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**DEBORAH COLBURN RECOGNIZED FOR LEGISLATIVE EXCELLENCE IN
PROMOTING ORAL HEALTH FOR THE UNDERSERVED**

DENVER- Deborah Colburn, former Managing Director of Oral Health Awareness Colorado! was recognized for her work to promote oral health access for Colorado's underserved. Ms. Colburn is currently the Director of the Animal Emergency Management Program at the Colorado Veterinary Medical Foundation.

The Colorado Public Health Association presented Colburn with its Legislative Excellence Award at its annual conference at Copper Mountain. Colburn was a champion for assuring that access to oral health services was included in the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Commission for Health Care Reform, was instrumental in securing increased Medicaid reimbursement rates for oral health providers, and improving the overall understanding of oral health as an integral part of total health within the health care and legislative communities.



“Oral health has long been seen as separate from overall health. This misconception has resulted in many school children being unable to learn due to severe dental pain, the loss of health for seniors who can no longer eat properly, and lost work hours due to oral pain or the need for extensive treatment. We need to shift our approach to providing oral health education and preventative care to reduce the amount of oral disease in our communities,” said Colburn, a resident of Eldora.

In her nomination of Ms. Colburn, Diane Brunson, Director of Public Health and Community Outreach at the School of Dental Medicine, noted that Ms. Colburn was the catalyst for increased recognition of the importance of good oral health in Colorado.

The Colorado Public Health Association (CPHA) is a professional association for people engaged in public health service. The group, a chapter of the American Public Health Association, advocates for public and environmental health and works to bring people together for an exchange of health and environmental ideas. The CPHA Award for Legislative Excellence, established in 1988, is awarded to a person or organization for highly visible past or present legislative efforts within Colorado or the United States in support of public health issues.