



Minnesota passes midlevel provider law

By Kathy Kincade
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History was made on May 16 as Minnesota became the first state in the U.S. to pass legislation allowing the licensing of midlevel oral health providers.

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— Diann Bomkamp, R.D.H., B.S.D.H.,
American Dental Hygienists'
Association

The Minnesota House and Senate overwhelmingly passed [Senate File 2083](#), a bill establishing the professions of dental therapist and advanced dental therapist provider. Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty signed the bill into law on May 16.

The bill was the culmination of nearly [two years of work](#) spearheaded by state Sen. Ann Lynch (D-Rochester). In its original form, the bill -- which was actually a combination of two separate pieces of legislation, one introduced by Rep. Kim Norton (D-Olmstead) and the other by Rep. Cy Thao (D-Ramsey) -- proposed the creation of two types of midlevel providers: oral health practitioners (OHPs) and dental therapists.

While some in the dental community were concerned that the educational requirements were not stringent enough, most opposed provisions in the bill that would have allowed the OHPs to fill or pull permanent teeth without the onsite supervision of a licensed dentist.

But last week, dental professionals and legislators reached a [compromise](#), and the bill -- with revised language designed to address the education and scope-of-practice concerns -- quickly made its way through the House and Senate and onto Gov. Pawlenty's desk.

"This is really an exciting piece of legislation, not just for Minnesota but for the whole country," Sen. Lynch told *DrBicuspid.com* last week. "I feel we've done good work for Minnesota, but also that we've contributed to healthcare reform in this country."

"The leadership demonstrated by Sen. Lynch, Rep. Thao, and their colleagues who worked closely on this effort is to be commended," said Diann Bomkamp, R.D.H., B.S.D.H., president of the American Dental Hygienists' Association, in a press release issued today. "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. The passage of the legislation in Minnesota is truly historic."

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