



## **Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation Awards \$35,000 to Support Rural Outreach Programs**

Richmond, VA- May 16, 2018 – The Virginia Dental Association Foundation (VDAF) announced that the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation has awarded a grant for \$35,000 to support the Mission of Mercy (MOM) dental clinics in Wise and Grundy, VA and to implement a Diabetes Prevention and Management Education Program in that region.

The MOM program, created in Virginia by Dr. Terry Dickinson in 2000, is now in its 19th year and has served more than 65,000 patients statewide. The Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation's support will also allow the VDAF to purchase supplies for upcoming MOM projects as well as help replace or repair mobile dental equipment.

“Anthem is proud to support the Virginia Dental Association Foundation,” said Maureen Dempsey, M.D., senior clinical officer, Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. “Studies have shown that oral health can significantly impact the quality of our overall health. By working with the VDAF to support the Missions of Mercy, we can help those in need get access to dental care and in turn, positively impact overall health.”

The VDAF MOM Dental Clinic in Wise, in partnership with the Virginia Dental Association (VDA) and the VCU Schools of Dentistry and Dental Hygiene, will provide dental services to thousands of residents in Southwestern Virginia at two clinics:

- July 20-22 at the UVA-Wise David J. Prior Convocation Center, Wise, VA
- October 6-7 in Grundy, VA.

The oral health care teams will perform cleanings, fillings, extractions, root canals and other procedures. Some patients may also receive dentures.

Another aspect of the grant from the Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield Foundation is the Diabetes Prevention and Management Education Program, which aims to improve the health outcomes for adults with type 2 diabetes and for those at risk. In addition to providing dental services at the MOM clinics, the VDAF will provide materials on diabetes prevention/management and smoking cessation. For an even greater impact, the VDAF will partner with The Health Wagon to work with a select number of patients with type 2 diabetes to manage their chronic condition and improve their overall health.

Barry Isringhausen, president of the VDAF, stated, “There is an ever-growing body of research that clearly shows treatment of periodontal disease can be of significant benefit to diabetic patients as they manage this chronic disease. The VDAF is most grateful to the Anthem Foundation for its generous support of our work on this important health issue and we look forward to further collaboration with them on this project.”

*Founded in 1996 as the charitable and outreach arm of the Virginia Dental Association (VDA), the VDAF is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide access to dental care for underserved and underinsured Virginians. For more information about the Virginia Dental Association Foundation (VDAF) and its programs, visit [www.vdaf.org](http://www.vdaf.org).*