

# SUPPORT SB22-219 REGULATE DENTAL THERAPISTS HEALTHY SMILES FOR EVERY COMMUNITY

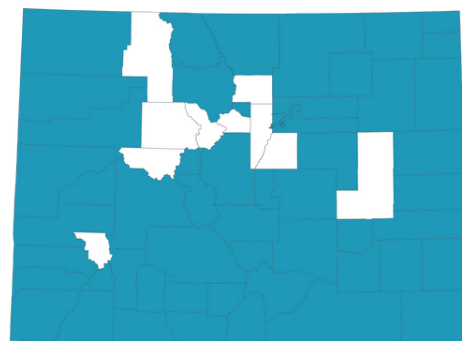


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Colorado has an opportunity to expand access to quality dental care and improve oral health outcomes for all of its residents. Too many communities face persistent problems accessing dental care because of the shortage of dental health providers. Significant disparities exist along geographic areas, racial and ethnic lines, and income levels.

## ACCESS PROBLEMS

- 1 in 5 Coloradans reports having fair or poor oral health.
- 5 counties don't have a single dental provider, forcing people to drive long distances for routine dental care, and overdue check-ups.
- 53 of Colorado's 64 counties are designated as a dental health professional shortage area.



Adults in rural areas have almost twice the prevalence of tooth loss vs urban adults.



Only 28% of Colorado dentists served any Medicaid enrolled patients in 2018.



In low income schools, 44% of all kindergarteners had at least one cavity.

## WHAT WILL SB22-219 ACCOMPLISH?

- ✓ Create the license and licensure process for Dental Therapists in Colorado - many elements will mirror what is in place for our Dental Hygienists and Dentists
- ✓ Licensure Requirements will include:
  - Graduation from a CODA-accredited institution
  - Passage of a comprehensive clinical exam
- ✓ Set the Scope of Practice for Dental Therapists around the procedures they can perform under diagnostic, evaluative, preventive, and restorative
- ✓ Set the supervision expectation between a Dentist and Dental Therapist

# WHO ARE DENTAL THERAPISTS?

Dental therapists are mid level providers, similar to a physician's assistant in medicine. Dentists hire and supervise dental therapists to expand quality care to more patients, grow their practices, and provide treatment in community settings, such as schools or nursing homes.

Dental therapists receive rigorous training in a select set of the most commonly needed routine procedures such as filling cavities, placing temporary crowns, and extracting badly diseased or loose teeth. Under the Commission on Dental Accreditation's national dental therapy accreditation standards, students must receive at least three academic years of full-time instruction, including clinical experience.



13  
STATES

HAPPENING  
AROUND THE  
COUNTRY

have already made this crucial step forward and have expanded access to affordable quality care.

## DENTAL THERAPISTS:

RECEIVE EXTENSIVE EDUCATION TO  
PROVIDE SAFE, QUALITY CARE.

ENTER THE WORKFORCE FASTER WITH  
LESS SCHOOL DEBT.

WORK AS PART OF THE DENTAL CARE TEAM  
ALONGSIDE DENTAL HYGIENISTS AND DENTISTS.

## A PROVEN SOLUTION WITH LONG TERM GOALS

Many communities around the country are already succeeding with Dental Therapists.

- Since 2004, Alaska has increased access for over 40,000 Native Alaskans living in rural communities.
- Dental therapists provide services in community and rural settings in more than 370 mobile dental sites throughout Minnesota.
- Massachusetts showed that the dental clinic could add an additional 8 appointments per day (1,920/year) with the addition of a dental therapist.
- A subsequent step after this bill is passed is to encourage our institutions of higher education to create a pathway of stackable credentials from Dental Hygienists to Dental Therapists.

## SUPPORTERS OF SB22-219:

- AARP Colorado
- American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
- Children's Hospital Colorado
- Clayton Early Learning
- Colorado Center on Law and Policy
- Colorado Children's Campaign
- Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
- Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
- Colorado Counties Acting Together
- Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
- Colorado Hospital Association
- Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization
- Colorado Public Health Association
- Comfort Dental
- Delta Dental of Colorado
- Delta Dental of Colorado Foundation
- Healthier Colorado
- Young Invincibles