MINNESOTA’S DENTAL THERAPIST LAW
CONCEPTION TO IMPLEMENTATION

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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](https://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/laws/?id=95&doctype=Chapter&year=2009&type=0)


QUESTIONS?

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