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**APPLE TREE DENTAL IMPLEMENTS FLEXIBLE STAFFING  
MODEL TO COMBAT CLINICIAN SHORTAGES**

(Hawley, MN; September 19, 2023) – Apple Tree Dental is proud to announce the launch of a new flexible staffing model, an initiative that will help the nonprofit organization, and others like it, fill clinician gaps.

Like other dental practices, Apple Tree has experienced the challenge of finding enough staff to meet the demand for services, and the shortage is keenly felt among Critical Access Dental providers in particular. To help solve some of this challenge, Apple Tree’s Flexible Staffing initiative will appeal to dentists, hygienists, and assistants who are not already on the organization’s team, by offering the opportunity to work on an extremely part-time basis.

Starting with two rural clinics in Fergus Falls and Hawley, Apple Tree plans to advertise the opportunity for local staff to come and work for the organization on very flexible terms. The initiative was specifically designed for busy dental professionals who are single parents, working full-time at a private practice, going to school, or even recently retired and not looking for a regular position. “Apple Tree has already had a long history of creating flexible employment opportunities for dentists who have recently retired,” said Dr. Michael Helgeson, Apple Tree’s CEO and co-founder. “We’re hoping to expand upon that success with the Flexible Staffing project.”

The pilot project was made possible by a collaboration with Northern Dental Access Center, which is in the west central Minnesota region — where Apple Tree’s Fergus Falls and Hawley Centers are located. The organization worked with Eric Snyder of Excelsior Bay Group on the development of the project, including creating multiple focus groups to evaluate the potential of the initiative before ultimately rolling it out.

“The goal is to lighten everyone’s load,” said Jessica Flotterud, Apple Tree’s Chief Strategic Officer. “A successful pilot project means that our current staff have the opportunity to work on their scheduled cases, and the clinicians who are brought in through the Flexible Staffing project are able to take on the urgent cases that we triage daily. This way, everyone should be able to work more efficiently.”

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### **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 care 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](http://appletreedental.org).

### **About Excelsior Bay Group**

The Excelsior Bay Group helps nonprofit organizations to deliver more fully on their mission and impact. We provide tailored services and advice in the areas of development, programming, governance and strategy. Visit [excelsiorbaygroup.com](http://excelsiorbaygroup.com) to learn more.