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### **Duke Endowment Funds Statewide Brushing Is Fun, Brush by Age One Program**

(RALEIGH, NC) A new program funded by The Duke Endowment will save the smiles of young children by promoting simple, evidence-based messaging about brushing the teeth of infants and toddlers. Collaboration of partners supporting children's oral health makes this exciting project a reality!

The \$336,500 award from The Duke Endowment, an organization that works to help people and strengthen communities in North Carolina and South Carolina by nurturing children, promoting health, educating minds and enriching spirits since 1924, will fund four years of "Brushing Is Fun, Start By Age One," a statewide effort designed to create profound oral health behavior change in parents and childcare providers. The cornerstone of the education campaign is clear, simple guidelines and protocols about brushing infants' and toddlers' teeth with a smear of fluoride toothpaste, a proven measure to prevent early childhood caries (ECC). ECC disproportionately affects poor and minority children, making eating, sleeping, talking, learning and even smiling difficult. Decayed teeth are often painful, and children in pain, along with their families, suffer from a poorer quality of life.

This newly funded program seeks to preempt costly dental treatment by preventing cavities as soon as the teeth erupt using the most effective tool available: fluoride. The program will develop and distribute definitive toothbrushing resources and guidelines including training videos and phone apps to key constituents across North Carolina in a wide variety of fields engaged in children's health and well-being: parents, childcare educators, caregivers, health consultants, WIC staff, home visitors, medical professionals and others.

Grant collaborators include the NC Oral Health Section (OHS) of the NC Division of Public Health, UNC Schools of Dentistry and Public Health, and Melanie Raskin, MMR, writer and producer, and the NC Foundation for Health Leadership and Innovation (formerly the NC Foundation for Advanced Health Programs), an organization that develops and supports innovative programs that advance affordable and sustainable quality health services to improve the health for the people of North Carolina.

For details about this program and the grant award, contact Kelly Close, NC Oral Health Section, Division of Public Health, [Kelly.Close@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Kelly.Close@dhhs.nc.gov)

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