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**APPLE TREE DENTAL INVESTS IN LEADERSHIP AND GROWTH
WITH ADDITION OF NEW STRATEGIC OFFICER**

(Mounds View, MN; February 9, 2022) - To advance the critical connection between good oral health and overall health, **Apple Tree Dental** has hired a new Chief Strategic Officer, **Jessica Flotterud**. Flotterud, who brings an impressive dental and business career to the new role, will oversee the Innovations Team, which is focused on research, advocacy, education, communications and development.



Flotterud has nearly 20 years of dental experience including numerous organizational and professional association leadership positions. As Dental Director of the Union Gospel Mission’s dental clinic, she led its transition through the creation of a new non-profit, **Hope Dental Clinic**, in 2016. She served as Hope Dental’s first Executive Director until joining Apple Tree. She is a Licensed Dental Hygienist, with a Master of Science in Dental Hygiene and a Master of Public Health degree along with advanced education in business administration and leadership.

In announcing the appointment, Dr. Michael J. Helgeson, Apple Tree’s CEO and Co-Founder, said, “We are so thrilled to have a passionate advocate like Jessica join Apple Tree! Her wealth of experience translating organizational strategy into outcomes will help lead our Innovations Team as we continue to design and test new ways to reach more underserved people and eliminate health disparities.”

On joining Apple Tree, Flotterud said, “I am honored to be part of the amazing Apple Tree team. They are a leader in non-profit dental care both locally and nationally, and a perfect fit with my personal goal to reach as many underserved patients as possible.”

A recent **National Institutes of Health (NIH) report**, “Oral Health in America: Advances and Challenges,” highlights the importance of creating a new role at Apple Tree that will guide the nonprofit as it seeks to overcome barriers to oral health and to inspire partnerships that foster healthy communities. The comprehensive 790-page document examines the status, opportunities and challenges of the nation’s oral health and features a three-prong Call to Action, including developing policy changes, integrating oral, medical and behavioral health in a variety of settings, and diversifying the workforce of oral health professionals. Throughout its 37-year history, Apple Tree has been focused on all three vital initiatives, and Flotterud’s appointment will allow the organization to expand those efforts and focus on transforming the healthcare system.

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Dr. Michael Helgeson and Policy Director **Deborah Jacobi** were among the 350 national oral health leaders who helped author the Surgeon General's report, which also cited the respected non-profit's work to refine the role of oral health care providers and its findings that there is cost-efficiency for dental practices employing Dental Therapists (DHAT, p. 524), as well as referencing one of Apple Tree's Dental Therapists **Heather Luebben's** 2018 case study on Long-Term Care (p. 567).

Apple Tree Dental, one of Minnesota's largest critical access dental providers, operates eight Centers for Dental Health, located in Coon Rapids, Fairmont, Fergus Falls, Hawley, Little Falls, Madelia, Mounds View, and Rochester. Apple Tree provides preventive, restorative, and specialty dental services, while prioritizing care to underserved children, adults, frail elderly, and people with special needs. Founded in 1985 to bring dental services to frail elders residing in Twin Cities' nursing homes, Apple Tree has grown to more than 200 employees. To reach people of all ages, socioeconomic status, and cultural and ethnic identification, the organization partners with communities across the state to overcome the barriers that have made dental care unavailable and created serious health disparities.

Apple Tree's nationally recognized innovative delivery model includes Centers for Dental Health and on-site mobile dental programs in collaboration with 150 community partners such as long term care facilities, assisted living centers, nursing homes, Head Start Centers, group homes, schools, and other community locations.

As part of its mission, Apple Tree advocates for system change at the state and national level to enhance oral health policy and increase funding for oral health. Apple Tree's Leaders were instrumental in forging consensus between stakeholders which contributed to bipartisan support for a package of dental bills in the 2021 Minnesota legislature session to expand the availability, quality, and accountability of dental care in public programs.

About Apple Tree Dental

Founded in 1985, Apple Tree Dental's mission is to overcome barriers to oral health. Apple Tree provides comprehensive preventive care and dental treatment services at eight Centers for Dental Health throughout Minnesota to individuals and families, and also operates on-site dental programs at 150 community partner locations for vulnerable communities using the industry's latest technologies. With special expertise in pediatric, geriatric, and special needs populations, Apple Tree is nationally recognized for its pioneering approach to integrating dental care as part of overall health and wellbeing. For more information, visit appletreedental.org.

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