

DENTAL THERAPY: A WORKFORCE SOLUTION

Oral health is vital to overall health. Yet for too many Washington families, timely and routine oral health care is out of reach.

Nearly 400,000 Washington kids covered by Apple Health don't see a dentist each year.

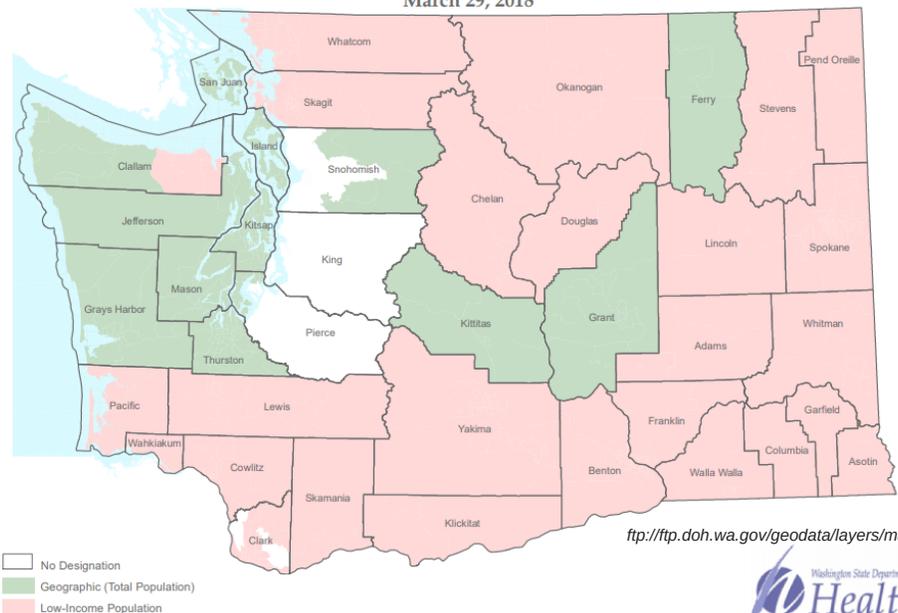
People with special needs, elderly people in nursing homes, parents in low-income families and communities of color, and people who live in rural and Tribal communities are feeling the worst effects of our shortage of providers.

Dental therapists strengthen the dental team, giving dentists and oral health clinics an opportunity to expand their business.

Adding just one dental therapist means a dental practice can take 2,000-3,000 more appointments a year. That means more good paying jobs for dental therapists, hygienists, dental assistants and administrative staff. For every dollar they generate, a dental therapist costs less than 30 cents to employ.

37 out of 39 counties have too few dental professionals to meet local needs.

Federally Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas for Dental Care
March 29, 2018



Dental therapists will complement other state efforts to increase access to care.

Capital investments expanding community dental clinics can't be maximized without an adequate workforce. Dental Therapists can leverage clinic expansion to reach the most patients in need.

Dental therapists could save hospitals money by providing high-quality, routine care.

In a single 18-month period, dental problems prompted 54,000 visits to Washington's emergency rooms, costing \$35 million.

Dental therapists are already practicing on Tribal lands in Washington.
This common-sense solution should be made available statewide.



DENTAL THERAPY: THE EVIDENCE IS CLEAR

“In a relatively short time period, dental therapists have made a difference....These findings should be of great interest to lawmakers who support evidence-based policymaking.” ¹

– Dr. Donald Chi, University of Washington

In a 2017 University of Washington study, researchers found that greater access to the therapists’ services resulted in fewer extractions among adults and children.



Dental Therapists provide high-quality care. The American Dental Association agrees.

A 2013 ADA study recognized that “appropriately trained mid-level providers are capable of providing high-quality service.” ²

Dental therapy is nationally recognized. The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) has established national standards for dental therapy education programs.

A 2017 study examined access to oral health care through the lens of Washington’s oral health care workforce.

Dentists, family physicians, pediatricians, and other stakeholders named dental therapy as a solution. ³

**Alaska, Arizona, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Vermont and Maine have all authorized dental therapy.
It's time for statewide Dental Therapy in WA!**

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Washington
DENTAL ACCESS
Campaign

References

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2. Wright, Graham, & Hayes, et al., "A Systematic Review of Oral Health Outcomes Produced by Dental Teams Incorporating Midlevel Providers" (2013).
3. D. Patterson, C. Andrilla, M. Schwartz, et al., "Assessing the Impact of Washington State's Oral Health Workforce on Patient Access to Care" (2017)