

Dental Therapists:

An Innovative Approach to Expanding Access

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*Vermont State Senate
Government Operations Committee
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Community Catalyst

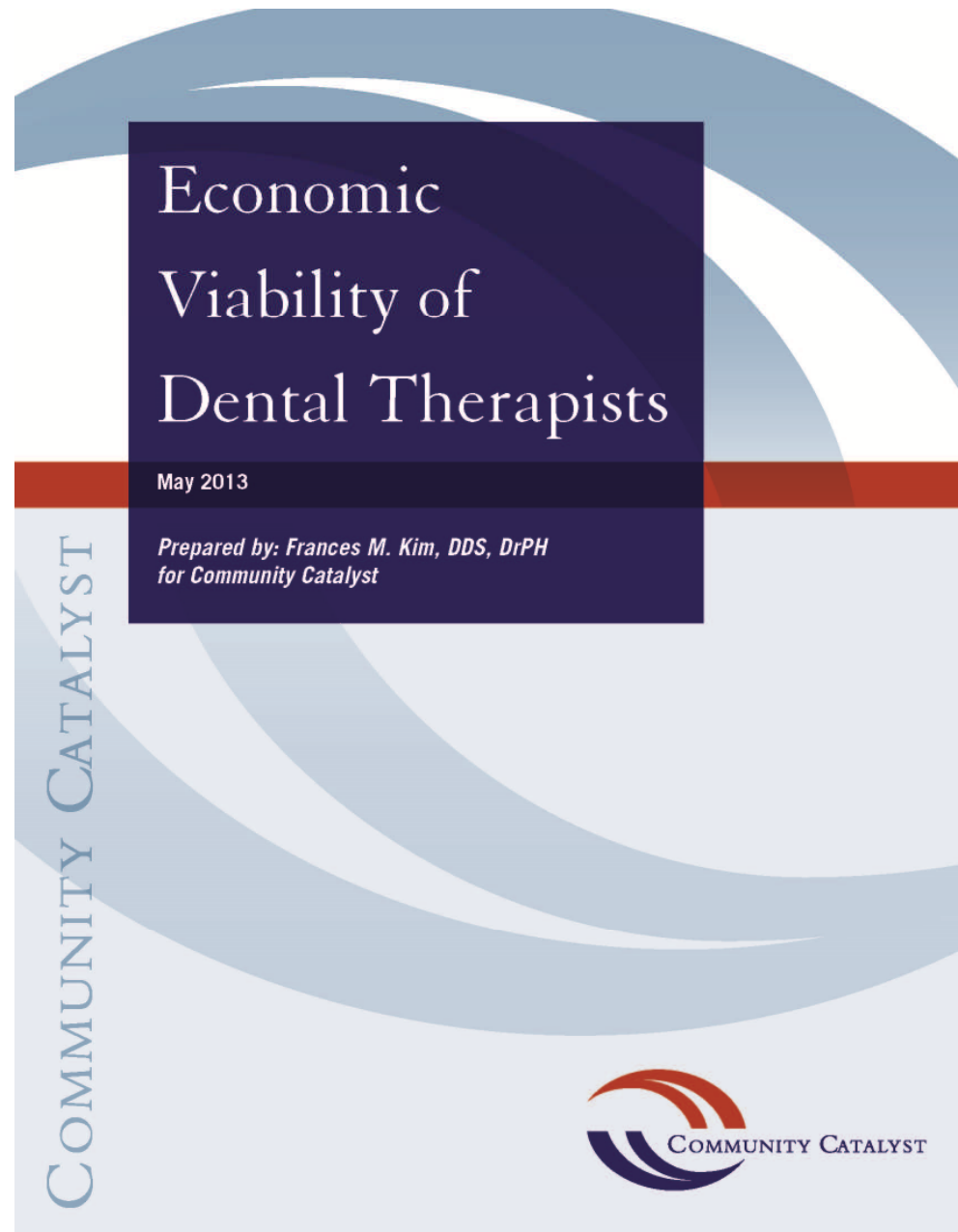
Community Catalyst is a national non-profit advocacy organization that works with national, state and local consumer organizations, policymakers and foundations to build consumer and community leadership to improve the health care system.

