

# SB 366 Fact Sheet

## The Oral Health Crisis in Nevada



“Nevadans experience many oral diseases and conditions *in greater number* than their national counterparts. Significant efforts have been made statewide to reduce the incidence of oral diseases; however additional work is needed to reduce the disparities between various groups.” **Nevada State Health Division**

- ✓ Nevada is ranked 47th in the nation for dental services and care. (WalletHub Jan 2019)

It is critical for **all** Nevadans to have access to preventive and therapeutic care by licensed oral health care providers.

**SB 366** has been brought forward by Senator Ratti on behalf of the Nevada Dental Hygienist’s Association in recognition of this disparity in oral health care. This bill offers a new mid-level dental professional, the **Dental Therapist**. Dental therapists are required to receive a master’s degree level education and would be similar to a nurse practitioner or physician’s assistant in the medical field.

### ***The key points of SB366:***

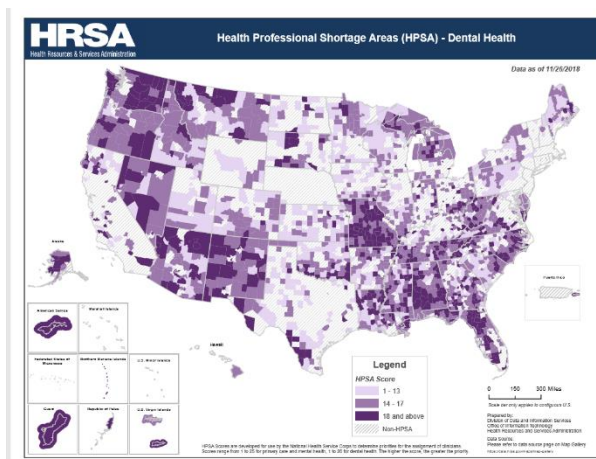
- Dental Therapists must graduate from an accredited dental therapy program. The Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) accredits all dental, dental hygiene and dental therapy education in the US. The dental therapist must first graduate from an accredited dental hygiene program, then graduate from an accredited dental therapy program and then prove competency through national and regional board examinations and obtain state licensure **(Sec 60.4)**
- Dental therapists can only perform duties that they have received education for, are allowed by the Nevada State Board of Dental Examiners and outlined in written practice agreement with authorizing dentist **(Sec 61)**
- Licensed dental therapists must complete the same amount of continuing education credits as licensed dentists **(Sec 68)**
- Licensed dental therapists must complete mandated supervised hours after licensure **( Sec.61)**
- Dental therapists must practice with a written practice agreement with an authorizing dentist **(Sec 61)**
- Dental therapists will have the authorizing dentist review charts monthly **(Sec 62.4)**
- The number of dental therapists that a dentist may authorize is limited to 4. **(Sec 62.5)**
- Dental therapists must practice in public health settings
  - Rural health centers, hospital, FQHC, tribal programs, school based settings ,mobile or practice settings in which 50% of the population meets criteria of any of the following: Medicaid, uninsured, poverty level, medically compromised **(Sec 61.3)**

*“Many published studies demonstrate that appropriately trained midlevel providers can provide high-quality services, including irreversible procedures such as restorative care and dental extractions.”*

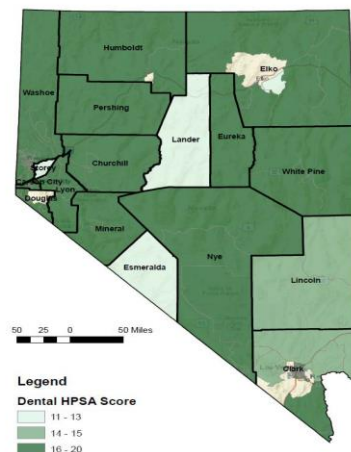
*- The American Dental Association Council on Scientific Affairs*

- 10 YEARS OF DATA IN MINNESOTA: Dental therapists have been actively practicing in Minnesota for 10 years. A workforce brief was issued in 2018 from the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Department of Dentistry supporting dental therapy as a safe, diverse, cost effective and productive workforce. <http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/orhpc/workforce/oral/2018dtbrief.pdf>
- Dental therapists practice in 54 countries across the globe. 1,100 academic papers have proven dental therapists to provide safe and effective care for children.
- 9 states have already passed legislation allowing dental therapists to practice
- 11 states are currently pursuing dental therapy legislation; Washington, Florida and Wisconsin to name a few. [http://www.adha.org/resources-docs/Expanding\\_Access\\_to\\_Dental\\_Therapy.pdf](http://www.adha.org/resources-docs/Expanding_Access_to_Dental_Therapy.pdf)
- **81% of the public polled would support a new dental midlevel provider** (national poll) <https://healthjournalism.org/blog/2017/01/backers-of-dental-therapist-profession-find-support-in-national-poll/>
- **GOP and Dems Agree in Merit for Dental Therapy:** <https://valleydailypost.com/gop-dems-agree-merit-dental-therapy>

**Nearly the entire state of Nevada has been classified as a dental healthcare professional shortage area by the US Federal Government, as well as the state of Nevada Division of Public and Behavioral Health. This includes urban, rural, tribal and frontier areas.**



Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas in Nevada



- Other barriers to care include:
  - \*Transportation
  - \*Cost
  - \*Language
  - \*Lack of Providers
  - \*Education
  - \*Location/time of services

### **SB 366 Intent**

- ✓ A provider that can see the elderly, veterans, homebound, adults and children in public health settings: including rural and tribal areas
- ✓ A provider that can serve the Medicaid population as well as uninsured and underinsured
- ✓ A provider that may bring patient care to a variety of settings, reduce wait times
- ✓ Enhance the current dental delivery system, promote diversity within the oral health care team
- ✓ Workforce development/career ladder for dental hygienists ( similar to nurse and nurse practitioner)