

2025

COMMUNITY IMPACT REPORT



Dedicated to Improving Oral Health and Wellness for All New Mexicans



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Discover your best smile.

Investing in Smiles

Since 1971, Delta Dental of New Mexico (DDNM) has remained dedicated to improving oral health and overall wellness for all New Mexicans. Our long standing investments in access, education, workforce growth, whole health integration, and community based initiatives are all driven by a single goal: creating measurable, lasting improvements in awareness, access, and affordability for communities across our diverse state.

DDNM is proud to collaborate with organizations of every size and sector to advance community health. Through partnerships with local nonprofits, hospitals, health clinics, tribal and community associations, and schools statewide, we help bring essential preventive services, dental education, and treatment directly to where New Mexicans live, learn, work, and gather.

These relationships ensure that more families—regardless of geography, background, or income—have meaningful opportunities to achieve better oral health and overall well-being. By working hand in hand with community partners, we broaden our reach, deepen our impact, and help build a stronger, healthier New Mexico for all.



Providing essential oral health care to those who need it most.

Working together to ensure children facing barriers get the dental care they need.

Good oral health starts in childhood, setting the stage for long-term oral and overall health. But for many children in our state, the tools and services they need for a healthy smile remain out of reach, as financial, medical, and other barriers stand in their way.

To close these gaps, we work closely with the **University of New Mexico (UNM) Health System**, our state's only academic medical center, and the **UNM Children's Hospital (UNMCH)**, the only dedicated children's hospital in New Mexico. Together, we deliver necessary dental services to children facing the steepest barriers to care by meeting them exactly where they are.

UNMCH Early Intervention Dental Program

Albuquerque, NM



Since 2022, UNMCH and the Division of Dental Hygiene have partnered with DDNM to address a critical need: **improving pediatric oral health for children across the state.**

This model helps children, particularly those from low-income or medically complex backgrounds, receive care before minor issues become serious. As a result, children receive more consistent preventive care, earlier identification of oral health concerns, better coordination between medical and dental providers, and greater access to treatment for New Mexico families with limited resources.



Partnership highlights:

In 2025, the program provided access to education and dental services at the following UNMH locations:

- UNM Carrie Tingley Hospital
- UNM Children's Hospital Specialized Clinics
- UNM Children's Hospital Pediatric Hematology Department
- UNM Children's Hospital Pediatric Oncology Department
- UNM Young Children's Health Center

UNM Comprehensive School Based Clinics Program

Albuquerque, NM



This partnership helps us break the cycle of childhood oral disease which is the leading chronic condition among children.

DDNM funding enables us to provide cleanings, exams, fluoride treatments, sealants, and restorative care to children at three Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) Title 1 schools (East San Jose Elementary, Van Buren Middle School, and Highland High School).

The impact of this program is profound and far-reaching for Albuquerque school children in need.

*- Angela D. Cook RDH, MS
UNM Division of Dental Hygiene*



For more than 16 years, DDNM and UNM have partnered to reduce dental health disparities for students across Albuquerque Public Schools (APS) — from elementary school through middle school and high school. This long-standing initiative focuses on Title I schools, where students often face the greatest barriers to consistent oral health care. By meeting students where they are, the program ensures that younger children establish strong oral health habits, middle-school students receive continued support, and high-school students have access to preventive and restorative care as they transition toward adulthood.

Partnership highlights:

- Age-appropriate oral health education from elementary through high school at East San Jose Elementary, Van Buren Middle School, and Highland High School (APS Title 1 schools)
- On-site preventive care including screenings and fluoride varnish
- Engagement at school health fairs, classroom presentations, and family events
- Referrals and restorative treatment at UNM Medical Group's Dental Clinic and partner clinics
- Providing oral health education, access, and dental services at the UNM Children's Campus (daycare for UNM students)
- Currently looking to expand program to include APS school based health programs at Washington Middle School, Manzano High School, and Albuquerque High School

Partnering locally to deliver dental care to vulnerable individuals and families.

At DDNM, our mission goes beyond providing dental benefits. We are dedicated to strengthening the health, wellness, and quality of life of the people and communities we proudly serve. Every initiative we support is rooted in a simple belief: **when our communities thrive, we all thrive**. Delivering essential oral health care not only reduces the risk of tooth decay, the most common chronic disease among children, but also helps prevent minor issues from becoming more serious, painful, and costly health problems. This means better health outcomes for children and greater peace of mind for their families; more smiles all around.

