



# Expand Access to Basic Dental Care Across Oregon with Dental Therapy

One in four Oregonians don't have access to dental care—dental therapy will help

Dental therapists are primary oral health care professionals with the training to provide the basic dental care that many Oregonians can't get today — exams, fillings, and simple extractions. **Oregon HB 2528 allows Oregon to license dental therapists to practice in the state.**



## Oregon can't wait—we need dental therapy now

- More than **one million Oregonians** live in areas that have a shortage of dentists.
- Low-income families in Oregon often lack access to basic dental care: **Less than half of children, and about one in four adults**, covered by Medicaid see a dentist each year.
- COVID-19 has made it even more difficult for people—especially low-income families and people of color—to access dental care.
- Increasing access to basic dental care **reduces preventable cavities** and other problems that turn into expensive trips to the emergency room, and long-term health problems.



## Dental therapy addresses unmet oral health care needs in rural and underserved communities and provides huge savings to the overall health system

- **Only 40% of Oregon dentists** accepted Medicaid patients before COVID-19 and the pandemic will likely decrease this further. Dental therapists provide cost savings, meaning dental offices employing therapists can serve more people, including those on Medicaid.
- Dental therapy is a rewarding profession with a good salary. Dental therapists often practice in rural and underserved communities where they grew up.
- Dental therapists are now authorized to provide care in **12 U.S. states**, and have **practiced across the world for decades**.
- Evidence shows that dental therapy prevents problems caused by untreated dental issues, **improves people's overall health**, and provides huge savings to the entire health system.

## Support HB 2528 and expand dental care access in Oregon

- HB 2528 allows the state to license qualified dental therapists, expanding access statewide.
- HB 2528 requires all dental therapists to graduate from an approved education program before being licensed.
- HB 2528 requires dental therapists to work under the supervision of a dentist.

A priority of the 2021 Children's Agenda



*A broad coalition of Oregon health and dental care groups, children's advocates, educators, consumers and tribes support HB 2825 to expand access to dental care for more Oregonians:*

