

# Dental Therapy Coalition: Encouraged by Governor and lawmakers' dental access efforts

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**Madison, WI** – A diverse coalition of dental access proponents support the creation of a dental therapist mid-level provider put forward by Governor Evers.

The Governor, like Representative Mary Felzkowski and Senator David Craig who continue their legislative effort to authorize dental therapy, seeks to address the dental workforce shortage in Wisconsin. Evers' dental package in the budget together with the reintroduction of the Felzkowski/Craig legislation demonstrates a bipartisan recognition of the dental access problem faced by rural, poor, and underserved citizens of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin ranks near the bottom in access to dental care for low-income children. The connection between oral health and overall health is well documented and advocates agree allowing dental therapists would improve access to care in our state.

A dental therapist is a highly educated and licensed oral health professional who works in conjunction with a dental care team under the supervision of a dentist. They provide evaluative, preventive, restorative dental care within their scope of practice. Authorizing dental therapists to a dentist-led team would increase access to dental care for underserved areas in Wisconsin.

In addition to over 50 countries, dental therapists are currently authorized in

Michigan (2018), Arizona (2018), Vermont (2016), Maine (2014), Minnesota (2009), with tribal authorization in Alaska (2003), Washington (2017) and Oregon via state pilot authority (2011). Several other states are currently considering legislation.