



Not A Matter of **IF** but **WHEN**

Dental Therapists Will Expand Access to Care in Ohio

It is no longer a question as to whether adding new providers to the dental team will expand access to quality care. Numerous evaluations prove that Dental Therapists will. The question that remains is when will Ohio take this critical step to improve access to care?

This week, you may hear concerns from organized dentistry but please know they do not speak for all dentists or the many community based and statewide organizations, including the Ohio Dental Hygienist Association, who support expanding the dental care team.

SAFE, QUALITY CARE

Studies show conclusively that Dental Therapists deliver safe, quality care. In addition, they allow dentists to grow their practices and increase revenues while treating more patients.

The American Dental Association's own journal acknowledged "a variety of studies indicate that appropriately trained mid-level providers are capable of providing high quality service." There have been more than a thousand studies on the quality of care provided by dental mid-levels, and none has ever shown it to be unsafe.

A 2012 literature review of more than 1,100 studies across multiple nations, demonstrates the quality of care provided by Dental Therapists. We have also seen it in practice here in the U.S. In Alaska, Dental Therapists have been able to provide quality care since 2005 to 35,000 people who previously had no opportunity for dental care. In Minnesota, one practice has been able to save \$1,200 a week by adding a dental therapist to the team. That therapist cared for 1,000 people in the first year alone. A further Minnesota study shows that Dental Therapists are expanding access to care to low-income, uninsured and underinsured patients. Clinics reported improved quality and high patient satisfaction in addition to reduced travel and wait times for some patients.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

"They'll [dental therapists] get actually more practice than a dentist does by the time they graduate. The dental therapist has a very small scope of practice. The dentist has to do multiple procedures." --Dr. Mary Williard, the Director of the Dental Health Aide Therapist Training Program in Alaska, graduate of The Ohio State University College of Dentistry, 1994.

In February 2015, the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) approved national training standards for dental therapy education programs. CODA is the same accreditation body for the education of dentists and dental hygienists. CODA adopted standards that ensure training institutions will have national and streamlined standards to shape their dental therapy programs.

The CODA approval signaled that organized dentistry's accrediting body thought it was in the best interest of the dental profession and the public to develop national standards for the program. More importantly, the vote was recognition that dental therapy as a profession is here to stay.

Acknowledging the need for national standards and establishing them is another important step in dentistry's path toward adopting team based providers—a step the medical community took decades ago when it expanded the medical team to include physician assistants and nurse practitioners.

Dental Access Now! Endorsers

Advocates for Ohio's Future
AIDS Resource Center Ohio
Americans For Prosperity, Ohio
Asian Services in Action, Inc.
Association of Ohio Health Commissioners
CareSource
Coalition on Housing and Homelessness in Ohio
National Association of Social Workers, Ohio Chapter
Ohio AIDS Coalition, a Division of AIDS Resource Center
Ohio Association of Area Agencies on Aging
Ohio Association of Community Action Agencies
Ohio Association of Foodbanks
Ohio Consumers for Health Coverage
Ohio Council of Behavioral Health and Family Service
Providers
Ohio Dental Hygienists Association
Ohio Head Start Association
Ohio Olmstead Task Force
Ohio Public Health Association
Ohio School Based Healthcare Association
UHCAN Ohio
Adelante (Toledo)
Akron Summit Community Action, Inc.
Area Office On Aging of NW Ohio (Toledo)
Athens County Department of Job and Family Services
Athens County Family and Children's First Council
CAC Of Belmont County (St. Clairsville)
Center For Closing the Health Care Gap in Greater Cincinnati
Centers for Families and Children (Cleveland)
Central Community House (Columbus)
Central Ohio Area Agencies on Aging (Columbus)
Clintonville Resources Center (Columbus)
Columbus Coalition for the Homeless
Columbus Federation of Settlement Houses (Columbus)
Community Action Org. – Del./Mad./Uni. Co's
Community Action Corp. of Wash./Morg. Co's
Community Partners for Affordable Accessible Healthcare (Cleveland)
Contact Center (Cincinnati)
Council on Rural Services (Piqua)
Dominican Sisters of Hope (Cincinnati)
Faith Community Alliance (Cincinnati)
Family Health Centers of Pike County
Gladden Community House (Columbus)
Greater Cincinnati Coalition for the Homeless
Health Partners of Western Ohio (Lima)
Highland Co. Community Action Head Start (Hillsboro)
Hocking, Athens, Perry Community Action Agency
Huckleberry House (Columbus)
Intercommunity Justice and Peace Center (Cincinnati)
League of United Latin American Citizens (Columbus)
Liberty Center of Sandusky County
LifeStart (Columbus)
Living in Family Environments (Columbus)
Lower Lights Christian Health Center (Columbus)
Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (Cleveland)
Merrick House (Cleveland)
Mid-Ohio Foodbank, Inc. (Columbus)
Miami County Recovery Council, Inc, (Troy)
Miami Valley Child Development Centers, Inc. (Dayton)
Near East Health Advisory Committee (Columbus)
NE Ohio Consumers for Health Care (Cleveland)
North Side Health Advisory Committee (Columbus)
NW Ohio Community Action Commission (Defiance)
Northern Ohioans for Budget Legislation Equality (Cleveland)
One Village Council (Toledo)
Over the Rhine Community Council (Cincinnati)
Over the Rhine Community Housing (Cincinnati)
Recovery Hotel (Cincinnati)
Power Inspires Progress (Cincinnati)
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church (Cincinnati)
Saint Francis – Seraph Ministries (Cincinnati)
Shared Harvest Foodbank (Fairfield)
Shawnee Mental Health Center, Inc. (Portsmouth)
Six County, Inc. (Zanesville)
Southside Health Advisory Committee (Columbus)
South Side Settlement House (Columbus)
Summit County Minority Health Roundtable
SW Ohio Consumers for Health Care (Cincinnati)
Tender Mercies, Inc. (Cincinnati)
Townhall II (Kent)
United Clevelanders Against Poverty (Cleveland)
United Pastors in Mission (Cleveland)
We Are The Uninsured (Cleveland)
Western Ohio Foodbank (Lima)
Westside Community Health Advisory Comm. (Columbus)
Wood, Seneca, Ottawa and Sandusky Community Action (Fremont)
WinMed Health Services (Cincinnati)

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