We support consumer advocacy networks that impact state and federal health care policy, and ensure consumers have a seat at the table as health care decisions are made.

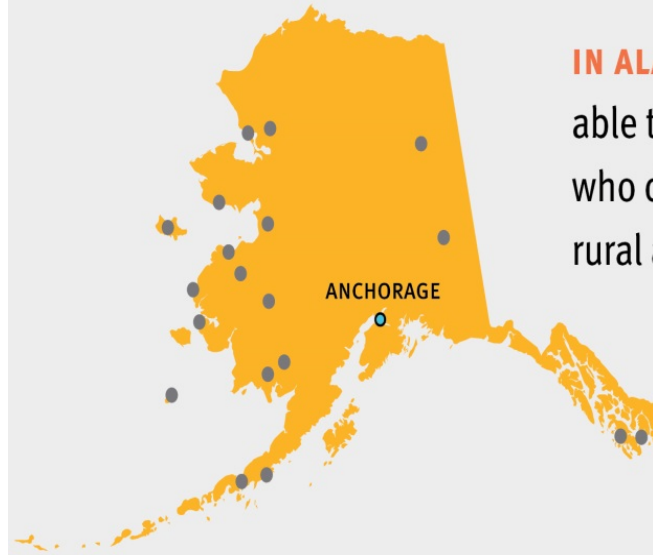
Oral Health is Important to Overall Health.

Yet tens of millions of Americans and tens of thousands of Vermonters can't get the dental care they need.

Economic Viability of Dental Therapists



Who are dental therapists treating?



IN ALASKA, dental therapists have been able to expand care to **40,000** people who didn't have access before, including rural and tribal populations.

IN MINNESOTA, dental therapists have been able to expand access to care to those most in need.

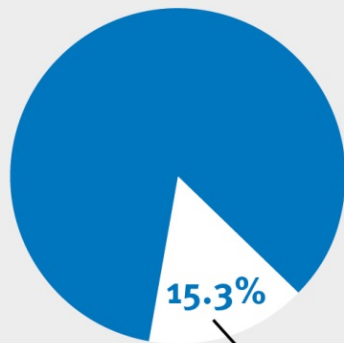
78%
of patients were publicly insured.



67%
of patients were under 21.



What services are dental therapists providing?



84.7%

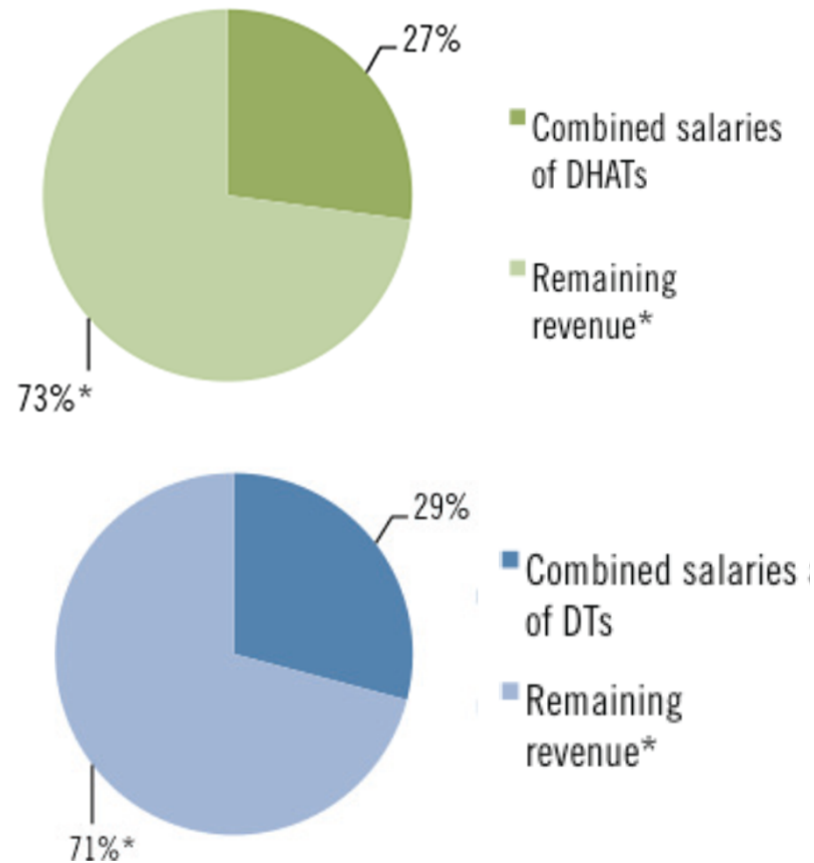
of the care dental therapists provide is
PREVENTIVE and **ROUTINE**.

