

## New Dental Provider Type to Improve Access in Minnesota

On May 16, Minnesota’s governor signed a bill into law creating a new dental provider type as a means to improve access to care for underserved Minnesotans. The bill was passed with overwhelming legislative support.

Two new types of practitioner are now recognized – a dental therapist and an advanced dental therapist. Figure 1.1 outlines the education, supervision, and scope of practice for each therapist level.

The University of Minnesota (UM) will offer a four-year dental therapist program. The four-year program will not require participants to have prior dental experience. In addition, UM and the Minnesota state colleges system will offer a two-year master’s program to dental hygienists who have a baccalaureate degree in dental hygiene for the Advanced Dental Therapist provider level. Courses will begin this fall.

The Minnesota state legislature will receive a report from the Minnesota Board of Dentistry in January 2014 regarding the impact of the new dental therapists on the delivery and access to services.

Figure 1.1

Dental Therapist	Advanced Dental Therapist
Graduates from baccalaureate dental therapy education program	Graduates from master’s advanced dental therapy education program
Practices under supervision of a MN-licensed dentist	Practices under supervision of a MN-licensed dentist
Practices in settings serving low-income, uninsured, and underserved patients or in a dental HPSA	Practices in settings serving low-income, uninsured, and underserved patients or in a dental HPSA
Must have a written collaborative agreement with a MN-licensed dentist	Must have a written collaborative agreement with a MN-licensed dentist

**Under general supervision, may:**

- Provide education
- Chart oral conditions
- Take X-rays
- Polish teeth
- Apply fluoride and sealants
- Test pulp vitality
- Make mouthguards
- Place temporary fillings
- Perform atraumatic restorative therapy
- Administer local anesthesia and nitrous oxide

**Under indirect supervision, may:**

- Provide emergency palliative treatment of dental pain
- Place and remove space maintainers
- Perform cavity preparations
- Restore teeth
- Place temporary crowns
- Prepare and place preformed crowns
- Perform pulpotomies on primary teeth
- Extract primary teeth
- Repair prosthetic devices
- Recement crowns

**May dispense:**

- Analgesics, anti-inflammatories, and antibiotics

**Under general supervision, may:**

- Perform all of the functions allowable to dental therapists
- Evaluate dental disease and create treatment plans
- Perform non-surgical extractions of permanent teeth

**May dispense:**

- Analgesics, anti-inflammatories, and antibiotics