

# MINNESOTA'S DENTAL THERAPIST LAW CONCEPTION TO IMPLEMENTATION

Michael Scandrett  
Minnesota Safety Net Coalition  
LPaC alliance/Halleland Habicht PA  
*law, policy and consulting*



# Minnesota's Dental Therapist Law

## Chapter 95 - enacted May 2009



Establishes two new types of licensed, mid-level dental practitioners, called dental therapists and advanced dental therapists, who will provide basic oral health and dental services to underserved patients and communities.

# MN Mid-level Alliance



- Safety Net Coalition, safety net providers
- MN Dental Hygienists Association
- Nursing homes and long-term care orgs
- Head Start programs
- Health insurance plans
- State government
- Disability organizations and advocates

# 2008 Law



- Skeleton framework for “oral health practitioner” established
- Work Group established
- Work Group recommendations reported in December 2008
- Legislation introduced in 2009
- Chapter 95 enacted in May

# 2008 Law



- Answered the question of “whether” to establish a mid-level practitioner
- Did not answer the “how” questions
  - ▣ Level of dentist supervision required
  - ▣ Education program requirements
  - ▣ Licensing and regulatory system
- Legislature created a work group, which recommended the “how” but this did not end the controversy

# 2009 Session



MDA and U of M Dental School offered alternative bill:

1. **MDA/U of M**: “physician assistant” model with dentist on site to do diagnosis and supervise treatment. Only the dental school could train:
2. **Safety Net Coalition**: “nurse practitioner” model to provide treatment where no dentists are available.

# Compromise



- Proposals merged: single practitioner, 2 levels
- Not based on dental hygienist
- Only basic procedures incl. “simple” extractions
- Supervising dentist requirements strengthened
- No diagnosis, but may assess
- No prescribing authority, but may provide
- Clinical practice required before advanced practice allowed
- Educational institutions not specified

# Policy Issues



- Scope of practice
  - ▣ Diagnosis by non-dentist
  - ▣ Defining “routine” or “simple” procedures
  - ▣ Extractions of permanent teeth
- Level of supervision
  - ▣ General supervision vs. indirect
- Education level, accreditation
- Permitted treatment settings





# 2010 Implementation



- Students began Fall 2009
- Approval of education programs
- Competency exams
- Licensing and certification system
- Reimbursement system
- First students graduate:
  - U of M DTs: 2013
  - Metro State ADTs: 2011

# For More Information

- **MN Dental Therapist Law:**  
<https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/?id=95&doctype=Chapter&year=2009&type=0>
- **Minnesota Safety Net Coalition:**  
<http://www.mnsafetynetcoalition.org/>
- **MN Oral Health Practitioner Work Group:**  
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/healthreform/oralhealth/index.html>
- **The Pew Center for the States: Oral Health**  
<http://www.pewcenteronthestates.org/initiatives/detail.aspx?initiativeID=42360>

# QUESTIONS?



*Michael Scandrett*  
*MN Safety Net Coalition*  
*LPaC alliance*  
*612-269-2589*  
*[mscandrett@lpacalliance.com](mailto:mscandrett@lpacalliance.com)*