

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
May 14, 2020

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**CAROLINA FELLOWS FAMILY DENTISTRY dba GRANVILLE VANCE DISTRICT HEALTH DEPARTMENT
RECEIVES FUNDING TO EXPAND DENTAL SERVICES IN LOCAL SCHOOLS**

Grant expands dental care in rural and underserved schools

[Oxford, NC] – A \$400,000 grant to **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry** aims to expand dental care in rural and underserved schools in Granville and Vance Counties. **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry** is one of eleven organizations—including health departments, safety-net providers, and non-profit organizations—to receive grants from The Duke Endowment.

The grant enables **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry** to launch school-based programs that prioritize preventive services (such as regular cleanings) and address certain restorative treatments (including fillings) for school-aged children. This grant follows an initial \$65,000, six-month planning grant previously awarded to **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry**.

School-aged children are disproportionately affected by poor oral health, and tooth decay is the most common chronic disease among children. Oral health problems and pain affect performance at school and are the top reason for school absences in low-resourced communities. Research finds that dental pain has a similar, if not greater, impact on children’s quality of life than acute asthma. Poor oral health in children is associated with increased shyness, feelings of worthlessness, unhappiness, and reduced friendliness.

“Dental disease is 100% preventable when consistent measures are taken to ensure that children have access to oral health care,” said Lisa Macon Harrison, Health Director. “We know that programs based in schools are effective but have not been widely replicated in our region because of the need for a regular dental care facility that can provide follow up for patients who need more involved care. Bringing school-based programs to Vance and Granville Counties will provide students with needed dental care in safe, convenient, and accessible locations, and will also allow for local follow-up from Dentists who see patients regardless of insurance status.”

Addressing the access gap is critical in North and South Carolina, where over 4.1 million Carolinians live in a designated dental professional shortage area. Children are particularly affected by the states’ oral health disparities. Dental problems and pain impact performance at school and contribute to absenteeism. Research finds that dental pain has a similar, if not greater, impact on children’s quality of life than acute asthma.

This grant will allow **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry** to provide a much-needed service to the area. Our program will be different than private school-based oral health programs and a better option for Granville and Vance County schools and students. Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry is invested in the community and staff are from the community. We accept all insurances including Medicaid and private insurances, as well as offer a sliding fee scale for students who do not have dental insurance. We will not only provide oral health services to the students within the school environment, we will also provide oral health education at the dentist visits as well as in the classrooms. Most importantly, we will be around for the students and families at our physical site in Oxford, NC, during summer months and any

other time they need us for continuity of care. Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry will also provide case management to assure students complete treatment plans whether at the school-based clinic or in our brick and mortar site...something the students will not get from the larger, traveling, private school-based oral health companies.

In addition to implementing this school based oral health program, **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry** has a fixed clinic which is located at 115 Hilltop Village, Oxford, NC. **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry** provides services such as cleaning, x-rays, fluoride treatment and sealants, fillings, extractions, dentures, and root canals for **ALL** patients, regardless of insurance. We accept Medicaid for children and adults, most private insurances, and have a sliding scale based on household size and income for the uninsured.

“School-based programs are designed to remove barriers by meeting children where they spend much of their days and to help ensure they are healthy, pain-free, and ready to learn,” said Stacy Warren, program officer for health care at The Duke Endowment. “We are proud to support **Carolina Fellows Family Dentistry** in expanding dental care for children living in rural and underserved areas with few or no treatment options.”

The grants are part of a multi-year initiative to address oral health in the state, with an early focus on school-aged children. To learn more about the School-based Oral Health Expansion Program, please visit <https://dukeendowment.org/our-work/supporting-oral-health>.

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<https://gvph.org/services/dental/>

The Duke Endowment

Based in Charlotte and established in 1924 by industrialist and philanthropist James B. Duke, The Duke Endowment is a private foundation that strengthens communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits. Since its founding, it has distributed more than \$4 billion in grants. The Endowment shares a name with Duke University and Duke Energy, but all are separate organizations.