The importance of oral health does not end in childhood. In fact, as we age, its importance only grows. However, for vulnerable populations and in remote parts of our state, getting essential oral health care at any age can be challenging, if not impossible.

That is why we collaborate with **Doña Ana Community College (DACC)** and **Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless (AHCH)** to deliver vital dental care to individuals and families in critical need.

Doña Ana Community College Dental Hygiene Program

Las Cruces & Doña Ana County, NM



Since 2018, we have worked closely with Doña Ana Community College (DACC) to provide no-cost preventive care, such as cleanings, screenings, and fluoride treatments, to individuals and families in Southern New Mexico. With our support, DACC has established community-based dental hygiene clinics at community hubs throughout Las Cruces and Doña Ana County, so residents facing financial hardship or limited access to care can receive the care they deserve in familiar locations.

Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless Dental Clinic

Albuquerque & Bernalillo, NM



For 20 years, we have worked hand in hand with Albuquerque Health Care for the Homeless (AHCH) to bring preventive and emergency dental care to people experiencing homelessness. Through a dental clinic and mobile dental van, this program provides high-quality care to more than 7,000 individuals in Albuquerque and Bernalillo County each year. To further expand access, AHCH has recently added new translation services, hired bilingual dental professionals, and introduced walk-in new patient exams and hygiene visits, made possible through support from DDNM.

A healthy smile can be life changing; giving someone the confidence to speak proudly in interviews, the ability to eat nourishing foods, and the relief of a mouth without pain. Through our collaborative efforts, we are not only improving individual oral health for those in need but also giving renewed hope and fresh opportunities to individuals, families, and communities.

For 20 years, DDNM and AHCH have worked side by side to ensure that oral health is within reach for everyone. Our partnership began with a shared belief—that access to care should never depend on circumstance—and it continues to guide our work today. Through ongoing collaboration and resource sharing, we combine our strengths to improve health outcomes and bring essential services to New Mexico's most vulnerable populations.

*- Jennifer Metzler, Chief Executive Officer
ABQ Health Care for the Homeless*



Collaborating with grassroots organizations to serve those in need across New Mexico.

To help improve access to dental care for residents across our state, we partner with and invest in grassroots organizations to amplify our impact and help thousands of New Mexicans gain the tools, education, and vital dental services they need.

Smiles Across New Mexico Small Grant Program

New Mexico Statewide



Through the Smiles Across New Mexico Small Grant Program, we are funding local organizations directly serving underserved children and at-risk populations—from rural schools and community centers to nonprofit outreach programs. These grants support grassroots dental education efforts that build oral health awareness, teach healthy habits, and help prevent oral disease.



Program Objectives

- Reduce oral disease through education, prevention, and treatment
- Expand access to affordable, timely, and high-quality dental care
- Enhance the awareness of good oral health with a focus on children and individuals in need
- Making a measurable difference in the oral health of New Mexicans
- Ensure New Mexico is among the states with the highest indicators of oral health



2025 Smiles Across New Mexico Grant Recipients!

- Cooking with Kids
- Jardin de los Niños
- Luna Community College
- Next Step Ministries
- Participa!, Inc.
- Rocky Mountain Youth Corps
- Santa Fe Community College
- First Choice Community Healthcare
- La Vida Felicidad
- NM Dental Association Foundation
- Nizhóní Smiles
- PB&J Family Services
- San Juan College
- St. Elizabeth Shelter

