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# ESTABLISHING DENTAL THERAPISTS IN KANSAS

*Creating Jobs, Saving Money, and  
Improving Oral Health*

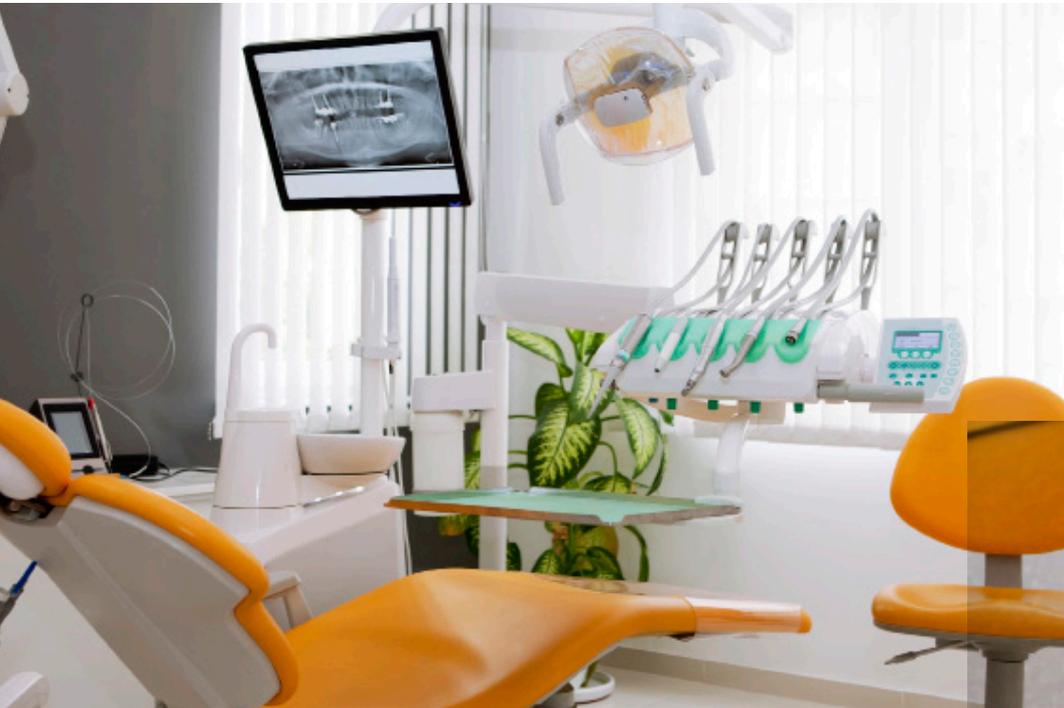


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## What are dental therapists – and how do they benefit Kansas?

Kansas is facing a dental care crisis. Too many people can't find a dental provider in their community.

Many dental practices are unable to grow. And regulations prevent us from expanding the dental workforce.



**“A variety of studies indicate that appropriately trained mid-level providers are capable of providing high-quality services.”**

January 2013 edition of the Journal of the  
American Dental Association (ADA)

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## Now is the time to do something about it.

Dental therapists have been flourishing as a part of the dental team in Minnesota for five years and in Alaska for more than a decade. Maine and Vermont have also authorized dental therapists to practice. Kansas can follow these states' lead to realize the benefits of dental therapists.

Dental therapists are specially trained mid-level dental providers who work with the supervision of a dentist to provide routine and preventive care, like drilling and filling cavities. They'll be graduates of educational institutions accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation – the same national organization that certifies programs for dentists and dental hygienists. Dentists and safety net clinics will be able to employ dental therapists in private practice and community settings – like schools, clinics, and nursing homes – to ensure more Kansans receive the oral health care they need.



***By approving dental therapists in Kansas, we can grow dental practices, create jobs, and significantly increase access to care. It's a win-win for our economy and for Kansans.***

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## Growing the Kansas Economy

Dental therapists make economic sense for Kansas. Dentists in Kansas are small business owners and should be given the opportunity to grow their practices as they see fit. By hiring highly trained dental therapists, they can expand their reach and serve more patients.

Approving dental therapists also gives our state a chance to bolster the job market. With five dental hygiene schools in Kansas, there is a large available workforce of dental hygienists already in place who can return to school to become dental therapists. Hygienists can obtain their advanced training right here in Kansas and can return to their hometowns to work with the supervision of a dentist.

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**“Dental therapists will strengthen the dental workforce, allowing dentists to grow their businesses and meet demand at no cost to the state. AFP-Kansas supports legislation to approve dental therapists in Kansas as an opportunity to support job creation, business growth and fiscal responsibility.”**



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## Ensuring Quality Care for all Kansans

Too many Kansans can't access dental care – and that can lead to serious health problems. Even people who take excellent care of their teeth and brush every day can develop dental disease. The dental therapy model increases access to routine care. More people will be able to see a dental therapist for their twice-yearly check-ups and with regular care, fewer people will experience severe dental problems.

Dental therapists in Kansas will always work with the supervision of a dentist; they will not practice independently.

Extensive research conducted on dental therapists and similar dental providers shows they provide safe, quality care to patients.

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**“These practitioners will make it easier and more affordable for underserved populations, including elderly people, to obtain high-quality oral care. At the same time, this will free up dentists for more complex procedures.”**

AARP Policy Book 2015–2016

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## Lowering the Cost of Health Care

Dental therapists are a proven solution to the problems we're facing when it comes to dental care. Because dental therapists cost less to train and to employ than dentists, they provide routine care in a more cost-effective way – similar to how nurse practitioners and physician assistants provide to medical patients.

