

Badger Institute: Commends senate passage of dental therapy bill

Posted on Wednesday, Apr 14, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

The Wisconsin State Senate today unanimously approved [Senate Bill 181](#), which would allow for dental therapists to practice in Wisconsin. The Badger Institute commends the Senate for passing this important legislation and urges the State Assembly to advance its version of the bill.

“This vote offers hope to Wisconsin families that struggle with access to basic oral care,” said Badger Institute President Mike Nichols. “Allowing dental therapists to practice here would benefit thousands of families in underserved areas. Given the broad, bipartisan support for this issue, we hope the Assembly will quickly follow suit.”

The legislation now awaits a hearing in the State Assembly.

Dental therapists are mid-level dental professionals who perform preventative and restorative procedures such as simple extractions and fillings under the supervision of a dentist. Dental therapists are now authorized to practice in 12 states, including neighboring Minnesota, and, more recently, Michigan. Many other states are actively exploring authorizing dental therapy.

SB 181 would require dental therapists to practice in a health provider shortage area or in an area made up of at least 50% of underserved populations such as those on Medicaid, patients in long-term care facilities, veterans or the uninsured.

Read more about the Badger Institute’s [work](#) on dental therapy and our latest [article](#), which highlights the impact dental therapists have had after practicing in Minnesota for a decade.