New Mexico Dental Association Foundation

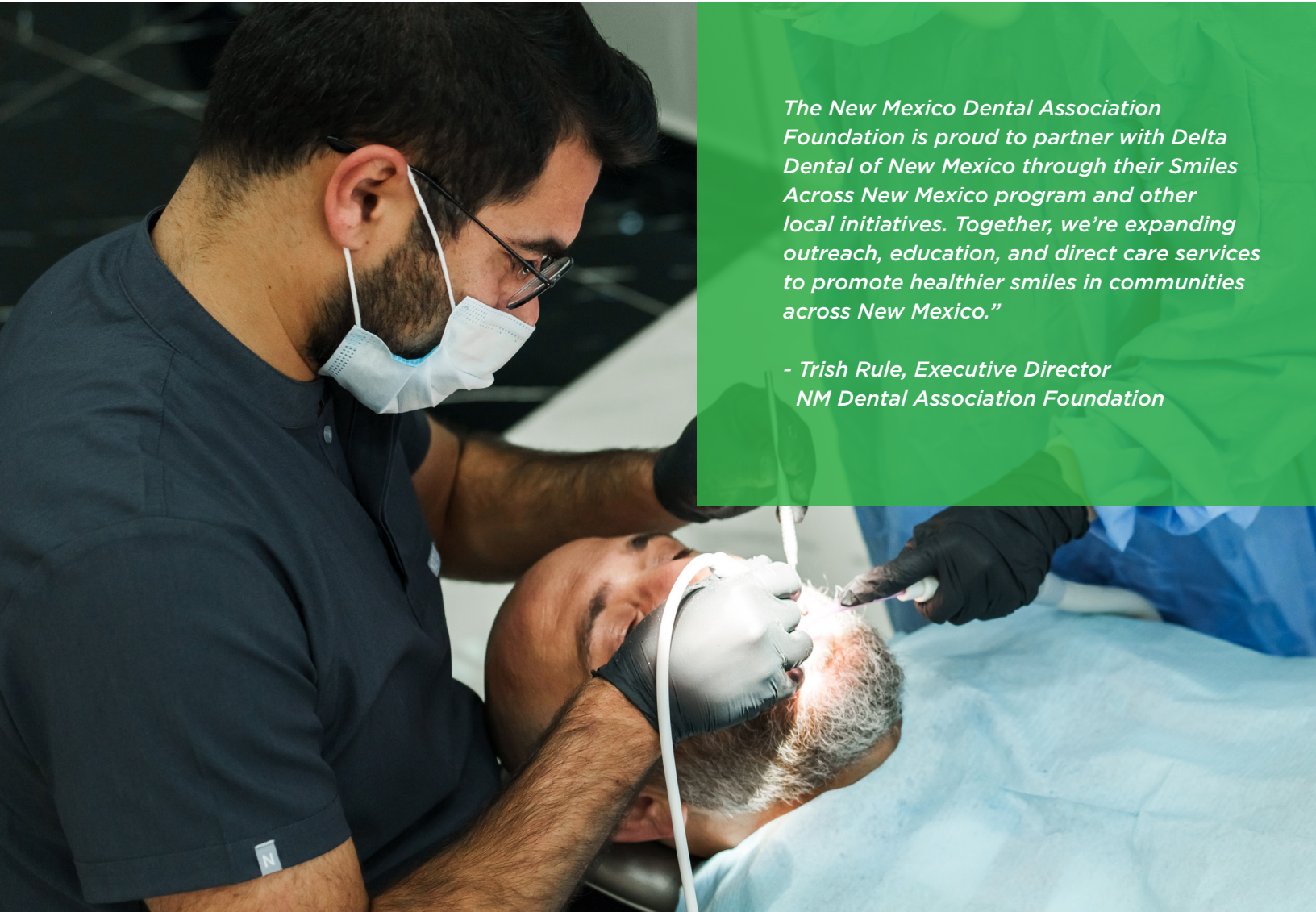
New Mexico Statewide



Through its statewide programs, the New Mexico Dental Association Foundation (NMDAF) provides vital dental treatment and education to thousands of New Mexicans each year. United by a shared commitment to expand access to oral health care, DDNM is proud to support NMDAF's work through significant in-kind contributions, including 5,000 oral health kits filled with toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and bilingual oral health education materials.

Program highlights:

- DDNM donated 5,000 oral health kits to NMDAF for distribution to schools across New Mexico.
- NMDAF distributed 10,825 outreach bags to children and families across Bernalillo, Doña Ana, Chaves, Luna, McKinley, San Juan, and Santa Fe Counties.
- NMDAF provided oral health education to 1,773 elementary school children, helping them build lifelong habits for healthy smiles.

A close-up photograph of a dentist wearing a dark blue scrub top, a white surgical mask, and black gloves. He is focused on a patient's teeth, using a dental tool. The patient is lying back in a dental chair, and the scene is brightly lit. A green semi-transparent box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

The New Mexico Dental Association Foundation is proud to partner with Delta Dental of New Mexico through their Smiles Across New Mexico program and other local initiatives. Together, we're expanding outreach, education, and direct care services to promote healthier smiles in communities across New Mexico."

*- Trish Rule, Executive Director
NM Dental Association Foundation*

Supporting the oral health and overall well-being of our communities, at every age and every stage.

