



Dental Therapy Talking Points for KDHA

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, the dental therapist will serve in a capacity similar to that of nurse practitioners and physician assistants. Dental therapists 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.

- Dental therapy creates a career ladder for dental hygienists who want to expand their skills. There is already a large available workforce of dental hygienists in Kansas to facilitate the spread of dental therapists.
- Dentists will be able to grow their practices and see more patients with the support of skilled dental therapists. Dental therapists will always work with a dentist's supervision.
- 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.
- If applicable, explain why you are interested in becoming a dental therapist. What would this mean for you?

Dental therapists will provide dental care at a reduced cost.

- Dental therapists can provide some of the routine care dentists provide now at a fraction of the cost. Dental therapists will be able to perform basic restorations (fillings), non-surgical extraction of baby teeth and very loose teeth, and placement of temporary crowns. 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 demonstrate proficiency on a test approved by the board for licensure.
- Dental therapists are expected to see 2,000 to 3,000 patients a year, greatly increasing access to care for adults and children across Kansas.
- 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.

Adding dental therapists to the dental team will create new Kansas jobs, save the state money, and ensure Kansans receive the oral health care they need. Kansas dental hygienists support the creation of dental therapists.