



# Prepare to Care

## ... Mouth Care Matters ...

Oral Health Education for Direct Care Professionals

## A Pilot With Promise

*"Through the collective work of the Lifelong Smiles Coalition, more aging Iowans will have access to dental care that can help improve their overall health. The Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation is proud to be a funder and active member of the Coalition."*  
– **Suzanne Heckenlaible**, Executive Director, Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation

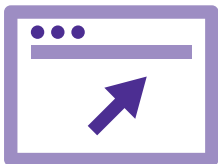
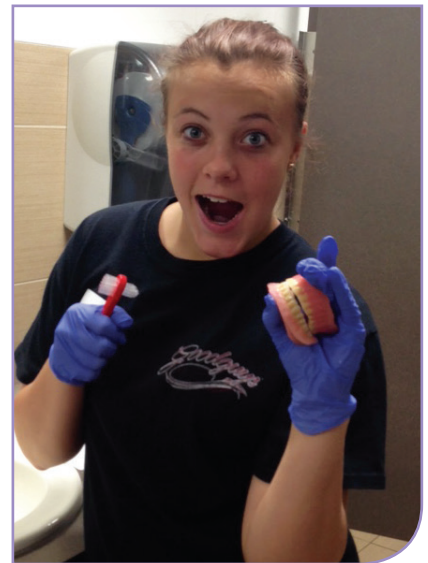
**MOUTH CARE MATTERS AN INITIATIVE OF** the Lifelong Smiles Coalition is one of three major initiatives supported by the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation. The Coalition's common goal is to assure optimal oral health for aging Iowans. Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, Iowa Department of Public Health through a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Cooperative Agreement (#DP13-1307) Contract (#5886NW02), Des Moines Area Community Colleges, University of Iowa College of Dentistry, and others have provided additional support for the project. The other two initiatives are I-Smile Silver and the Office of Education and Training within the College of Dentistry, University of Iowa.

**PROJECT GOALS:** Develop and test a competency-based Oral Health Specialty Training for direct care professionals that would be recognized as the first specialty under the State's Prepare to Care program; and increase access to and improved quality of the oral health care of older Iowans who are homebound or live in a nursing home.

The State's Prepare to Care Program, administered by the Iowa Department of Public Health is a competency-based training program for those who provide direct care and support to Iowans of all ages and abilities in various settings.



**LIFELONG SMILES**  
Oral Health Access for Aging Iowans



**For more information, please visit:**  
<https://directcare.training-source.org>  
<http://www.iowapreparetocare.com>

Graduates of the program receive a state-issued certificate that is portable across care and support settings and regardless the needs of the individuals served.



## Partners in Development and Teaching

### Dr. Anita Stineman

*University of Iowa College of Nursing*

"Involving content experts in the development of the curriculum ensures that the information included 'best practices' and is essential and relevant to the role of the Direct Care Professionals (DCPs) in providing the proper level of support for completion of oral health. Providing qualified instructors with the tools to effectively engage students and manage a safe learning environment is critical to retention and application of the content for the DCPs as they work to improve the quality of life for older adults." — *Dr. Anita Stineman*



*Dr. Stineman and Dr. Cowen shared their expertise in the development of the training competencies, the curriculum, and in co-teaching the Mouth Care Matters instructor class.*

### Dr. Howard Cowen

*University of Iowa College of Dentistry Office of Education and Training*

When asked what the single most important thing for direct care professionals to know, Dr. Cowen said, "Oral health has a significant effect on one's overall health."

— *Dr. Howard Cowen*



## DEFINITION OF DIRECT CARE PROFESSIONAL

*Direct Care Professional (DCP) is an umbrella name for one of the largest sectors of Iowa's workforce. Direct care professionals are defined as individuals who provide supportive services and care to people experiencing health conditions, illnesses, or disabilities and receive compensation for such services. They may work in home-based, community-based, or facility settings. They may have job titles such as direct support professional, supported community living worker, home health aide, direct care worker, and universal worker. The umbrella term also includes other jobs titles like hospice aide, personal assistant, certified nursing assistant, and patient care technician.*

## Developed a Competency-based Oral Health Specialty Curriculum for Those Who Provide Direct Care

*Pictured on the right: Mouth Care Matters curriculum committee*



## 23 Dental Hygienists Graduate as Mouth Care Matters' Instructors – Exceeding the Goal of 15

Dental hygienists completed a state approved application process to be accepted into the class which was taught by Dr. Howard Cowen and Dr. Anita Stineman, University of Iowa Colleges of Dentistry and Nursing respectively.