15.3%

Other procedures in
Dental Therapist
scope of practice

Financial Impact of Expanding the Dental Team

According to a May, 2013 Community Catalyst study on the economic viability of dental therapists in Alaska and Minnesota, dental therapists cost their employers less than 30 cents for every dollar of revenue they generate.



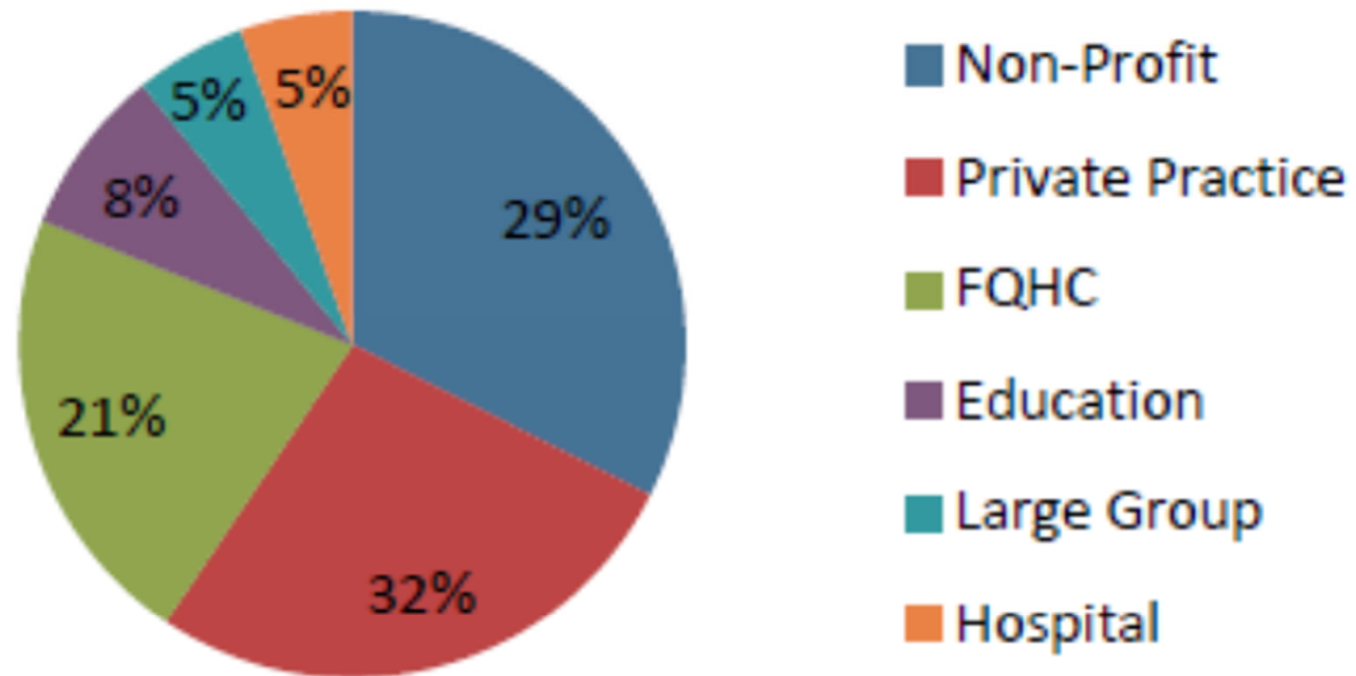
**Total Revenue Generated by Advanced Dental Therapists and Dental Therapists in Minnesota - green
Dental Health Aide Therapists in Alaska - blue**

