



Connie Beck, Director
Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

news release

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More dental professionals in Humboldt County to accept Denti-Cal

Six local Registered Dental Hygienists will soon be able to provide additional dental services to young children who have Denti-Cal, dental insurance under the Medi-Cal program. This will improve access to oral health care for income-eligible children and is part of the nearly \$4 million Local Dental Pilot Project grant awarded to the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) in 2017.

Scholarships funded through the grant will give six hygienists already working in Humboldt County the opportunity to complete a four-month training program to expand their services as Registered Dental Hygienists in Alternative Practice (RDHAP).

Connie Stewart, executive director of the California Center for Rural Policy at Humboldt State University, said training additional RDHAPs will help address the limited number of dental health providers who accept Denti-Cal in the county. "By investing in local dental hygienists, we invest in professional development of people committed to working in our community," she said.

The Redwood Community Action Agency will administer the scholarships over the next three years. "It's exciting to see an expanded network of professionals who are dedicated to improving oral health for some of our community's most vulnerable people," said Lorey Keele, community services director for the agency.

Laura McEwen, program services coordinator for DHHS's oral health programs agrees, "RDHAPs can provide enhanced dental services to children most in need. This increase in providers will be an incredible benefit to children in our county."

Darla Dale, who has operated as a Registered Dental Hygienist in Alternative Practice in Eureka for more than 13 years, said preventive services are important to maintaining good oral health. "Certainly RDHAPs can clean teeth, but they can do so much more to keep smiles healthy," she said,

adding that RDHAPs can take X-rays and apply treatments that help stop cavities. "Most importantly, RDHAPs teach children and their parents how to take care of their teeth to prevent cavities in the future."

For more information, call DHHS Public Health at 707-268-2172.

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