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INSTITUTE FOR RURAL HEALTH RECEIVES GRANT FROM DELTA DENTAL OF KENTUCKY

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – The Institute for Rural Health, part of WKU’s College of Health and Human Services, has received a \$20,000 grant from Delta Dental of Kentucky’s philanthropic initiative, Making Smiles Happen.

In 2016, Delta Dental of Kentucky, along with several key partners, conducted the [Making Smiles Happen: 2016 Oral Health Study of Kentucky’s Youth](#)—the first oral health surveillance study of Kentucky children since 2001. This comprehensive study found that despite some progress, many children suffer from poor oral health, including untreated cavities and dental disease. It is Dental Dental of Kentucky’s mission to improve the oral health of Kentuckians, especially children.

The Institute for Rural Health was established in 2001 to identify and address rural health and human services needs through the utilization of two mobile units, the Mobile Dental Unit and the Mobile Health Unit. The underserved patient population targeted by these Units consists of those with limited access to dental and medical care in geographic areas that suffer from a shortage of health professionals.

The \$20,000 grant will be used to purchase materials and supplies for two programs offered by the Mobile Dental Unit. The Preventive Program consists of a sealant program for elementary and middle school children, a fluoride varnish program for Head Start children, and a prenatal dental program. The Comprehensive Program offers limited definitive treatments that include restorations and extractions.

Over the last five years, the Mobile Dental Unit has provided more than 12,000 total procedures in underserved communities in western Kentucky. In the course of

providing services to Kentuckians in more than 20 counties across the Commonwealth, the Institute's dental outreach initiatives utilize students in various majors, including dental hygiene, public health and social work. This involvement allows students in health-related fields to see first hand the dire dental needs in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and gain a heart of service through clinical and/or health education experiences.

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