

**MEMORANDUM**

FROM: Patricia Moulton, President  
TO: Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs  
CC: Sophie Zdatny, VSCS Chancellor  
Katherine Levasseur, VSCS Director of External and Government Affairs  
Dr. Cheyanne Warren, VTC Dental Therapy Program Director  
SUBJECT: Dental Therapy Update and needs.  
DATE: April 15, 2021

Thank you for the opportunity to provide an update on dental therapy to you April 15. This is my written version of that testimony.

We will be submitting our accreditation for Dental Therapy to the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) soon. We will follow with submittal to the New England Commission on Higher Education (NECHE) following CODA. Both are needed.

Our progress has been significantly affected by COVID. This was driven by:

- CODA shut down for a year which prevented us from submitting earlier. They have recently opened up for applications again.
- It wasn't just CODA, COVID prevented many things from moving forward with dental therapy.
  - The entire dental community was shut down for a majority of the year.
  - That delay dragged out our timeline with anticipating the program would be running by next fall, that is clearly delayed.
  - Our "advanced standing pathway" is the pathway for a hygienist to come back to become a dental therapist at an accelerated pace.
    - This is the likely path for most of our initial students.
    - To make this as student friendly as possible, we want students to be able to work as much as they can given dental hygienist shortages. We want to deliver the didactic part of that curriculum remotely through distance education as well as develop more regionalized clinical training sites.
  - Distance education will enable us to recruit students from Maine and Connecticut.
  - As more legislation is passed will allow us to continue to grow without a lot of additional costs.
- Establishing clinical partners was delayed due to dentists being closed much of the year. These clinical partners could be a great path forward.
- Maine, which was part of our CODA submission, has backed out due to COVID and difficulty hiring.
- We are working to develop sites around Vermont. We have a promising opportunity in Brattleboro with a dental clinic there.
  - This arrangement is still under discussion but the distance education portion is critical to that work and with other clinics.
  - To be clear, if we could purchase additional chairs, at \$50K a piece, we could offer more clinical opportunities. However, this \$300,000 is not in our current ask.

**Our current needs are:**

\$100,000: Capital costs: compressor, distance ed classroom, install simulators and benches.

\$20,000: Distance education needed for in state and out of state clinical sites.

\$270,000: Two years of director salary and benefits for the program director to ramp up the program. \*  
\$390,000

\* Previous grants are in place to cover operating costs for 5 years to get the program started and grow enrollment to a point where tuition can cover operating costs. COVID has delayed our program start. Our current grant which funds staffing costs ends in summer, 2022. Due to delay, we need to continue to cover the costs of the staffing.