

# Passing Dental Therapist Legislation: Plan for Success, Expect Opposition



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Minnesota Safety Net Coalition  
*LPaC alliance*  
*law, policy and consulting*

# Minnesota's Coalition

- MN Safety Net Coalition
- Dental access problem in MN
- Past MN efforts
- Oral Health Committee of the SN Coalition
- Legislative Alliance
- Dental Therapy Alliance

# For and Against

## For it:

*Apple Tree Dental, Aging Services of Minnesota, Arc Greater Twin Cities, Arc of Minnesota, BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota, Children's Dental Services, Children's Defense Fund Minnesota, Community Action Head Start, Community Dental Care*

*Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities, Disability Law Center, Ecumen, ElderCare Rights Alliance, Family Housing Fund, Families Moving Forward, HealthPartners, Hennepin County Medical Center, Hennepin Faculty Associates, Lake Superior College, Lake Superior, Community Health Center, Legal Services Advocacy Project, Local, Public Health Association, Mary's Place, Sharing and Caring Hands, Medica, Metropolitan Health Plan, Metropolitan State University, Migrant Health Service, Minnesota Association of Community Health Centers, Minnesota Association of Community Mental Health Programs, Minnesota Council of Health Plans, Minnesota Dental Hygienists Association, Minnesota Dental Hygiene Educators' Association, Minnesota Hospital Association, Minnesota Social Services Administration, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities*

*Minnesota Visiting Nurse Agency, National Dental Association, National Rural Education Association, National Rural Health Association, Native American Community Clinic, Neighborhood Health Care Network, Neighborhood Involvement Program, Normandale Community College, NorthPoint Health & Wellness Center, Open Door Health Center, Partnership to Improve Children's Oral Health, People Serving People, Portico Healthnet, PrimeWest, Regions Hospital, Sanford Health Plan of MN, Scenic Rivers Health Services, St. Anne's Place, St. Stephen's Human Services, Three Rivers Community Action, Inc., United Way Bright Smiles, West Side Community Health Services*

## Against it:

*Minnesota Dental Association  
Minnesota Dental Assistants Association  
Minnesota Academy of General Dentistry*

# Policy Decision Checklist

1. Regulatory agency
2. Scope of practice
3. Dentist Supervision
5. Educational programs
  - Approval, credentialing, accreditation, residency
6. Licensing
7. Patients served
8. Practice settings
9. Financing

# MN Alliance - Principles

- Address the access problem directly
- Broad scope incl. fillings and extractions
- General supervision
- Not just remote areas
- Children and adults
- Variety of settings: FHQCs, head start, rural, native communities, nursing homes, hospitals and more

## Keep Focus on the Access Problem

- Untreated dental disease affects ability to learn, work, function in daily life
- Untreated dental disease results in higher costs
  - Lack of prevention and patient education
  - Delays result in more costly treatment
  - Treatment in hospital emergency rooms
- The most vulnerable patients suffer worst



Children should never be put to bed with a bottle

# The Washington Post

## For Want of a Dentist

Pr. George's Boy Dies After Bacteria From Tooth Spread to Brain

By Mary Otto  
Washington Post Staff Writer  
Wednesday, February 28, 2007; B01

Twelve-year-old Deamonte Driver died of a toothache Sunday.

A routine, \$80 tooth extraction might have saved him.

If his mother had been insured.

If his family had not lost its Medicaid.

If Medicaid dentists weren't so hard to find.

If his mother hadn't been focused on getting a dentist for his brother, who had six rotted teeth.

By the time Deamonte's own aching tooth got any attention, the bacteria from the abscess had spread to his brain, doctors said. After two operations and more than six weeks of hospital care, the Prince George's County boy died.

Deamonte's death and the ultimate cost of his care, which could total more than \$250,000, underscore an often-overlooked concern in the debate over universal health coverage: dental care.

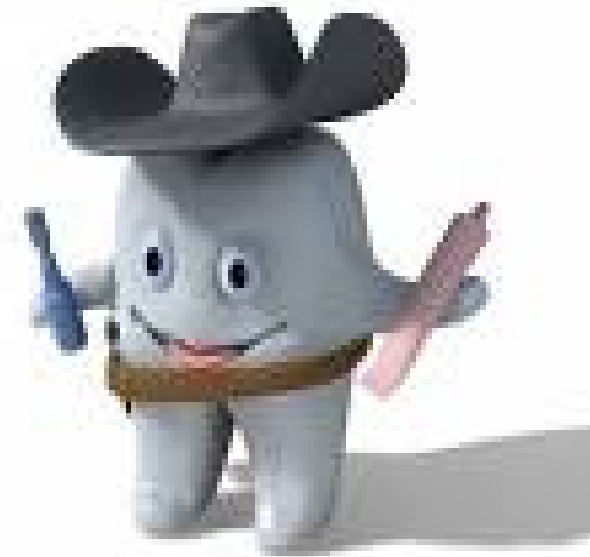
# Rely on Facts and Research

- Over 50 countries have programs
- Many research studies found quality as good or better than dentists for basic procedures
- No contrary research or examples of patients being harmed





# Expert Help is Essential



Dentists, DHs, DAs, researchers, nurses, experts from other states and countries, people who work with the underserved, etc.

