



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Iowa children need to see dentist by age 1

Delta Dental's new 'Dentist by 1' campaign website provides resources for Iowans

JOHNSTON, Iowa (May 8, 2012) – Only eight percent of Iowa children see their family dentist by age 1.¹ That's a staggering fact when it's recommended that children should go to the dentist within six months of getting their first tooth – and no later than their first birthday.²

“Tooth decay is nearly 100 percent preventable. But to help prevent cavities, it's important to begin good oral health habits, like visiting the dentist, when children are very young,” said Dr. Ed Schooley, dental director for Delta Dental of Iowa and Foundation board member.

By visiting the dentist by age 1, the child and parent establish a relationship with a dentist, which can help set a foundation for good dental health care and habits. Studies show that early preventive dental care like check-ups and cleanings can not only save in future dental treatment costs, but also alleviate the pain and suffering that can result from untreated oral health issues.

Through the 2012 “Dentist by 1” public service campaign, the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation hopes to educate Iowa parents about the benefits of taking their children to the dentist by age 1. A new campaign website www.DentistBy1.com provides more information about the importance of visiting the dentist from a young age and how to care for young children's teeth.

“The ‘Dentist by 1’ campaign aligns with the Foundation's new strategic goal of every Iowa child age 0-12 being cavity-free by 2020,” said Donn Hutchins, president and CEO of Delta Dental of Iowa and Foundation president. “Data from Delta Dental shows that despite having dental benefits, on average Iowa children are not having their first dental exam until after age 3, which is two years too late.”

As part of the campaign, the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation is providing educational materials to Iowa hospitals, clinics, pediatricians and OB-GYN offices. The Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation's "Dentist by 1" campaign is supported by the Iowa Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, Iowa Department of Public Health and University of Iowa College of Dentistry.

Preparing Your Child For the First Visit

Going to the dentist for the first time can be a little scary for kids. Delta Dental of Iowa offers these tips to help prepare your child for his or her first dental visit:

- **Play dentist.** Take turns pretending to be the patient and the dentist with your child. If he or she has a favorite stuffed animal or doll, pretend to take it to the dentist. Let your child take the toy along to the appointment for extra security.
- **Visit the dentist before the appointment.** Stop by your child's dentist's office and let him or her meet the dental staff and check out the waiting room. This way, it will feel a little more familiar when it is appointment time.
- **Talk about teeth.** Share as much as you can about healthy teeth, so your child understands the importance of good oral health. Explain words they may hear at the dentist's office, including cavities, fluoride, gums and X-ray.

For more information on the importance of visiting the dentist by age 1 and tips on establishing good oral health habits for a lifetime of healthy smiles, visit www.DentistBy1.com.

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 54 million people in more than 93,600 employer groups.

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¹Delta Dental of Iowa 2010 Claims Data.

²American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Dental Association.