, Shelter Health Services' Executive Director says, "Dental services are difficult to source for our patients that are without money and Medicaid. And since dental issues can exacerbate improvement of other medical issues, it is important to integrate dental care into our services. We are thankful for and appreciative of The Delta Dental Foundation’s support of our free clinic and our ability to bring quality dental care to the homeless women and children we serve."

The Delta Dental Foundation focuses on ensuring that children and adults in North Carolina receive high-quality oral health education and dental care. The grant received by Shelter Health Services is one of 19 grants totaling \$70,000 that DDNC is donating to North Carolina oral health organizations and programs. This is the second year that Shelter Health Services has received a Smiles for Kids grant, totaling \$3,000 in funding. Grant recipients were selected based on criteria that included the number of at-risk children served, the uniqueness of the program, the level of community involvement in the program and the ability to measure results.

“Dental disease is the number one childhood disease, yet it’s preventable. Teaching parents how to maintain good oral health in their children from birth is critical to prevention,” said Curt Ladig, president and CEO of Delta Dental of North Carolina. “By providing support to Shelter Health Services for the important work that it does, we can help to ensure that this at-risk population receives necessary oral health care and information.”

**About Shelter Health Services**

The mission of Shelter Health Services is to remove health issues as barriers to self-sufficiency and upward mobility for homeless adults and as impediment to development and readiness to learn for homeless children, by providing free healthcare and health information that is easily accessible. For more information, visit [www.shelterhealthservices.com](http://www.shelterhealthservices.com).

**About the Delta Dental Foundation**

The Delta Dental Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization established in 1980, which serves as the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina. The foundation's goals are to support education and research for the advancement of dental science, and to promote the oral health of the public through education and service activities, particularly for those with special needs. For more information, visit [www.deltadentalnc.com](http://www.deltadentalnc.com).

**About Delta Dental of North Carolina**

Delta Dental of North Carolina is a nonprofit dental service corporation created in 1970 to provide dental benefits throughout the state. Its mission is to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. It does so by providing affordable access to oral health care with the largest network of providers, including two out of every three dentists, in North Carolina.

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