



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact:

Jill Hamilton, Corporate Communications Manager
Delta Dental of Iowa
9000 Northpark Drive
Johnston, IA 50131
(515) 261-5526
jhamilton@deltadentalia.com

FIND Project Awards Wapello Dentist Loan Repayment Grant

~ Open house and celebration planned for Dr. Sunny Hamilton and the Wapello community on Nov. 12~

Johnston, IA (November 8, 2010) — Wapello dentist Sunny Hamilton has been awarded up to a \$100,000 educational loan repayment grant through the Fulfilling Iowa's Need for Dentists (FIND) project, which recruits dentists to practice in rural communities in underserved Iowa counties by helping them with their dental education debt.

Dr. Hamilton's award is comprised of funding from the Delta Dental of Iowa Loan Repayment Program, matching grants from the Community Health Care of Wapello and a congressional earmark for the FIND project from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"Financial assistance and student loan repayment programs are effective ways to recruit dentists to underserved areas of Iowa," said Donn Hutchins, president and CEO of Delta Dental of Iowa. "Delta Dental, through our Loan Repayment Program, is supporting private practice dentists who make a commitment to practice in rural Iowa. Dr. Hamilton will be a valuable member of the Wapello and Louisa County communities for years to come."

Dr. Hamilton is a 2004 graduate of the University of Iowa College of Dentistry and is the owner of the recently established Sunshine Dental in Wapello. A reception and open house will be held at Sunshine Dental in Wapello on Friday, Nov. 12 from 4 – 6 p.m.

The startup costs for a new dental practice are significant, with an average investment of more than \$300,000. In addition, most dentists graduate from dental school today with more than \$120,000 in educational debt. The Iowa Area Development Group and Eastern Iowa Light & Power also provided Dr. Hamilton with a \$165,000 USDA zero-interest loan to assist with her practice startup costs.

“This award is a great demonstration of the collaborative efforts between the Community Health Care of Wapello, USDA Rural Development, Eastern Iowa Light & Power and the FIND project stakeholders,” said Bill Menner, USDA rural development state director in Iowa. “We are proud to support the efforts of the FIND program to bring needed dental care, while enhancing the economic growth of Wapello and Louisa County.”

To be eligible for the Loan Repayment Program, award 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. Fifty-five of Iowa’s 99 counties are designated as dentist shortage areas for the Loan Repayment Program. The Loan Repayment Program is a component of Delta Dental of Iowa’s Public Benefit program that invests in projects that improve the oral health of Iowans. For more information, visit www.iowafindproject.com.

FIND project partners include Delta Dental of Iowa, Iowa Area Development Group, Ripple Effect, University of Northern Iowa Institute of Decision Making, Iowa Department of Public Health Oral Health Bureau 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. As a not-for-profit, Delta Dental of Iowa invests in oral health projects through the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation that focus on access to care, prevention, education and research. Delta Dental of Iowa is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental member companies. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation, providing coverage to more than 54 million people in nearly 93,600 employer groups.

###