

Oral Health Task Force Receives Funding to Continue Care Mission

August 9, 2019 – The Oral Health Task Force (OHTF), a program of the North Shore Health Care Foundation (NSHCF), has recently secured four grants to continue its mission to provide greater access to and address gaps in oral health care for the children of Cook County and the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The Task Force received funding from:

- The Cook County Community Fund - \$3,000
- Arrowhead Electric Cooperative - \$5,000
- MN Department of Health – Healthy Baby. Healthy Teeth Mini-grant \$3,000
- Northland Foundation - \$10,000

“We’re pleased to have been successful in our applications to secure this grant funding and are grateful to these organizations for recognizing the critical need for children’s oral health care,” said Paul Nelson, OHTF Chair and NSHCF Board Member. “The Oral Health Task Force has been able to help over 800 children and youth and pregnant moms with dental care locally because of the collaborative way we are addressing oral health here in Cook County.”

Having healthy teeth is an integral part of children's overall health and well-being. Early preventive care such as screenings and sealants can keep teeth healthy and reduce the need for expensive restorative care later. Although tooth decay is almost completely preventable, it is the most common childhood disease. Studies show links between ear and sinus infections, weakened immune systems, diabetes and other serious illnesses. Lack of dental care can affect children's speech, nutrition, growth and development. Over 51 million school hours are lost each year due to dental-related illness.

The funding received will help the OHTF complete annual screenings through all local schools and other organizations, and will help support a generous sliding fee scale program to cover children prenatal to 26 years of age with other dental care needs not covered by other programs. The OHTF employs an Oral Health Educator/Hygienist and works with Grand Marais Family Dentistry and the Sawtooth Mountain Clinic for care provision.

About the Task Force

The Oral Health Task Force works to provide dental care to the children of Cook County and the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. We educate the community on the importance of early preventative care and promote financial assistance that makes dental care more affordable. In addition to leadership from the North Shore Health Care Foundation, the Task Force includes representation from:

- Sawtooth Mountain Clinic
- Local schools and school nurses,
- Grand Marais Family Dentistry,
- Cook County Public Health & Human Services, and
- the Grand Portage Health Service.

More information about the OHTF is available at NorthShoreHealthCareFoundation.org or by calling 218-387- 2334.

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Contact: Valerie Marasco Eliassen, Executive Director – North Shore Health Care Foundation, 218-387-9076, cell: 218-387-5700 or nshcf@boreal.org