



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**APPLE TREE DENTAL  
ROCHESTER CENTER FOR DENTAL HEALTH  
GETS MAJOR REMODEL THANKS TO GENEROUS GRANTS**

(Rochester, MN; January 11, 2024) – Apple Tree Dental is proud to share the news of the remodel of the Rochester Center for Dental Health’s entire lower level and first floor patient services areas. This remodeling project was accomplished in phases and completed in the fall of 2023 after several years of planning, fundraising, and construction.

Apple Tree originally established dental care in Southeastern Minnesota in 2008 providing essential on-site dental services for nursing facility residents in the area. In 2013, with local community support, Apple Tree launched the Rochester Center for Dental Health, expanded into a full-service, brick-and-mortar dental clinic on Skyline Drive SW. The building has two levels, one above ground and one below.

With the ever-growing need for Critical Access Dental providers in and around Olmsted County, the Rochester Center soon required remodeling to optimize space and expand access to care for underserved patients. In 2018, planning began to renovate both the upper and lower floors.

The lower level needed remodeling first. In 2022, supported by grants from **Mayo Clinic and Rochester Area Foundation**, the unfinished lower level of the Center was completely remodeled. The lower level is the hub of Apple Tree’s Southeastern Mobile Dental Program, which provides comprehensive, on-site dental care for 19 regional long-term care facilities and group homes. It also serves as office space for the Center’s patient care coordinators and dentists.

With the lower level completed, remodeling of the first floor clinic, including expanding the waiting area, was launched. The Rochester Center is one of few clinics in the area with a dental team trained to provide advanced oral health services for patients with special needs, the majority of whom are on Medical Assistance and require special accommodations.

(More)

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Supported by grant funding from **Mayo Clinic, Rochester Area Foundation, the Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation, and Think Bank**, in 2023 Apple Tree completed the first floor remodeling. The clinic now has space for mobility aids such as motorized wheelchairs and provides required HIPAA privacy for patients as they are welcomed to the Center for their care.

“The need for affordable dental care around Rochester is huge,” said Casey Berge, Apple Tree’s Southwest Regional Director, who oversees the Rochester Center. “We see a lot of patients with special needs, including accessibility needs, so optimizing existing unused space at the Center was crucial to expanding critical access dental care in the area. Our patients have said it’s a vast improvement!”

Dr. Michael Helgeson, Apple Tree’s CEO and co-founder, expressed gratitude to the funders that made the remodeling possible. “I just can’t thank our funders enough for their generosity. Supporting the remodeling of the Rochester Center is making it possible for us to provide critically needed oral health services in Southeastern Minnesota.”

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### **About Apple Tree Dental**

Founded in 1985, Apple Tree Dental's mission is to overcome barriers to oral health. Our vision is to foster partnerships that create healthy communities. Apple Tree provides comprehensive preventive care and dental treatment services at nine 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 Mayo Clinic**

Mayo Clinic is a nonprofit organization committed to innovation in clinical practice, education and research and to providing compassion, expertise and answers to everyone who needs healing. Visit the [Mayo Clinic News Network](#) for additional Mayo Clinic news.

### **About Rochester Area Foundation**

The Rochester Area Foundation is a cornerstone of philanthropy in the Rochester, Minnesota, area, dedicated to improving the quality of life for all residents through collaborative funding, strategic partnerships, and community-led initiatives. It manages various funds and grants, driving social, cultural, and economic growth in the region. As stewards of community assets, the Rochester Area Foundation remains committed to transparency, accountability, and inclusivity in all aspects of its work. For more information, visit [rochesterarea.org](http://rochesterarea.org).



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### **About Carl & Verna Schmidt Foundation**

The Carl and Verna Schmidt Foundation is a private foundation with headquarters in Rochester. It makes grants to charitable organizations primarily in southeastern and south-central Minnesota. The founder of the Foundation had special interest in supporting libraries in smaller cities and preserving wetlands.

### **About Think Bank**

Think Bank is a community bank headquartered in Rochester, Minnesota, with full-service offices in Rochester, Apple Valley, Eagan, and Edina. Think Bank focuses on consumers and businesses, providing a full array of banking, mortgage, financial planning, and insurance services.