



# Dental Therapy Talking Points

*Creating jobs. Saving money. Ensuring healthy Kansans.*

Adding a new provider to the dental team will create jobs, improve Kansans' health, and save money. As a mid-level oral health provider, dental therapists will serve in a capacity similar to that of nurse practitioners and physician assistants. They will be dental hygienists who obtain advanced education at programs accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation. They will work with the supervision of a dentist to provide routine and preventive care.

## **Establishing dental therapists will create jobs and grow the Kansas economy.**

- Dentists will be able to grow their practices and see more patients with the support of skilled dental therapists.
- Dental therapists will be trained right here in Kansas and can return to their hometowns to work.
- Dental therapists are well-paid professionals, earning between \$60,000 and \$80,000 annually. In Minnesota, the average hourly wage for a dental therapist is \$45.

## **Dental therapists will provide dental care at a reduced cost.**

- Dental therapists can provide some of the same routine care dentists provide now, and cost less to employ than dentists. Adding a dental therapist to the dental team frees up dentists to focus on the more complex procedures, allowing the entire team to operate more efficiently.
- By employing dental therapists to provide routine care, safety net clinics can stretch funding further to increase the number of patients they serve.
- The Kansas Legislature can establish dental therapists without spending valuable tax dollars.

## **Dental therapists will ensure that Kansans receive the dental care they need.**

- Dental therapists will provide high-quality care. Dental therapy education programs will be accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation, the same agency that certifies dental schools. This means that educational programs for dental therapists will be held to the same standards as educational programs for dentists and dental hygienists.
- Dental therapists will make it more cost-effective for private dental practices to serve patients with KanCare insurance, and for safety net clinics to serve more patients.
- Dental therapists will work in schools, nursing homes, safety net clinics, and other underserved areas so that more Kansas families can receive care, avoid costly emergencies, and prevent serious illnesses.