

Dental therapy timeline

More than 56 million people in the United States live in areas with dentist shortages. Dental therapy is a proven solution that has helped increase access to care. Dental therapists are midlevel providers who deliver preventive and routine restorative treatment at schools, nursing homes, and veterans homes to people who would otherwise struggle to get access to care.

- 2003**
Alaska tribes greenlight dental therapist training.
- 2005**
Dental therapists begin providing care in Alaska.
- 2009**
Minnesota becomes the first state to pass dental therapy legislation.
- 2011**
First Minnesota dental therapy class to graduate begins work.
- 2014**
Maine passes dental therapy bill.
- 2015**
Commission on Dental Accreditation guidelines for dental therapy training programs approved.
- 2015**
Oregon tribal dental therapy pilot approved.
- 2015**
In North Carolina State Board of Dental Examiners v. Federal Trade Commission, U.S. Supreme Court rules that professional licensing boards can't be anti-competitive.
- 2016**
Vermont passes dental therapy bill.
- 2016**
Swinomish tribe of Washington is first tribe in Lower 48 states to hire a dental therapist.
- 2017**
77 Minnesota dental therapists provide more than 100,000 visits.
- 2018**
Arizona and Michigan enact dental therapy laws.
- 2019**
Connecticut, Idaho, Nevada, and New Mexico pass dental therapy bills.
- 2020**
Willamette Dental Group and Pacific University launch second dental therapy pilot program in Oregon.



2005: Dental therapists begin providing care in Alaska.

Alaska Native communities with dental therapists had lower rates of tooth extractions and more preventive care than Alaska Native communities without access to such care.



2009: Minnesota becomes the first state to pass dental therapy legislation.

Dental therapists are cost-efficient mobile members of the dental team and can travel to meet the demand in rural towns across the state.

© 2018 The Pew Charitable Trusts

For further information, please visit:

pewtrusts.org/dental

Contact: Josh Rosenblum, officer, communications

Email: jrosenblum@pewtrusts.org

Project website: pewtrusts.org/dental

The Pew Charitable Trusts is driven by the power of knowledge to solve today's most challenging problems. Pew applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public, and invigorate civic life.