

Vermont dentists benefit from the Vermont Educational Loan Repayment Program

Delta Dental Plan of Vermont recently awarded a community match grant to three Vermont dentists for the 2017-2018 year. For seven years, Delta Dental Plan of Vermont has contributed to the success of the Vermont Educational Loan Repayment Program for Dentists by awarding grants. The University of Vermont Larner College of Medicine Area Health Education Centers (AHEC) administers the program on behalf of the State of Vermont.

Through workforce recruitment and retention, the purpose of the program is to increase access to dental care in underserved communities and to address the health professional shortages that cause disparities in access to oral health care in Vermont. It provides repayment of educational loans for dentists serving in workforce shortage areas and serving the Medicaid population. Recipients must sign a service agreement contract and practice a minimum of 20 clinical hours per week at designated sites.



Katie Krieter Piet, DDS

Dr. Katie Krieter Piet was looking for a position in a dental office that offered a high level of challenge and responsibility, with an opportunity for career growth. She found that at St. Johnsbury Dental Associates.

Dr. Piet earned her Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from West Virginia University School of Dentistry in Morgantown, West Virginia, after

earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and Chemistry from Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, Indiana. While studying at WVU School of Dentistry, she held several leadership positions in its Pediatric Dental Club and tutored students in Physiology and Anatomy. During her last two years, she worked in the Urgent Care and Oral Surgery departments during her school vacations and breaks. Urgent Care offered a fast-paced environment that strengthened her diagnostic skills. In the Oral Surgery department, she took medical histories, presented to the attending oral surgeon, and treated patients.

Before training for her dental career, Dr. Piet worked as an analytical chemist, during which time she co-authored an article on an organic chemistry experiment that appeared in the *Journal of Chemical Education*.

Sonal Patel, DMD

Dr. Sonal Patel earned her Doctor of Dental Medicine from Goldman School of Dental Medicine at Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts, and completed the Advanced Standing Program of Internationally Trained Dentists.

She is originally from a small town in India. She came to the United States to continue her education, fell in love with the country, and decided to settle here. After her dental training, her first position was in Springfield, Massachusetts; however, she really wanted to settle in a small, peaceful town. While exploring Vermont, she

recognized it as an attractive place to live and raise a family. She loves its people and its natural beauty.

While searching for dental opportunities, she discovered St. Johnsbury Dental Associates. She was impressed with its state-of-the-art dental facility and its use of advanced technologies; and she loves the town of St. Johnsbury. She has a vision of “delivering high quality dentistry to a low-income population” and working in a clinic that serves a rural community by providing transformative care. The educational loan repayment funds have helped her to realize this vision.



Brandon M. Vanasse, DMD

“I’m very grateful for the award from Vermont Educational Loan Repayment Program and Northeast Delta Dental,” said Dr. Brandon Vanasse. He practices general dentistry at the dental practice of Dennis LeBlanc, DDS, in Derby, Vermont, which is in Orleans County and is located on the Canadian border. A Vermont native, after

graduating from high school in Newport, Vermont, he earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Molecular Genetics from the University of Vermont, Burlington. He earned his Doctor of Dental Medicine degree from Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine (BUGSDM), graduating Cum Laude.

Community service is one of the hallmarks of Dr. Vanasse’s life. His volunteer work most closely aligned with the medical/dental fields include serving as a research associate at Fletcher Allen Health Care’s Emergency Department (Burlington, VT); working with MEDLIFE (Ecuador) to set up medical clinics and teach children about oral hygiene; working with BUGSDM Service Learning Projects (Boston) to raise oral health awareness among inner city children and place free sealants; and providing Special Smiles dental screenings (Burlington, VT) at Special Olympics events.

Visit www.vtahec.org for more information about the Vermont Educational Loan Repayment Program for Dentists.