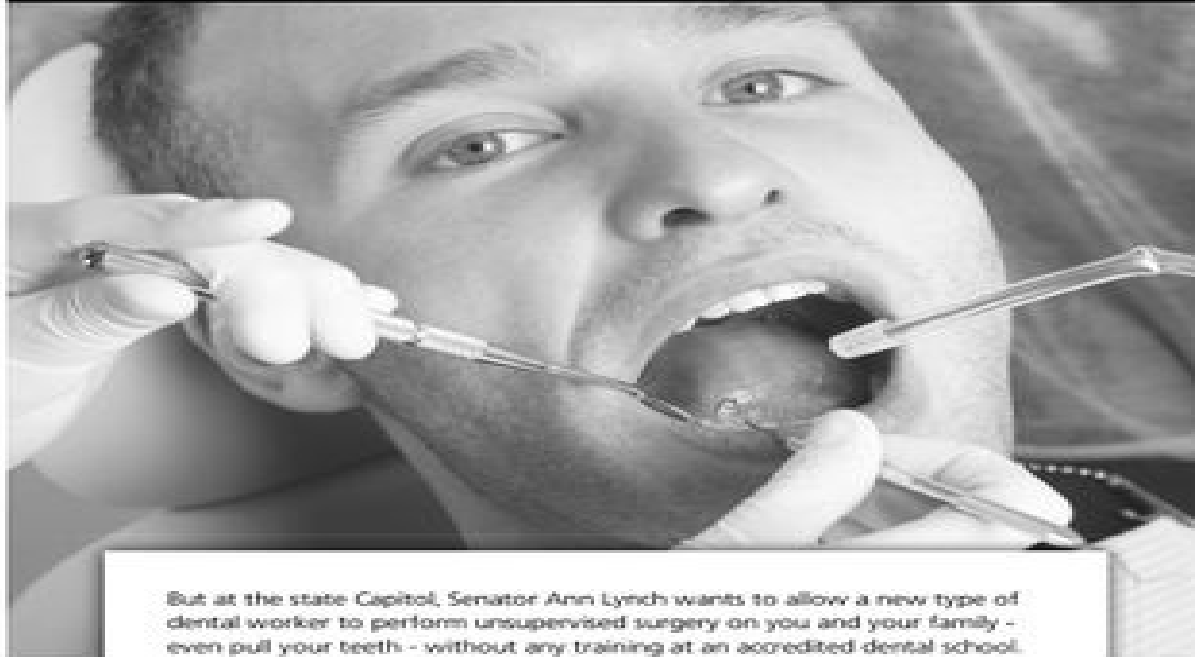
# Opposition Tactics

- Well funded
- Aggressive grassroots
- Advertising and earned media
- Scare tactics and misinformation
- Political pressure

# Opposition Arguments

- DTs will be inadequately trained in unaccredited schools and perform complex surgical procedures with no dentist supervision.
- This is an experimental program that has never been tried anywhere in the world and will jeopardize patients' health and safety.
- The problem is funding and dental payment rates, not a shortage of dentists

## The last thing you want to hear when you're getting dental care is "uh-oh."



But at the state Capitol, Senator Ann Lynch wants to allow a new type of dental worker to perform unsupervised surgery on you and your family - even pull your teeth - without any training at an accredited dental school.

And worse, a dentist wouldn't even have to be in the building if something goes wrong.

Minnesota's lawmakers must ensure that only supervised, dental school trained professionals perform surgery.

**Call Senator Ann Lynch and tell her unsupervised workers doing dental surgery is a bad idea.**

**Call Senator Ann Lynch today at 651-296-4848.**

*Fold for by the Minnesota Dental Association*  
Call Senator Ann Lynch today at 651-296-4848. Fax 651-296-4847. © 2007 MDA

## Going to the Dentist Could Start to Become Painful

A risky proposal at the Minnesota legislature could mean some Minnesotans, including children and the elderly, might be treated by an experimental new dental practitioner. Some of these patients are our state's most medically challenged, but could have their teeth drilled and pulled by a dental practitioner who is not trained at a dental school. And worse, they would not even have a supervising dentist in the building when performing these irreversible procedures.



**Minnesotans should not be used as an experiment!  
Do you want your family affected by this kind of  
dental health reform?**

**Call YOUR LEGISLATORS today!** Tell them to require that this new practitioner be taught at a dental school **AND** be supervised by a dentist when doing surgical procedures.

**Action will be taken at the legislature soon.  
Please call today!**

# Success Factors

- Guiding principles, leadership and process
- Expertise: communities, dentists, educators, providers, health plans, advocates
- Communications
- Lobbying
- Grassroots
- Leadership



# Questions?

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