

# WPHCA: Community health centers applaud oral health workforce legislation

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Madison, WI – The Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association celebrates the Assembly Health Committee’s action to hold a hearing on Assembly Bill 402, authorizing practice by Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries (EFDAs) in Wisconsin.

Since 2008, Community Health Centers have tripled their dental capacity to answer the call of Wisconsinites who are living without oral health care, providing over [280,000 dental visits](#) to both child and adult patients in 2020.

According to Steve Smith, Chief Operating Officer and Interim Chief Executive Officer at Community Health Systems in Beloit, “As with mid-level practitioners in medicine, EFDAs will enable dentists and dental hygienists to practice at the highest scope of their licenses, allowing them to deliver more patient care. This would be particularly beneficial at Community Health Centers, where often the needs of the community are greater than the capabilities of dental clinics to meet those needs. This could vastly increase our preventive services at outreach clinics in school based and other programs.”

WPHCA appreciates the continued leadership of bill sponsors Sen. Felzkowski and Rep. Plumer in advancing oral health initiatives this session. WPHCA supports AB 402 as one tool to improve access to oral health and improve oral health outcomes

for patients, along with the biennial budget's investment in improving reimbursement rates in the Medicaid program.

Wisconsin policymakers can take further action to address oral health gaps by advancing AB 169, authorizing licensure of dental therapists. The legislation passed unanimously in the Senate in April and has been referred to the Assembly Committee on Organization.

The Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association (WPHCA) represents all 17 of Wisconsin's Federally Qualified Health Centers which provided care for nearly 300,000 Wisconsin residents in 2020.