



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH RECEIVES DENTAL GRANT TO BENEFIT FRANKLIN COUNTY**

*-Franklin County Health Department to begin first-ever Dental Program-*

**TALLAHASSEE** – Franklin County Health Department (FCHD) today announced that it will begin providing dental services to residents. Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation of Florida awarded FCHD an IMPACT grant with \$100,000 for three years to help address the growing oral health disparities in the community. The funds will be used to cover a variety of dental services in their newly equipped two chair dental clinic in Carrabelle and their two chair clinic in the centralized school in Eastpoint. Oral health services will be provided to children and adolescents from low-income families as well as Medicaid eligible children, adolescents and adults. Basic preventative and emergency dental services for low income adults will also be available.

“We are grateful for this generous funding from the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation that will enable us to provide an array of dental services in Franklin County,” said Interim Administrator of Franklin County Health Department Marsha Player Lindeman. “This is much-needed funding to support our efforts to provide dental care across the community.

The FCHD will be the only Medicaid provider of dental services in the county. The Dental program will consist of two components including a fixed land clinic and a school based dental sealant program. The clinic capacity will be a minimum of 1,500 patient visits per year served by a team of dental providers consisting of a full time dentist, a dental hygienist, two dental assistants, and a financial eligibility specialist. Services offered will include: examinations, prophylaxis, topical fluoride treatments, dental sealants, oral hygiene instruction, restorative care, limited surgical care, emergency care and referrals.

“We are enthusiastic that the Blue Foundation has chosen to grant our community funds to benefit the underserved dental needs of the children of Franklin County,” said Dental Director Dr. Renee Parrish. “These funds will provide numerous services for healthy children’s smiles.”

The FCHD School Based Dental Sealant Program will consist of a two-chair fixed operatory within the Franklin County Consolidated K-12 School (FCS) located in Eastpoint. The project will be offered to 100 percent of children enrolled in first through third grade utilizing a team of dental providers consisting of a part-time dentist and a dental hygienist. The expectation will be that 250 students will receive services. School based program services will be offered daily based on the approved school calendar. Services provided will include: examinations, prophylaxis, topical fluoride treatments, dental sealants, oral hygiene instruction, follow-up and referrals.

The purpose of the Blue Foundation's Improving Access to Health Care (IMPACT) Grant Program is to increase access to quality, health-related services for Floridians, especially those who are uninsured and/or underserved. For more information please contact the Franklin County Health Department at 850-653-2111.

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