With increased access to preventive dental care services, Kansans will rely less on costly emergency room care. And safety net clinics can utilize state dollars more effectively by hiring dental therapists. Plus, there's no cost to the state to establish dental therapists.



**“As a dentist in a Kansas safety net clinic, I see firsthand the overwhelming need that exists for quality dental care. Adding dental therapists to our dental team will allow us to better address that need and provide high-quality care to more Kansans.”**

Dr. Mollie Day, DDS  
Heartland Community Health Center Dental  
Director 2016 Oral Health Kansas  
Outstanding Dentist

# Let's make dental therapists a reality in Kansas!

Momentum for dental therapists is growing across the country. This model has been recognized by dentistry's accrediting agency and the Federal Trade Commission. More than 50 groups, including health organizations, business leaders, and tribal governments, support dental therapists for Kansas. Want to help bring dental therapists to our state?

Learn more at [kansasdental.com](http://kansasdental.com).



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## A Message from the Kansas Dental Project

Kansas faces a serious dental workforce shortage. In every part of our state, too many Kansans can't access the dental care they need to be healthy. It's particularly difficult for seniors, children, Kansans with disabilities, and those with KanCare insurance or no insurance to find care. The Kansas Dental Project offers a cost-effective, business-minded solution to this problem.

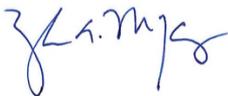
We support establishing dental therapy in Kansas because the evidence is clear: allowing dentists and safety net clinics to hire dental therapists would grow the reach of the dental team and improve Kansans' oral health. In a time of difficult budget choices, dental therapy presents an opportunity to grow the economy and benefit Kansans' health at no cost to the state.

We hope state lawmakers will support our efforts to solve Kansas' dental workforce shortage in the upcoming legislative session. If you would like to learn more about the Kansas Dental Project's proposal, please do not hesitate to contact us. You can reach us at [kansasdentalproject@gmail.com](mailto:kansasdentalproject@gmail.com) or (785) 232-0550, and we are happy to answer questions or discuss this issue further with you.

Sincerely,



Denise Cyzman, Executive Director  
Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved



Annie McKay, President and CEO  
Kansas Action for Children

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# Members of the Coalition

American Academy of Pediatrics, Kansas Chapter	El Centro Inc.	Keys for Networking
American Association for Community Dental Programs	EmberHope	Kickapoo Tribe of Kansas
Americans for Prosperity, Kansas Chapter	Family Resource Center of Pittsburg	LeadingAge Kansas
Association of Community Mental Health Centers of Kansas	Finney County Community Health Coalition	Medical Service Bureau
Black Health Care Coalition of Kansas City	Interhab	Mother and Child Health Coalition
Children's Alliance of Kansas	Kansas Action for Children	National Alliance on Mental Illness, Kansas Chapter
Communities Creating Opportunity (CCO)	Kansas Advocates for Better Care	National Association of Community Health Centers
Communities in Schools of Kansas Inc.	Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association	National Rural Health Association
Community Action Inc.	Kansas Association for the Medically Underserved	Northeast Kansas Community Action Program
Community Health Council of Wyandotte County	Kansas Association of Community Action Programs	Oral Health America
Cross-Lines Community Outreach Inc.	Kansas Association of Local Health Departments	Oral Health Kansas
Disability Rights Center of Kansas	Kansas Children's Service League	Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation
Dodge City Peaceful Tribe	Kansas Dental Hygienists' Association	Southeast Kansas Community Action Program
Douglas County Community Health Improvement Partnership	Kansas Farmers Union	Statewide Independent Living Council of Kansas
East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corporation (ECKAN)	Kansas Health Care Association	Success By 6 Coalition of Douglas County
Economic Opportunity Foundation Inc.	Kansas Legislative Policy Group	Sunflower State Health
	Kansas Public Health Association	Thrive Allen County
	Kansas Statewide Homeless Coalition	Topeka Independent Living Resource Center
		The Whole Person

# Dental Therapy: By The Numbers

**87.**

That's the number of Kansas counties that don't have enough dental providers to meet residents' needs. Many Kansans struggle to find dental care. When they need a cleaning or have a painful cavity, they turn to emergency rooms or wait for charity events – or simply go untreated. Dental therapists will provide high quality, routine care to children, adults, and seniors.

**125,000.**

That's how much additional revenue a dental practice could earn annually by employing dental therapists. Kansas faces a serious dental workforce shortage, and that means dentists who want to grow their practices have reached a plateau. They can't serve more patients without additional staff. By hiring dental therapists, dentists can grow their businesses, create new job opportunities, and expand the reach of the dental team.



\$0.

That's how much it will cost the state of Kansas to allow dentists to hire dental therapists. Dental therapy is a cost-effective solution. Allowing dental therapists to work in Kansas gives dentists the opportunity to grow their business and meet demand at  
**NO COST TO THE STATE.**

74.

That's the percentage of Kansans who agree who agree it's time to establish dental therapy. Dental therapy is good for dentists: hiring a dental therapist will allow practices to see more patients and free up dentists' time to focus on complex and specialized procedures. Dental therapy is good for dental hygienists, who will enjoy new career opportunities. And dental therapy is good for Kansas, expanding critical access to care in every corner of the state.



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