

Minnesota Passes Legislation Allowing Mid-level Oral Health Provider

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CHICAGO, May 18 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- History was made on May 13, 2009, as Minnesota became the first state to pass legislation allowing a "mid-level" oral health provider into state statute - enabling students who are educated under the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner (ADHP) model to become licensed to practice. The Minnesota state House and Senate overwhelmingly passed Senate File 2083, a bill establishing the Dental Therapist and Advanced Dental Therapist providers in the state. Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty signed the bill into law on May 16.

The new providers will focus their practice on care for underserved populations in the state and will administer educational, preventive, palliative, therapeutic, and restorative services. The bill is supported by the Minnesota Safety Net Coalition, which has taken the lead in advocating for a new provider. Proponents of the OHP, including the Minnesota Dental Hygienists' Association, have also lent support to the effort. The Minnesota Dental Association is not opposed to the legislation.

The Dental Therapist/Advanced Dental Therapist provider language was the culmination of nearly two years of work spearheaded by Minnesota State Senator Ann Lynch who first brought legislation to establish a new oral health provider forward in 2008. Senator Lynch along with Representative Cy Thao in the House were integral in both supporting legislation for the new providers and forging a compromise among the various stakeholders.

American Dental Hygienists' Association President Diann Bomkamp, RDH, BSDH noted, "The leadership demonstrated by Senator Lynch, Representative Thao and their colleagues who worked closely on this effort is to be commended. Forging consensus on workforce issues is never easy but Minnesota is a demonstration to others throughout the country that solutions can be developed and implemented."

As previously mentioned, the legislation paves the way for the first students in the country who are educated under the Advanced Dental Hygiene Practitioner model to become licensed and enter the workforce. Minnesota licensed dental hygienists who have met admission requirements are entering the Masters program offered by Metropolitan State University in St. Paul, Minnesota. These students will obtain the competencies needed to practice as Advanced Dental Therapists in the state.

Interim Dean of Health Sciences of Normandale Community College and Co-Chair of Metropolitan State University Dental Hygiene Program Colleen Brickle, RDH, EdD, noted, "We are proud that our efforts in Minnesota will be part of an access solution and pave the way for meeting the needs of underserved in other states."

ADHA developed the AHDP provider model beginning in 2004 and finalized ADHP Competencies in 2008. Providers educated under the ADHP model build on their dental hygiene skill set by learning additional clinical skills and will also become competent in skills necessary to navigate the complex health care system, advocate for patients, and effectively manage a clinic or practice. The providers will focus on providing care to underserved patient populations.

President Bomkamp commended the efforts in the state, remarking, "The passage of the legislation in Minnesota is truly historic. The underserved in Minnesota who have long struggled to obtain dental care that is so vital to their overall health will now have a new provider to seek care from and a new way to enter into the health care system."

For additional information about the effort in Minnesota, please see the following links:

- [History of the midlevel effort](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/bldbill.php?bill=ccrsf2083.html&session=1s86)
"https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/bldbill.php?bill=ccrsf2083.html&session=1s86" target="_new">[Full text of Senate File 2083](#)
- [Metro State/Normandale ADT Program](#)
- [ADHP Competencies](#)
- [University of Minnesota's School of Dentistry Dental Therapy Program](#)
- [Minnesota Public Radio Story](#)
- [Minnesota Dental Hygienists' Association](#)

ADHA is the largest national organization representing the professional interests of more than 150,000 dental hygienists across the country. Dental hygienists are preventive oral health professionals, licensed in dental hygiene, who provide educational, clinical and therapeutic services that support total health through the promotion of optimal oral health. For more information about ADHA, dental hygiene or the link between oral health and general health, visit ADHA at <http://www.adha.org>.

<http://www.bio-medicine.org/medicine-news-1/Minnesota-Passes-Legislation-Allowing-Mid-level-Oral-Health-Provider-46256-1/>