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Now Accepting Applications for the 2016 Dedicated to Minnesota Dentists Dental Education Loan Repayment for Service Program

Program created to help address health professional shortage areas throughout Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. (November 11, 2015)- Eligible applicants are encouraged to apply for the 2016 Dedicated to Minnesota Dentists (DMD) Dental Education Loan Repayment for Service Program. The purpose of DMD is to attract dentists to practice general dentistry in underserved areas of Minnesota where there is a shortage of dental providers and improve access to care.

Funding and administration of the DMD Program is provided by Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation in collaboration with the Minnesota Dental Foundation for program promotion and candidate selection. DMD is not a grant, rather Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation will pay up to $200,000 in educational loans in return for service in a community that is a Health Professional Shortage Area. Health Professional Shortage Areas are geographic areas, population groups or health care facilities that have been designated by the Federal government as having a shortage of health professionals. DMD recipients are encouraged to provide care for people who may otherwise go without services, including some public program patients.

“Oral health is a critical aspect to overall health and wellbeing,” said Rodney Young, Chief Executive Officer and President, Delta Dental of Minnesota and Chair, Delta Dental Foundation Board. “A community is not healthy or prosperous without access to good oral health and quality dental care. We are proud to partner with the Minnesota Dental Foundation to help support access to care through the placement of dentists in underserved communities.”

The 2016 call for applicants marks the DMD Program’s second round of applicants. 2015’s Inaugural DMD Program recipients included four dentists serving the following Health Professional Shortage Areas:

• Crystal Chopp, D.D.S. practicing in Ely, Minnesota
  Dr. Crystal Chopp graduated from the Indiana University School of Dentistry in May of 2015 with a D.D.S. degree. She has participated in a number of community service projects and organizations such as the SEAL In program and traveled to Kenya and Haiti on international service learning trips.

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• **Marissa Goplen, D.D.S. practicing in Benson, Minnesota**
  Dr. Marissa Goplen graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry in May of 2015 with a D.D.S. degree. She has been involved with the University of Minnesota Hispanic Student Dental Association since 2011, and has volunteered at *Give Kids a Smile* Day.

• **Steven Holcombe, D.D.S., practicing in Mora, Minnesota**
  Dr. Steven Holcombe graduated from Midwestern University Downers Grove- College of Dental Medicine in May of 2015. He has participated in *Give Kids a Smile* Day as well as Mission of Mercy in Illinois and Iowa.

• **Mark Thiele, D.D.S., practicing in Warroad, Minnesota**
  Dr. Mark Thiele graduated from the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry in May of 2015 with a D.D.S. degree, and was a School of Dentistry Continuing Student Scholarship Nominee. Mark has volunteered with the Minnesota Mission of Mercy and *Give Kids a Smile* Day.

For more information on DMD Program eligibility, funding and selection criteria, as well as to apply, please visit [www.dedicatedMNdentists.org](http://www.dedicatedMNdentists.org).

**Minnesota Dental Foundation:**
The Minnesota Dental Foundation is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit public foundation whose vision is to eliminate unmet oral health needs in Minnesota by initiating and supporting outreach programs that provide dental services to underserved populations and communities; encouraging and supporting volunteerism within the profession; and promoting careers in dentistry, especially in underserved areas.

**Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation:**
Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation is designed to support Delta Dental of Minnesota's mission of improving the oral health of the people in Minnesota and advancing the science and art of oral health in Minnesota. The Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation supports initiatives that promote access to oral health and, in turn, improve the overall health and vitality of our community.

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