

Dental Therapist-Hygienist Licensure – September 2013

Purpose of Legislation: This legislation would include dental therapist-hygienists (DTHs) as a part of New Mexico's full dental team. DTHs would improve access to high-quality, cost-effective dental services and provide economic opportunity for New Mexico's underserved, rural and tribal communities. DTHs would improve the health of New Mexico's working families, children, disabled and elders and provide a workforce solution to the urgent dental crisis in New Mexico

Defines Dental Therapist-Hygienists: A dental therapist-hygienist is an individual who –

- 1) Has graduated from a dental therapy-hygiene educational program that provides a minimum of 3 years of dental therapy and hygiene curriculum that is developed in partnership with an accredited institution of higher education;
 - a. OR, if already a licensed dental hygienist, has graduated from a dental therapy education program that provides a minimum. of 1 year of dental therapy training and education.
- 2) Is from the underserved community or similar community where he or she plans to practice (or is committed to practicing in an underserved community), receives a letter of recommendation from the supporting community as part of the application process for the DTH education program, and maintains an ongoing relationship with the sponsoring entity including one community prevention project in the supporting community during coursework;
- 3) After graduating, has completed at least 400 additional clinical hours under the indirect supervision of a dentist;
- 4) Has passed a comprehensive competency-based exam given by a nationally recognized regional testing agency if available, and if not available by an institution of higher education with a dental therapy education program, following his or her completion of a dental therapy educational program;
- 5) Has passed a written examination covering the laws and rules for practice in NM;
- 6) Holds a license to practice dental therapy in the state; and
- 7) Once licensed, can practice under the general supervision of a dentist under a written "dental therapist-hygienist management agreement."

(General supervision means the supervision of tasks or procedures by an off-site dentist at the time the tasks or procedures are being performed, pursuant to DTH management agreement, so long as those tasks and procedures are within the scope of practice for a DTH. General supervision of a DTH is achieved through daily and as needed real-time communication between the dentist and DTH using telemedicine/health information technology.)

Includes Dental Therapist-Hygienist Scope of Practice - A Cost-Effective, Financially Viable Workforce Model:

DTHs provide a range of routine treatment and restorative care services as well as prevention and education services. These high-quality, billable services make dental therapists a cost-effective, financially viable workforce model. Includes a pathway for hygienists who with a minimum additional year of education and training to become DTHs.

Licensure, Fees & Accountability:

Establishes licensure requirements, fees, and accountability requirements for DTHs that mirror those of dentists and dental hygienists.

Establishes Dental Therapist-Hygienist Advocates as Members of the Dental Hygiene Committee and of the NM

Dental Board: One dental therapist advocate or DTH will be appointed by the Governor as a voting member of the NM Dental Board and the Dental Hygienists Committee. All decisions relating to dental therapy-hygiene practice must be made by the joint Board and Committee and include the dental therapist advocate or DTH appointee and the public member appointees.