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WELLONE EXPANDS NURSING HOME SERVICES

Local Community Health Center receives over \$30k to provide dental services to nursing home residents in Providence & Kent Counties

PASCOAG, RI – WellOne (formerly Northwest Community Health Care and Bayside Family Healthcare) announced today that it is the recipient of a \$28,879 award to provide funding for the purchase of start-up dental equipment for a nursing home oral health project in partnership with CareLink, Inc. This funding is made possible by a grant from The Rhode Island Foundation, the state’s community foundation.

The grant will support the collaborative efforts of WellOne and Wisdom Tooth, CareLink’s mobile dental program for nursing homes, to expand the dental services that are being provided to Medicaid patients in WellOne’s service area. This will create not only additional service capacity in nursing homes that are currently being aided by Wisdom Tooth but also enable the attending to of additional nursing homes. The dental services are available to any resident in the nursing home who wishes to apply and are at no cost to the facility.

A team of professional dental practitioners consisting of dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants, provide diagnostic, preventative and palliative services that include: limited, comprehensive, detailed, and extensive oral evaluations; radiography and diagnostic imaging services; testing and laboratory services; prophylaxis (cleanings); fillings and repairs; simple extractions; and denture fittings & repairs.

In addition, WellOne also received a \$5,000 Senate Legislative Grant as a result of Senator Michael Lenihan’s efforts on the agency’s behalf, for the purchase of a Nomad Pro handheld dental x-ray machine at its North Kingstown location. This system will expand the x-ray capabilities both at this site as well as facilitate increased dental service to area nursing homes.

The World Health Organization reports that the correlation between oral health and overall health is even more pronounced in the elderly, increasing the risks to general health as well as affecting nutritional intake as a result of “compromised chewing and eating abilities.” Recent research also suggests “possible associations between chronic oral infections and diabetes, heart and lung disease,” and stroke. (Office of the Surgeon General. Press release; 5/25/2000).

“Oral health care is critical to maintaining overall good health at any age”, stated WellOne’s President and CEO, Peter J. Bancroft. “The ability to provide the means for this important service to members of the community who otherwise would be unable to do so themselves is a key component of our agency’s commitment to promote wellness and wellbeing in the patients and towns we serve.”

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About WellOne

Established in 1909, WellOne is the oldest nonprofit community health center in Rhode Island, was the first rural health clinic in the nation, and historically has served as a pioneer in public health initiatives including its groundbreaking immunization and chronic disease management programs as well as a commitment to oral health care that dates back to the establishment of dental clinics in the 1920s.

WellOne's mission is to provide high quality primary medical and dental care to the residents of the communities that it serves. WellOne operates sites in Pascoag, Foster and North Kingstown serving more than 13,000 patients and treating residents from every city/town in the state but Little Compton. In addition to primary medical and dental care, the organization provides behavioral health, mammography and bone density scanning services. The organization offers services on a sliding fee scale to qualifying uninsured patients and operates a discount pharmacy program in collaboration with CVS.