



Press Release

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**Mary's Center and Howard University School of Dentistry Commemorate First Year Partnership
Providing Oral Health to Older Adults**

Funded by Delta Dental Community Care, the Partnership has Provided Dental Care
to 900 DC Residents Over the Age of 60

Washington, DC — Today, Mary's Center and the Howard University School of Dentistry commemorated the first anniversary of a joint oral health program for older adults in the District of Columbia. The partnership, funded by the Delta Dental Community Care was established to address the urgent need for oral health services to improve the overall health and wellness of the elderly community. The grant also provides funds for new state-of-the-art equipment and renovations to increase both organizations' capacity to offer high-quality, equitable care.

Oral health directly affects every individual's overall health and quality of life, and dental services are a core component of Mary's Center's holistic, multipronged approach to care. By providing access to essential dental care to an under-resourced, older adult population that is often medically complex or at elevated risk for complications, Mary's Center improves the health of the community and reduces emergency room visits.

Roughly 13% of Washington, D.C. residents are 65 years and older and during the first anniversary of the partnership, both Mary's Center and the School of Dentistry at Howard University have been able to provide dentures, cleanings, preventative care, and oral surgery at discounted rates or free of cost to elderly residents. Since the launch of the inaugural Senior Oral Health Coalition in Washington, D.C. last year, Mary's Center and Howard University College of Dentistry have collectively provided 900 older adults with affordable, high-quality oral health care services and managed more than 4,250 dental treatment encounters, including 532 restorative procedures and 207 oral surgeries, and provided 133 sets of prosthodontics.

"The dedication and hard work of our partners have already had a profound and positive impact on the lives and health of many underserved older adults in the Washington, DC metro area," said Kenzie Ferguson, vice president of foundation and corporate social responsibility for Delta Dental of California.

For decades, Mary's Center and Howard University College of Dentistry have been providing much-needed oral services to Black and Brown low-income communities, most of which lack health insurance

and economic stability. Through this partnership, both organizations have been able to expand their reach to communities with the largest rates of oral health issues.

"We are extremely thankful for this partnership that has allowed us to provide dental care to our elderly community who often neglects their oral health due to the rising costs," says Dr. Richard Gesker, Executive Vice President of Dental Services at Mary's Center. "This financial support from the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation and the shared experience in oral health with Howard University, have greatly improved access to care for older adults in our nation's capital."

"This unique partnership has provided such an amazing opportunity for our growing senior population, many of whom struggle to find affordable high-quality dental and oral health care," says Dr. Candace Mitchell, Associate Dean for Clinical Affairs & Clinical Associate Professor at Howard University College of Dentistry. "In addition, the exposure of our students to this special population will help develop a future workforce who will be educated and skilled in the care of our seniors."

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About Mary's Center

[Mary's Center](http://www.maryscenter.org) is a community health center serving over 65,000 people of all ages, incomes, and backgrounds in the Washington, DC metro area for 35 years. With an integrated model of health care, education, and social services, Mary's Center offers each participant individualized care on the path toward good health, stability, and economic independence. For more information, visit www.maryscenter.org.

About Delta Dental Community Care Foundation

[The Delta Dental Community Care Foundation](https://www1.deltadentalins.com/foundation.html) is the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of California and its affiliated companies including Delta Dental Insurance Company, Delta Dental of Pennsylvania, and Delta Dental of New York, Inc. Since 2011, the Community Care Foundation has awarded more than \$100 million in funding and support to increase access to quality dental care, oral health education, and to advance scientific research across the company's 15-state service area and the District of Columbia. For more information about the Delta Dental Community Care Foundation, please visit <https://www1.deltadentalins.com/foundation.html>

About Howard University College of Dentistry

[The College of Dentistry at Howard University](https://dentistry.howard.edu/) was established in 1881. It is the fifth-oldest dental school in the United States. As a teaching and patient care institution, the College has trained thousands of highly skilled dental professionals to serve their communities, particularly the underserved. <https://dentistry.howard.edu/>