

Delta Dental donates \$1 million to SIU School of Dental Medicine

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ALTON - The [Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation](#) has given \$1 million to the Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) to annually serve hundreds of additional southern Illinois children.

“Delta Dental of Illinois and Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation believe every Illinois child deserves a healthy smile and good oral health,” said Bernie Glossy, president and

chief executive officer of Delta Dental of Illinois and Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation. “Oral health is integral to overall health, and it’s staggering how many children in Illinois have untreated tooth decay, especially when you consider it’s largely preventable.”

The goal is to significantly decrease the wait time for patient treatment by creating state-of-the-art ambulatory centers focused on children’s oral health needs. The centers will feature procedure rooms specifically designed for children with innovative equipment such as cone beam CT, a special kind of X-ray, and new sedation suites.

“This gift will enable us to treat some of the most vulnerable patients in our state,” said SIU SDM Dean Bruce Rotter, DMD. “The support of Delta Dental of Illinois and Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation will help us more effectively manage the treatment of the hundreds of patients seen through the Special Needs Dental Care Program each year. With the new ambulatory center and this new ability to administer general anesthesia to treat pediatric patients with complex dental care needs, we will be able to significantly expand our overall capacity and provide better care to these children.”

According to the recent statewide oral health assessment report “Oral Health in Illinois,” poor oral health is one of the most pressing, unmet health care issues facing Illinois children today. The report found that one-third of Illinois children in rural areas have untreated tooth decay, and that Illinois children living in poverty are five times more likely to have fair or poor oral health.

[The SIU School of Dental Medicine](#) students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.