

MINNESOTA'S DENTAL THERAPIST LAW

CONCEPTION TO IMPLEMENTATION

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Minnesota's Dental Therapist Law Chapter 95 - enacted May 2009

Establishes two new types of licensed, mid-level dental practitioners, called dental therapists and advanced dental therapists, who will provide basic oral health and dental services to underserved patients and communities.

MN Mid-level Alliance

- Safety Net Coalition, safety net providers
- MN Dental Hygienists Association
- Nursing homes and long-term care orgs
- Head Start programs
- Health insurance plans
- State government
- Disability organizations and advocates

2008 Law

- Skeleton framework for “oral health practitioner” established
- Work Group established
- Work Group recommendations reported in December 2008
- Legislation introduced in 2009
- Chapter 95 enacted in May

2008 Law

- Answered the question of “whether” to establish a mid-level practitioner
- Did not answer the “how” questions
 - ▣ Level of dentist supervision required
 - ▣ Education program requirements
 - ▣ Licensing and regulatory system
- Legislature created a work group, which recommended the “how” but this did not end the controversy

2009 Session

MDA and U of M Dental School offered alternative bill:

1. **MDA/U of M:** “physician assistant” model with dentist on site to do diagnosis and supervise treatment. Only the dental school could train:
2. **Safety Net Coalition:** “nurse practitioner” model to provide treatment where no dentists are available.

Compromise

- Proposals merged: single practitioner, 2 levels
- Not based on dental hygienist
- Only basic procedures incl. “simple” extractions
- Supervising dentist requirements strengthened
- No diagnosis, but may assess
- No prescribing authority, but may provide
- Clinical practice required before advanced practice allowed
- Educational institutions not specified

Policy Issues



- Scope of practice
 - ▣ Diagnosis by non-dentist
 - ▣ Defining “routine” or “simple” procedures
 - ▣ Extractions of permanent teeth
- Level of supervision
 - ▣ General supervision vs. indirect
- Education level, accreditation
- Permitted treatment settings



2010 Implementation

- Students began Fall 2009
- Approval of education programs
- Competency exams
- Licensing and certification system
- Reimbursement system
- First students graduate:
 - ▣ U of M DTs: 2013
 - ▣ Metro State ADTs: 2011

For More Information

- **MN Dental Therapist Law:**
<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/?id=95&doctype=Chapter&year=2009&type=0>
- **Minnesota Safety Net Coalition:**
<http://www.mnsafetynetcoalition.org/>
- **MN Oral Health Practitioner Work Group:**
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/oralhealth/index.html>
- **The Pew Center for the States: Oral Health**
http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/initiatives_detail.aspx?initiativeID=42360

QUESTIONS?

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