

The Minnesota Dental Foundation (MDF) offers financial support and in-kind services for outreach programs that meet the mission of the MDF by providing dental services to underserved populations, by promoting dental health initiatives, or by supporting dental profession career and volunteer opportunities. The focus is on providing resources that will make lasting improvements in the oral health of Minnesotans and enhance the dental profession in the state.

Each year the MDF Board of Directors reviews applications for grants that fit these criteria. Support for programs and oral health initiatives may change each year based upon issues facing the dental profession, but the core principle of benefiting the underserved remains constant. Since 2001, through December 31, 2023, the Foundation has awarded \$4,108,806 in grants and/or in-kind services to fund 752 oral health initiatives. In addition, \$2,000,000 has been dispersed by the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation in the collaborative project to help access dental care in rural HPSAs. And collaborative projects with DentaQuest are valued at \$7,500. Thus, a total of \$6,116,306 has been allocated to help the underserved access dental care.

2023 Recipients

In 2023, MDF gave a total of \$301,221 in cash to 36 projects. Some of the recipients may have received assistance for more than one project. Of those dollars, funding was provided for four internal programs – Give Kids a Smile Marketing, Donated Dental Services, Martha Mordini Rukavina Loan Forgiveness Program and the Retired Dentist Program, at a total cost of \$228,574. All of the funded programs help increase access to care for underserved populations or help to build a sustainable oral health workforce in Minnesota.

Give Kids a Smile

The following community clinics received funding for the two-day charitable program in February that provides free preventive and restorative dental care to children from low-income families. Grant monies help defray the costs for dental supplies and oral health education materials for the children seen at these non-profit clinics. In 2023, 1,316 children were seen in 66 community clinics and private dental offices. The value of the services provided was \$846,743 by 1,027 volunteers, which included 149 dentists.

- CentraCare Dental Clinic, Willmar
- Central Lakes College, Brainerd
- CHI St. Joseph's Community Dental, Park Rapids
- Children's Dental Services, Minneapolis
- Community Dental Care, Buffalo
- Community Dental Care, Maplewood
- Community Dental Care, Robbinsdale
- Community Dental Care, Rochester
- Community Dental Care, St. Paul
- Lake Superior College Dental Hygiene Clinic, Duluth
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- University of Minnesota GKAS, Minneapolis

Community Outreach

A number of community-based clinics and outreach programs provide critical dental services to children and adults who otherwise would not have access to oral health care.

- CARE Clinic, Red Wing
- CHI St. Joseph's Health, Park Rapids
- Children's Dental Health Services, Rochester
- Community Dental Care, Buffalo
- Gillette Children's Hospital Foundation, Saint Paul

- Greater Minneapolis Crisis Nursery, Minneapolis
- Hope Dental Clinic, Saint Paul
- Let's Smile, Inc., Owatonna
- Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Mission Outpost Dental Clinic, Burnsville
- Mobile Loaves Twin Cities, Minneapolis
- Northern Dental Access Center, Bemidji
- Northern Dental Access Center, Halstad
- Ready, Set, Smile PA, Minneapolis
- The Salvation Army's Good Samaritan Dental Clinic, Rochester
- United Family Medicine, Saint Paul

Allied Dental Education Programs

The following organization in Minnesota received a grant to help with resources to assist with educating dental auxiliaries while providing care to the underserved.

- Central Lakes College, Brainerd

Internal Programs

The following programs of the Minnesota Dental Foundation provided care to the underserved.

Donated Dental Services (DDS), a program of Dental Lifeline Network, provided free dental care to disabled, elderly and medically fragile patients in private dental offices. In the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023, 208 patients received \$1,003,105 in comprehensive care by 407 dental volunteers and 87 laboratories at a cost of \$90,000 to administer the program. This program is funded by a grant from the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation. Since the program's inception in 2003, 2,669 patients have received \$16,198,555 in free dental services. Again, COVID-19 had a significant affect on this program.

The **Martha Mordini Rukavina Loan Forgiveness Program** is funded by the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board (IRRRB) to help dentists pay back educational loans if they are willing to practice in the Taconite Assistance Area of northeastern Minnesota for at least five years. This program started in 2009 and became a program of the Minnesota Dental Foundation in 2011. Since 2011, three dentists have completed the five-year requirements of the program and four dentists are still receiving financial assistance. Funds are available for more applicants.

The **Minnesota Mission of Mercy (MnMOM)** has had events in Mankato (2012), Bemidji (2013), Mankato again (2014), Duluth (2015), Moorhead (2016), Minneapolis (2018) and St. Cloud (2022). In the seven events since the inception of the program in Minnesota, 50,850 free dental procedures valued at \$6.77 million in 10,400 patient encounters have been provided. The next event will be in 2024 in Duluth.

The **Retired Dentist Program** is a project for retired dentists who are no longer earning any income from dentistry which reimburse them for their license, professional liability insurance, CPR and CE in return for providing volunteer dentistry to the underserved. Retired dentists must provide at least 100 hours per year and receive no compensation. As of December 31, 2023, there were seven retired dentists in the program. Total expenditures for the program in 2023 were \$3,002 and \$397,473 in free dentistry was provided. Since the inception of the program in 2014, 21 retired dentists have participated and have provided \$3,320,756 in free dentistry.

The **Minnesota's Heroes Orthodontic Program** was initiated in 2015 to provide needed orthodontic care to children and spouses in Gold Star Families (families who have lost a family member in service to our country since 9/11). This program is in collaboration with Smiles

Change Lives and the Minnesota Association of Orthodontists. Five kids have been treated through this program. The orthodontists provide the treatment for free and there have been no direct costs for this program.

The **Dedicated to Minnesota Dentists Loan Repayment for Service Program** provides loan repayment up to \$200,000 per individual if they practice in a rural Health Professional Shortage Area (HPSA) for at least five years. This program is in collaboration with the Delta Dental of Minnesota Foundation and it provides the funding of the program. A total of ten dentists and \$2 million now have been utilized to provide dental services in rural HPSAs of Minnesota. The cities include Bigfork, Cook, Deerwood, Ely, International Falls, Montevideo, Mora, Tyler, Walker and Warroad. Funding is no longer available for this program.

The **Give Kids a Smile** program became a program of the Minnesota Dental Association in 2003 and was transferred to the Minnesota Dental Foundation in 2016. 3M Oral Care, the Minnesota Dental Association, the Minnesota Dental Foundation and several individual donors contributed funds for the media exposure and program management. Data for 2023 is noted above. Since the program's inception in Minnesota, over 84,000 children have received \$26.4 million worth of free dentistry.