2014 Minnesota Department of Health Evaluation of Dental Therapists

- Increased access for underserved patients and communities
- Reduced wait times and travel times (especially for rural communities)
- Reduced clinic operating costs serving more patients for the same amount of money
- Increased dental team productivity
- No quality or safety complaints or concerns
- Practiced in a variety of treatment settings
- Dental therapists can potentially reduce ER visits

Minnesota Dental Therapists

- 42 licensed Dental Therapists (DTs)
- DTs practicing in a variety of settings and increasing access to care



Alaska's Dental Therapists

- 35 dental therapists increased access to care for over 40,000 Alaska Natives
- Provide culturally competent care
- Produce high patient satisfaction rates
- Reduce amount of emergency care
- Increase preventive care
- Create jobs and generate economic impact
 - Created 76 full time jobs per year with total personal income of \$4.4 million
 - Net economic effect of program is \$9.7 million

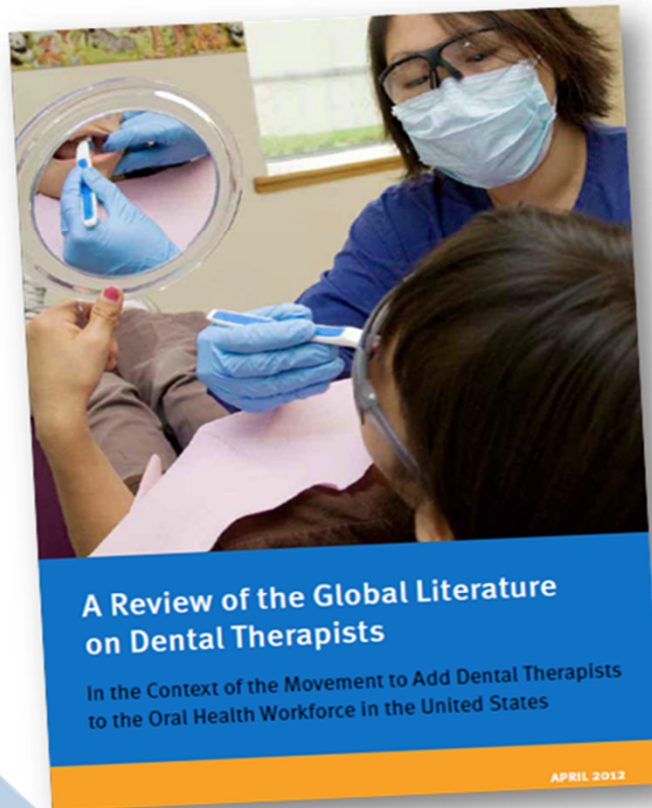
National Accreditation Standards

- On February 6th CODA adopted national dental therapy training standards, which states:
 - Educational programs should have the flexibility to determine the degree awarded to program graduates (no difference in curriculum between bachelors and masters programs)
 - Dental therapists to be trained in three academic years with advanced standing granted to dental hygienists and assistants
 - State sets supervision levels; removal of restrictive direct supervision requirements

Impacts:

- Accreditation will be overseen by a national accrediting body rather than on a state by state basis
- Recognition of the need for dental therapy programs and the profession nationally

Evidence Based Solutions



A global literature review of 1,100 documents found that “mid-level” dental practitioners known as dental therapists have a long history of providing safe, effective dental care. In fact none of the 1,100 documents found any evidence of compromises to safety or quality of care.



Thank You