**100% were satisfied with training.**



**Prepare to Care**  
... Mouth Care Matters ...

Oral Health Education for Direct Care Professionals

# 64 Direct Care Professionals Graduate From Mouth Care Matters Program

Six two-day classes were held at four Des Moines Area Community College Campuses in Ankeny, Boone, Carroll, and Newton. For all of the photos, visit: <http://bit.ly/1SP9JXe>



Preliminary findings of the pre-post tests collected from direct care workers completing the oral health specialty training reveal:

- For items answered correctly by at least 70%, there were twice as many on the test following training compared to the test before training.
- There was a gain in knowledge as a direct result of the training.

**95%** want to take additional Prepare to Care classes.

**98%** of those who graduated from the Mouth Care Matters class were very satisfied or satisfied.

**"I think everyone needs to take the training; it shouldn't be an option."**

**"I put a poster of the ugly pictures in the break room and posted a note saying: 'make sure it gets done!' I got some comments from co-workers saying they were surprised about what bad oral health can do."**

*– Direct Care Worker Focus Group Participants*

## Employers Value Mouth Care Matters

Direct care professionals from sixteen different employers graduated from the Mouth Care Matters class. All sixteen employers participated in a phone interview after staff completed the training.

**94% or (15 of 16 employers) said they were interested in sending more staff to the Mouth Care Matters class.**

**"We would like to have more staff trained in oral care to increase the quality of oral care being provided."**

**"Staff have been thrilled with the opportunity to attend (the training) and about how much they learned, especially how important good oral health is to overall health. With this increased knowledge they are placing more emphasis on oral care."**

*Special Thanks to WesleyLife and Madrid Home for their involvement as Mouth Care Matters project case study sites.*





## Evaluation Yields Promising Results

Evaluation by the National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice.

## Sustainability

Strategies for sustainability are being explored with various stakeholders including community colleges, employers, Lifelong Smiles Coalition members, the Direct Care Workforce Initiative, and others. Institutionalizing the training program into the community colleges that have embraced the Prepare to Care program may be a cost effective way to advance and sustain the programs, as well as integration into the I-Smile Silver and other programs.

## Resources & Links:

**Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation** <https://www.deltadentalia.com/foundation/>

**Lifelong Smiles Coalition** [lifelongsmilescoalition@gmail.com](mailto:lifelongsmilescoalition@gmail.com)

**Prepare to Care** <https://directcare.training-source.org/>  
<http://www.iowapreparetocare.com/>

**Mouth Care Matters** <http://www.iowacaregivers.org/education/prepare-to-care.php> and <http://bit.ly/1oyx9TT>

**I-Smile Silver** <http://lifelongsmilescoalition.com/downloads/ISmileSilver.pdf>

**University of Iowa College of Dentistry Office of Education and Training**  
<http://bit.ly/1KFVfGw>

**For more information** on oral health for older adults:  
<http://www.toothwisdom.org/care/state/iowa>

*"There is growing evidence of the importance of oral health in caring for older adults in the health and long term care and service settings. Poor oral health has been associated with systemic diseases including pneumonia and respiratory infections.*

*The current evaluation found significant gains in knowledge about oral health among direct care workers trained through the Mouth Care Matters project. The evaluation also underscores the need, not only to continue to evaluate the effects of training for direct care workers, but also to evaluate how the results of training translate into practices in the workplace, especially long term care facilities and home health."*

— **Brad Richardson, Ph.D.**,  
Research Director, National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice,  
University of Iowa School of Social Work, Principal Investigator for Mouth Care Matters Project

*"We look forward to marshaling the Coalition's resources toward the common goal of ensuring optimal access to oral health care for every Iowa nursing home resident and homebound elderly person"*

— **Mary Jane Carothers**, Vice President, Quality Improvement & Clinical Affairs

## LifeLong Smiles Coalition Member Organizations

Iowa CareGivers  
Iowa Public Health Association  
Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation  
Iowa Health Care Association  
Iowa Department on Aging  
Iowa Dental Hygienists' Association  
Des Moines Health Center  
Iowa Healthcare Collaborative  
Iowa Primary Care Association/Safety Net Collaborative

The University of Iowa College of Dentistry and Dental Clinics  
LeadingAge Iowa  
Iowa Department of Public Health  
Iowa Medicaid Enterprise  
Iowa Association of Area Agencies on Aging  
Mid Iowa Community Action, Inc.  
The University of Iowa College of Nursing  
Visiting Nurse Services of Iowa  
Principal Financial Group

 **DELTA DENTAL**



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