

NYS Must License Dental Therapy to Address Increasing Demand for Dental Services Amidst Severe Dental Workforce Shortage Crisis

CHCANYS strongly recommends New York State to license Dental Therapy

- Dental therapists are mid-level providers who serve on dentist-led care teams and can provide preventative and restorative care including health education, prophylaxis, x-rays, cavity fillings, temporary crown placements, and tooth extractions. Dental therapists allow dentists to provide more complex care and are more economical than hiring another dentist, which can be challenging itself.¹ Studies on dental therapy practice have shown that they provide safe, high-quality care, lead to improvements in access, and are welcomed by patients.²
- **CHCANYS is also in strong support of A.5373 (Woerner)/S.4428 (Fernandez)** which would allow New York to license and provide Medicaid reimbursement for dental therapists. This will help to alleviate New York's dental workforce shortages and expand access to preventative dental services.

Licensing Dental Therapy is critical to meet demand for and expand access to dental services

- New York is experiencing an urgent and growing need for greater investments in the dental workforce. Expansion efforts are necessary to ensure equitable access to dental care, particularly in underserved communities which are experiencing dental care deserts.
- New York currently has 137 Dental Health Professional Shortage Area designations affecting more than 3.3 million people but only about 18% of the need is being met.³
- Licensing dental therapists in New York would significantly increase access to preventive and non-emergent care.

Community health centers (CHCs) are attempting to meet dental care demand & expand access

- CHCs play a crucial role in providing and expanding access to dental care. There are currently 66 CHCs providing dental services across New York and are often the only source of affordable and accessible dental care, especially for individuals covered by Medicaid or without insurance, as private practices often do not accept new patients, and/or refuse to treat these patients.
- Demand for CHC dental services has increased since the height of the pandemic and is continuing to grow. However, CHCs are struggling to meet the overwhelming demand and often cannot expand access to dental care due to dental workforce shortages and inability to compete with private practices for this limited pool of dental providers.
- This scarcity of dental providers further exacerbates health disparities, since it disproportionately impacts low-income individuals and people of color, who already utilize less dental care than the rest of the population in part due to the existing limited availability of dental services.⁴

¹ [About Dental Therapy | National Partnership for Dental Therapy](#)

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8428854/>

³ <https://files.constantcontact.com/b6bde37a401/02ad43d7-da91-43c7-a913-8465a94f2ff2.pdf>

⁴ [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Oral Health Strategic Framework, 2014–2017 - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)