Raising awareness of the link between oral health and overall well-being.

One of the most underrecognized aspects of oral health is its impact on overall health. Oral health can impact a person's risk for chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and cognitive decline. Oral health can also play an important role during pregnancy and can significantly affect mental health. However, the importance of oral health for overall health is often overlooked or misunderstood, leaving large knowledge gaps that can pose risks to well-being.

To fill these gaps, we work with respected partners like **Girls Inc. of Santa Fe (GISF)** and the **American Heart Association of New Mexico (AHANM)** to equip New Mexicans of all ages with a greater understanding of these crucial connections, so they can take better care of their health.

Girls Inc. of Santa Fe

Santa Fe, NM

girls
inc.
of Santa Fe

For 65 years, GISF has been a beacon of hope and empowerment for girls aged 5-18 throughout Santa Fe and its surrounding communities. DDNM is proud to partner with GISF to further enhance their programming to include oral health as part of their healthy living curriculum. This support is crucial, as 86% of the girls served by GISF come from low-income households, 41% speak a language other than English at home, and 20% come from single-parent households.



American Heart Association of New Mexico

New Mexico Statewide



American Heart Association of New Mexico and DDNM are dedicated to bridging the gap between oral and heart health. Together, we are working to improve health and well-being by helping patients, dental care teams and primary care teams better understand and address this heart-mouth connection.

*- Sherri Wells, Executive Director
American Heart Association of NM*



DDNM's collaboration with AHANM is driven by a shared understanding: the health of the mouth and the health of the heart are deeply connected. Research shows that periodontal (gum) disease and chronic oral inflammation can increase the risk of heart disease and stroke—two of New Mexico's leading health challenges.

Through this partnership, DDNM and AHANM work together to ensure more New Mexicans understand how daily oral hygiene habits—like brushing, flossing, and regular dental care—can support a healthier heart. By elevating this connection in public health messaging, we help individuals make informed decisions that reduce risk and improve whole-body well-being.

Partnership highlights:

DDNM partnered with AHANM to amplify the oral-heart health message at major New Mexico events, ensuring this critical information reaches thousands of people. These events provide powerful platforms to reinforce how oral health practices can lower heart disease risk—especially in populations most affected by cardiovascular disparities.

- 2025 New Mexico Heart Walk & 5K Run
- 2025 New Mexico Go Red for Women
- 2025 New Mexico Go Red for Native Women



Supporting direct outreach efforts to those who are homebound and in their final days.

The connection between oral health and overall health goes in both directions. Physical health conditions and poor nutrition can contribute to tooth decay, and both physical and mental health challenges can make it more difficult to maintain good oral hygiene habits.

That is why we support direct outreach efforts to protect the whole health of those experiencing serious mobility or health challenges through our partnerships with **Meals on Wheels New Mexico** and the **Presbyterian Healthcare Foundation**.

Meals on Wheels New Mexico

New Mexico Statewide



Meals on Wheels New Mexico has been providing meals, comfort, and companionship to homebound neighbors since 1972, now serving around 2,000 clients every year. Recognizing good nutrition is essential for both oral and overall health, we are proud to support their work in providing healthy meals and oral health supplies to our neighbors in need.

Presbyterian Healthcare Foundation

Albuquerque, NM



We are proud to partner with the Presbyterian Robert Wertheim Hospice House, which offers compassionate hospice care in a home-like setting for patients who may not have other options for end-of-life care. Through this partnership, we are helping to enhance the quality of life for New Mexicans in their final days.



Healthier smiles for generations to come.

Protecting athletes' smiles and strengthening communities.

Maintaining a healthy smile takes more than regular brushing, flossing, and trips to the dentist. A serious dental injury can also mean missed school or lost work time, not to mention the risk of long-term pain and complications.

Many of these injuries can be effectively prevented with the right equipment, but that equipment is not always readily available or easily accessible for all athletes in our state. To remedy that, we give thousands of athletes the tools they need to protect their teeth through the **DDNM Mouthguard Program** and our work with **Special Olympics New Mexico**.

Delta Dental of New Mexico Mouthguard Program

New Mexico Statewide



Starting in 2023, the DDNM Mouthguard Program has partnered with the New Mexico Activities Association (NMAA) to provide Delta Dental Athletic Mouth Guards to all high school wrestling (67 schools) and football teams (123 schools) across New Mexico.

