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For immediate release

WVDHHR Oral Health Program Receives Grant

The DentaQuest Foundation has selected the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Oral Health Program and the West Virginia Oral Health Coalition to join its Oral Health 2014 Initiative. The Oral Health Program will receive \$100,000 to support its work to tackle the lack of access to oral health services for the underserved in West Virginia.

The Oral Health 2014 Initiative is a major step to launch a national movement to reverse profound oral health disparities in the United States. West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources joins non-profit partners in 20 states in this nationwide collaborative effort: Alabama, Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Idaho, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia.

"This is a really important moment for oral health," said Ralph Fuccillo, president of the DentaQuest Foundation. "State organizations have a critical role in health improvements as advocates and stakeholders," he added.

WV State Dental Director Dr. Jason Roush said, "This additional funding will allow the West Virginia Oral Health Program and partners to continue building on recent progress and implementation of the State Oral Health Plan. This monetary award demonstrates the importance of how stakeholders working together can make a difference and improve the oral health status of all West Virginians."

According to a recent report from the Institute of Medicine, nearly 5 million children went without regular dental checkups in 2008 because of financial limitations, and 33.3 million Americans live in an area with a shortage of dental professionals. The

multi-year Oral Health 2014 Initiative aims to eliminate such disparities by supporting state organizations who are building community partnerships.

The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Oral Health Program will use the funds to improve infrastructure by adding an epidemiologist, fluoride specialist, and dental sealant coordinator as identified in the State Oral Health Plan. Additionally, the Oral Health Program will partner with the West Virginia University School of Dentistry to increase medical/dental collaboration by developing an oral health educational curriculum for non-dental providers.

Learn more about West Virginia's Oral Health Program online at http://www.wvdhhr.org/mcfh/ICAH/oral_health_program.asp.