

News Release

For Immediate Release

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PIERRE, SD (April 17, 2007) -- The first annual Great Smiles Awards, sponsored by Delta Dental of South Dakota, were presented Friday, April 13 to three individuals for their work in improving oral health in South Dakota. The awards ceremony was held during the South Dakota Oral Health Coalition Summit in Sioux Falls.

“We feel it’s important to recognize and honor the professional and personal contributions of these three individuals who are creating Great Smiles across the state of South Dakota,” said Scott Jones, President and CEO of Delta Dental of South Dakota. “Each of the awardees has gone above and beyond in their efforts to both prevent oral diseases and to increase access to dental care in the state.”

The award winners included:

Nicole Glines, RDH, a dental hygienist from Pine Ridge, was the winner of the Great Smiles Community Promoter of the Year award for establishing a coalition of health providers to address the oral health needs of the people of the Oglala Sioux Tribe.

The Great Smiles Health Educator of the Year award went to **Mendy Herke**, Madison, a Health Specialist for the Inter-Lakes Community Action Partnership’s Pre-Birth to Five Head Start program, for her efforts to increase access to care and oral health education and prevention efforts in Inter-Lake’s 12-county service area.

Dr. Thane Crump, a pediatric dentist from Watertown, received the Great Smiles Medical/Dental Professional of the year award for his work with the area Head Start program in meeting with families to teach them about oral health, his involvement in the Partners for Prevention program, and his volunteer efforts with the Ronald McDonald® Care Mobile.

Delta Dental provided each of the Great Smiles winners with a custom-designed award and \$1,000 to direct to the oral health charity of his or her choice.

Delta Dental of South Dakota is an oral health company specializing in providing dental benefits programs to more than 1,500 employer groups throughout South Dakota. Through its supporting 501(c)(3) foundation, the Delta Dental Philanthropic Fund, the company supports a number of oral health causes as part of its not-for-profit mission to advance and promote the improvement of oral health in South Dakota.