

Reality Check ✓

FACTS About Mid-Level Dental Providers

Prepared by the Minnesota Dental Association

A proposed mid-level dental provider, supported by the Minnesota Safety Net Coalition and referred to as an Oral Health Practitioner (OHP) in H.F.535 and S.F. 2083, would be allowed to perform a wide range of preventive care, tooth drilling, and tooth extractions without on-site supervision of a Minnesota licensed dentist. Licensing this new health care professional to provide these procedures without the support of a dentist to make intra operative treatment decisions and manage unexpected surgical complications lowers the standard of dental care for Minnesotans and puts patients at risk.

Another proposed mid-level provider, referred to as a dental therapist in H.F.535 and S.F. 2083, is supported by the Minnesota Dental Association, the Minnesota Academy of General Dentistry, the Minnesota Dental Assistants Association, and a number of other dental professional organizations. The scope of practice and level of supervision for the dental therapist is also favored by the Minnesota Board of Dentistry. This new member of the dental team would be educated in an accredited dental school and licensed to drill and fill baby and permanent teeth and extract baby teeth, while working in partnership with a dentist.

Safety Net Coalition

Incorrect Statements

Reality Check ✓

What they aren't telling you!

<p>The OHP “must be supervised by a dentist at all times” and is “only allowed to do services the dentist has authorized.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The OHP legislation does not require that a patient be seen by a dentist. ✓ “Supervision” is technically only through a written agreement and the dentist does NOT have to be on-site when teeth are being drilled or extracted; the dentist could literally be hundreds of miles away or even in another state. ✓ The treatment “authorization by a dentist” would be through the use of a generalized written agreement, NOT through an individualized examination, diagnosis and treatment plan performed by a Minnesota licensed dentist. ✓ The bill requires the dentist to assume responsibility for all dental restorative and surgical services performed by an OHP...when the dentist may never have even seen the patient!
<p>Mid-level dental providers exist in over 50 countries and have “been proven safe by decades of research.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The OHP scope of practice proposed exceeds the scope of any other country. ✓ Industrialized countries that allowed broad scopes of practice for mid-level providers <u>are now restricting</u> certain surgical procedures, like pulling permanent teeth (NO longer allowed in England, New Zealand, and Australia). ✓ In England, where there are 18 mid-level dental provider programs, a dentist must first examine the patient and provide a treatment plan before a mid-level provider can see the patient. ✓ There has never been a comprehensive clinical outcomes study of any mid-level dental provider program in the world. ✓ Research shows that dentists are less likely to employ mid-level dental providers if they were not educated in a dental school.
<p>An OHP education program must meet “all existing...and additional new accreditation standards.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ The only educational program in Minnesota accredited to <u>teach tooth drilling and tooth extractions</u> is the University of Minnesota School of Dentistry. ✓ It will take at least 5-7 years for any mid-level dental provider program to earn accreditation. ✓ No MnSCU institution has ever taught, nor is accredited to teach, drilling or extractions of teeth. ✓ MnSCU’s OHP curriculum has never been available for public review.
<p>The OHP educational program is “not limited to dental hygienists.”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Although the OHP legislative bill doesn’t require one to be a dental hygienist, the programs planned and taught by MnSCU certainly do. Enrollment is limited to hygienists with a baccalaureate degree. It is in reality a “re-training program.” ✓ This educational and legislative plan is based on a curriculum developed and promoted nationally by the American Dental Hygienists Association (adha.org) and is designed as an “Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner.”