The Delta Dental Athletic Mouthguard is an American Dental Association (ADA) accepted product, which means it has demonstrated safety and efficiency in alignment with ADA requirements.

In 2025, 16,469 mouthguards were donated (valued at \$19.99 a piece). Since 2023, 38,493 mouthguards were donated, saving New Mexico families over \$769,000.

Program highlights:

DDNM added the following partners to the Mouthguard Program in 2025:

- Adaptive Sports Program New Mexico
- New Mexico Department of Oral Health
- New Mexico Ice Wolves Youth Hockey
- New Mexico Young America Football League



Special Olympics of New Mexico

New Mexico Statewide



Special Olympics New Mexico works to transform lives and build more inclusive communities by providing year-round sports training and athletic competition in Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. In support of their work, we are proud to provide dental screenings and Delta Dental Mouthguards for Special Olympics athletes through the Special Smiles event.



Giving New Mexicans the tools for healthier smiles today and tomorrow.

Investing in the future dental workforce.

Ensuring New Mexicans now and in the future can have good oral health requires great dentists. But our state faces a serious dentist shortage and according to the New Mexico Office of Oral Health, New Mexico has an average dentist to population ratio of 1 to 3,297, which is much higher than the federal standard of 1 to 1,050.

To champion the smiles of New Mexicans now and for future generations, we are making investments in the future dental workforce through the Delta Dental Future Workforce Fund.

Delta Dental Future Workforce Fund

United States



Launched in 2023, the Delta Dental Future Workforce Fund invests up to \$1 million annually in comprehensive solutions, innovative pilots, and scalable models that inspire school-aged children to pursue a career in oral health. As part of the Delta Dental Plans Association, we are proud to be a financial contributor to the fund to help ensure that individuals across the U.S. can get the care they deserve from passionate dental professionals.



Together with our partners, we are supporting New Mexicans' smiles throughout their lives.



Infants and young children receive oral health supplies and preventive dental care alongside medical services, reducing socioeconomic and geographic barriers to address oral health needs earlier.



Delta Dental of New Mexico helps school-aged children develop healthy habits through school-based dental care, oral health education, and athletic mouthguards delivered through trusted community partnerships statewide.



Adults gain broader access to dental care, health education, and screenings, through partnerships across the state aimed at highlighting the connection between oral health and overall wellness.



Families benefit from preventive care and oral health resources delivered close to home, including screenings, cleanings, fluoride treatments, oral health kits, and community-based education across New Mexico.



Partnerships supporting older adults and people with serious health or mobility challenges provide nutritious meals, meaningful connection, and compassionate hospice care that promotes comfort, wellness, and dignity.

Helping New Mexicans discover their best smile.

At Delta Dental of New Mexico, we champion the smiles of all New Mexicans because we know a healthy smile is about far more than appearance. Oral health is an essential part of overall health and influences how people connect, grow, participate in their communities, and experience life fully.

- It affects our ability to speak and communicate, helping us form bonds, express ourselves, and cultivate meaningful relationships.
- It shapes how we see ourselves and engage with the world, influencing our confidence and our experiences at work, in school, and in our personal lives.
- It affects our ability to taste, chew, and enjoy food, allowing us to nourish our bodies, share meals with loved ones, celebrate traditions, and experience the flavors that connect us to home.
- It can also affect our ability to breathe comfortably, an essential part of our health, well-being, and everything we do.

As a New Mexico-based nonprofit, our responsibility extends beyond administering dental benefits. We work to strengthen access to quality care, support stable provider networks, and invest in education, prevention, and wellness initiatives that address barriers and promote healthier communities. Rooted in the state we are proud to call home, we listen to local needs and collaborate with organizations that understand their communities best.

Our local knowledge is strengthened by the reach and resources of the national Delta Dental system. Together, these strengths help us support dependable access, long-term value, and solutions shaped for New Mexico's distinct communities. This combination allows us to remain responsive to the people we serve while drawing on broader expertise and resources to advance oral health across the state.

Through trusted access to dental benefits, strong community partnerships, and continued reinvestment in New Mexico, we are working to reduce disparities, support lifelong wellness, and help more people receive the care, education, and resources they need. From early childhood through older adulthood, our goal is to help every New Mexican build and maintain a healthy smile that supports a fuller, healthier life.





Discover your best smile.

Delta Dental of New Mexico | Serving New Mexicans Since 1971

Please note figures were calculated based on reports received by NM-based nonprofit organizations.