



Let's bring  
dental therapy  
to California!  
Learn more:  
**COHEC.org**

## THE PROBLEM

### Not all Californians have access to oral health care.



Low-income, uninsured, immigrant, rural, Tribal, and BIPOC communities face more barriers to care, resulting in more oral health problems and economic inequities.

### California has an uneven distribution of dental providers.



California has the greatest number of dentists per population of any state in the U.S. Yet, many areas of the state do not have a sufficient number of dentists to meet communities' needs.

### Dental disease hurts more than our teeth.



The health of our mouths affects the health of our entire bodies and our ability to perform essential functions, like speaking, eating, working, studying, and sleeping.

*The California Oral Health Equity Coalition (COHEC) is a grassroots campaign led by low-income BIPOC, Tribal, and other marginalized communities across the state, with the goal of authorizing dental therapists in California.*

# Dental Therapy Advances Oral Health Equity for All Californians

## THE SOLUTION

Dental therapy can help achieve oral health equity and advance racial and economic justice for all Californians.

### Dental therapists:

- Are **licensed professionals** who work under the supervision of a dentist to conduct routine dental procedures, like exams and fillings.
- Work as **part of a dentist-led team**, complementing the roles of dental hygienists and dental assistants.
- Receive training at programs that are **accredited by the same organization** that accredits education institutions for dentists and dental hygienists.
- **Practice in areas with chronic shortages of dental providers**, such as rural communities, Tribal lands, and low-income neighborhoods.
- **Provide care in clinics, dental offices, and non-traditional settings** — like schools, nursing homes, and community centers — bringing essential services directly to people who might otherwise go without.
- Have been **providing safe, high-quality care** in the U.S. for 20 years and internationally for more than 100 years.
- Are authorized to **practice in 14 states and counting**.

# BENEFITS OF DENTAL THERAPY IN CALIFORNIA

Dental therapy is a proven, community-driven solution to expand access to quality, culturally relevant, and affordable oral health care.

## DENTAL THERAPY:

### IMPROVES ACCESS TO CARE IN THE COMMUNITIES WHERE THEY WORK



Dental therapy creates more opportunities for people to access **early treatment and prevention**, avoiding more painful and invasive care in the future.

Where dental therapists practice, patients **wait less time** for appointments and have **shorter travel times** for care.

### ENSURES THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF CARE FOR PATIENTS



Studies have found **comparable quality of care** between dental therapists and dentists in the procedures in which dental therapists are trained.

Patients who receive care from dental therapists are **highly satisfied with the quality of care**.

### CREATES ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Because dental therapists perform a narrow set of commonly needed procedures, they can be trained in less time and at less cost than a dentist.

Dental therapy allows **local colleges to build accessible workforce pipelines** that foster family-supporting jobs and better oral health.

### CAN HELP BRIDGE LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL GAPS



Accessible education means that dental therapists are more likely to **represent the communities they serve**.

Patients also have better experiences and health outcomes when **providers share their culture**.

### IS A COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTION



Because the costs of employing a dental therapist are about 1/3 to 1/2 that of employing a dentist, hiring them is an **affordable way to treat more patients**, while freeing dentists up to address more complex cases.

Dental therapy **helps clinics serve more patients** with the same budget and can divert costly emergency room use for dental problems.