

Dental Therapist-Hygienists

A Community Workforce Solution
for Improving Access to Quality Dental Care
for Rural, Tribal & Underserved New Mexico

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NM Dental Health Crisis

- May 2013 - NM Healthcare Workforce Report to Legislature **concluded:**
 - NM 39th worst in U.S. in number of dentists/1,000 people.
 - 69% of dentists in NM metropolitan areas.
 - **1.31 million New Mexicans** (63%) are either in a shortage area or underserved (38% in DHPSA, 25% underserved)
 - NM needs 200-400 more dentists to meet need.
 - 9 NM counties either have none or 1 dentist and/or hygienist. (NM Dental Board licensure data)
 - 40 known long-standing vacancies for dentists in NM

(Adequacy of NM's Healthcare System Workforce, NM Dept. of Health Report to Legislative Finance Cmte. 5/15/13)

NM Dental Crisis...

Result of Shortage:

- 34% of all NM 3rd graders have untreated dental decay, worse for NA population.
- Thousands of New Mexicans –children, elders & persons with disabilities – do not have access to, or wait > 6 months for necessary dental care.
 - **Result:** Living in pain, missing school or work, low school performance, lost work productivity, life threatening medical emergencies, long-term serious health problems.
 - NM Mission of Mercy dental clinic, stand line/camp out for days for free dental services. (Oct. 2010, March 2012, Sept 2013)

Other Factors that Worsen Shortage:

- Very few dentists include Medicaid and non-insured patients as a significant portion of their patient mix.
- Aging dentist workforce: 51% age 55+
- **Demand will only increase:** Federal law mandates dental coverage for children up to 21 yrs., Medicaid expansion.
- **NEW** – NM DOH announced expansion of Medicaid dental coverage to also cover adults (Sept. 2013)

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NM Healthcare Workforce Rpt. Recommendations

- The number of dental health professionals in the state and their maldistribution cannot adequately meet current or future demand.
- ***“The Legislature should also revisit the concept of dental therapists as an additional way to provide care to underserved areas under the supervision of dentists.”***

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Who are Dental Therapists?

- Dental providers, general supervision of off-site dentists, study after study show provide high quality, cost-effective dental services to rural and tribal communities. (*April 2012, Review of Global Literature on Dental Therapists, David A. Nash*)
 - ZERO of 1100 studies and reports have revealed a problem with the quality of care dental therapists provide.
- Home-grown, culturally competent, selected by their communities, practice in their home or similarly situated communities.
- Obtain rigorous, competency-based education, training and clinical experience.
- *With Dental therapist you get a dentist, team of dental providers.* - Expand the reach of dentists to underserved and remote communities using telemedicine.

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Dental Therapists...

- Financially sustainable workforce model: Provide a range of billable, routine treatment and restorative care services as well as prevention and education services.
 - **NEW** - Cost employers less than 30 cents for every dollar they generate when serving underserved populations.
 - Studied AK & MN DHATs, DTs, ADTs.
 - (*Community Catalyst Report, May 2013*)
 - Can increase a dentist's productivity and profitability, including adding a 20% Medicaid patient mix. (*The Pew Center, Dec.2010*)
- Since 2005, provide care in remote Alaskan tribal villages and recently in Minnesota. Over 90 years, provided care in 53 countries including industrialized countries.
- 40,000 more Alaskans now receiving routine and preventative care because of dental therapists.

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A Workforce Solution for NM

- **Jobs, Economic Opportunity & Career Pathways**
 - Career, jobs and economic opportunities for those in rural and tribal NM, say NM communities. (Con Alma rpt. 2010)
 - Career pathway for dental hygienists
 - With additional training dental hygienists can become dental therapists. This means providers serving the public sooner.

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Tribal Sovereignty, Right to Self-Determination

- State Law Change Required to Restore Tribal Sovereignty and Rural Community Right to Self-Determination -
 - For NM rural communities, tribes, pueblos and nation to have the right to train and employ a dental therapist, NM state law must specifically allow dental therapists to practice in NM.
 - Federal law (Indian Health Improvement Act 2010) took away these communities' rights to have dental therapists.
- 2006- American Dental Association (ADA) and Alaska Dental Society (ADS) sued and AK DHAT program and all AK dental therapists
- 2007 - ADA & ADS withdrew suit. ADA/ADS settled for compromise in Indian Health Improvement Act of 2010
 - Key legal opinions upheld sovereignty for tribes

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Sovereignty cont...

