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## **DELTA DENTAL of IOWA AWARDS DENTAL EDUCATION LOAN REPAYMENT**

ANKENY, Iowa – September 6, 2006 – Delta Dental of Iowa has awarded a \$50,000 educational loan repayment grant to Sac City dentist R. Louie Ching as part of a program to recruit dentists to rural communities and other areas of the state that have a shortage of dentists.

Delta Dental has awarded seven dental education loan repayment grants since the program began in 2002. In order to be eligible for loan repayment, grant recipients agree to practice in a designated dentist shortage area and devote at least 35 percent of their practice to Medicaid-eligible, elderly, disabled, and other underserved patients over a three-year period. Seventy-nine of Iowa's 99 counties are currently designated as dentist shortage areas.

“Loan repayments are one of the most effective ways to recruit dentists to underserved areas of the state, and having a dentist in town makes a big difference to a community's economy and quality of life,” said Donn Hutchins, President and CEO. “Delta Dental is pleased to play a role in meeting the needs of Iowa's underserved dental patients.”

The loan repayment program is a collaborative effort with Delta Dental of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Public Health and the University of Iowa College of Dentistry.

*Delta Dental of Iowa is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. The Iowa company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to more than 47 million people in nearly 81,000 employer groups.*

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