- Compromise: AK program can continue, but no other tribe or tribal organization in the other states can have DTs, unless state law allows for DTs. *[25 U.S. Code 18, §1616l(d)(2)(B) and (3)(A)]*
- **“The Secretary shall exclude dental health aide therapist services from services covered under the program.”** [Community Health Aide Program (CHAP), federal program for provision of primary care services to NA/AN]-
- **The Secretary can include dental health aide therapists in the CHAP if:**
 - “an Indian tribe or tribal organization” or “IHS” elects to have dental therapists AND is
 - “located in a state in which the use of dental health aide therapist services or midlevel dental provider services is authorized under State law to supply such services in accordance with State law.”
- Tribes that try to do this without state law change would be breaking federal law and risk being sued.
- Non-Native Communities, state law must allow DTs.
- ACA allows 15. \$4 million grants for training and education of DTs and other alternative dental providers
 - DTs have to be in state law to be eligible

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Dental Therapists: An Innovative, Tested Model for NM

- Proposals for a NM Dental Therapist program are not new to NM.
 - 2008 – Presentation to Interim HHS Cmte.
 - Jan. 2011 - Introduced HB 495, dental therapist legislation for the 2011 NM legislative session
 - Oct. 2011 -Proposal presented to Indian Affairs Cmte.
 - 2012 – Proposal presented to Interim HHS Cmte. Endorsed
 - 2013 – Introduced dental therapist-hygienist legislation
 - Sept.-Oct. 2013 – Present to legislative cmtes. – Health & Human Services, Indian Affairs, Economic & Rural Development
 - Dec. 2013 – Introduce legislation
 - Jan. 2013 – Legislative session, 30-day session

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NM Schools Can Train & Educate DTHs

- NM Education Institutions interested in establishing dental therapist education programs
 - Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (SIPI)
 - Dona Ana Community College – Las Cruces
 - Northern NM University – Espanola
 - Eastern NM University–Roswell
 - Navajo Technical College -Crownpoint, NM

- **NM Dental Therapist Education Program Summit** (July 2013), national experts on how to establish effective and efficient DTH education programs

Support for Dental Therapist Model

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|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • NM State Legislative Health & Human Services Committee – Endorsed dental therapist legislation (Nov.12) | • Northern New Mexico College – Espanola, NM | • NM Telehealth Alliance | • Union County Health & Wellness Network want dental therapists in their community – Clayton, NM |
| • AARP New Mexico | • NM Alliance for Retired Persons | • NM Voices for Children | • Union County General Hospital |
| • Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board (AAIHB) | • NM Alliance for School-Based Health Care | • NM Youth Development, Inc., Elev8NM | • Women's Intercultural Center – Anthony, NM |
| • Center for Civic Policy | • NM American Federation of Teachers Retirees | • Pueblo of Kewa/Santo Domingo Health Board - want dental therapists in their community. | |
| • Concilio CDS, Inc. - Las Cruces, NM | • NM Center on Law & Poverty | • RESULTS - Santa Fe | |
| • Des Moines School Health Advisory Council | • NM Conference of Churches | • Rio Arriba Community Health Council | |
| • Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of New Mexico | • NM Dental Hygienists' Association | • Rio Arriba County Health & Human Services | |
| • Native American Professional Parent Resources, Inc. (NAPPR) | • NM Health Resources (NMHR) | • Southwest Women's Law Center | |
| • Native Health Initiative | • NM League of United Latin American Citizens | • Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute | |
| • Nizhoni Smiles Dental Clinic - Shiprock, NM | • NM Public Health Association (NMPHA) | • Tierra del Sol (Las Cruces) – affordable housing organization. | |
| | • NM Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice | | |

Support cont...

- William H. Johnson, Jr. – Fmr. NM Cabinet Secretary for Human Services Dept.
- Alfredo Vigil, MD FAAP–Fmr. NM Cabinet Secretary for Health & Human Services - Taos, NM.
- Ronald J. Romero, DDS – Fmr. NM Dept. of Health Dental Director, Private practice dentist – Santa Fe, NM.
- Howard Rhoads, DDS: – Farmington, NM
- Bob Giannini, DDS – Fmr. NM Dental Board Chair
- Roger Ames, DDS
- Bill Niendorff, DDS
- Harris Silver, MD
- William H. Wiese, MD, MPH, Ret. UNM faculty; Fmr. NM DOH Public Health Division Director

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NM Dental Crisis Demands Action

- We have a growing, committed coalition of supporters.
- We have reached out to and met with those who oppose our proposal, and we will continue to do so.
- However, the NM dental crisis is bigger than all of us.
- It demands action, an innovative and tested solution for all New Mexicans
- Solution: Legislation that allows for NM Dental Therapist-Hygienists, and a NM Dental Therapist-Hygienist education programs.

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Call to Action

- **Dental care is a crisis in NM.**
- **We have a solution.**
 - Improve NM rural, tribal and underserved access to quality, cost-effective dental services,
 - Provide jobs, stimulate economic opportunity for these communities,
 - Restore community self-determination and tribal sovereignty, and
 - Allow the best of NM's training institutions and communities to partner to solve our dental care crisis.

Request: Support and recommend legislation that includes dental therapist-hygienists as part of New Mexico's dental team

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-Thank you -

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