

May 27, 2025

Chair Alyssa Black
House Committee on Health Care

Dear Chair Black:

As your committee continues its due diligence in ensuring Vermonters have access to high quality oral health, we know there's interest in an update of the dental therapist program.

Briefly for context, in 2016, the Vermont state legislature enacted Act 161 making Vermont the third state in the United States to authorize the licensing of dental therapists, a midlevel oral health practitioner, following Alaska and Minnesota. Due to the absence of a dental school in Vermont and the presence of a single Dental Hygiene Program at Vermont Technical College (now Vermont State University), the law required that dental therapists must first be trained as Vermont-licensed dental hygienists. To facilitate the establishment of this program, the State of Vermont allocated \$400,000 for its development.

Despite substantial good-faith efforts, several significant barriers—many of which are systemic or structural—have impeded full program launch. These include being a small, resource-constrained rural institution, the financial viability of the program, the lack of Vermont's oral health clinical infrastructure, faculty recruitment, and the system-wide reorganization of the Vermont State Colleges.

At the direction of Chancellor Mauch, we are currently performing a comprehensive feasibility assessment to determine whether a sustainable path forward exists for the dental therapy program. This evaluation includes financial modeling, faculty recruitment analysis, and infrastructure review. Our goal is to reach a final determination grounded in both the mission of expanding access to oral health care and the institutional and statewide realities we face.

We hope to update your committee in January of next session on the results of this assessment.

Respectfully submitted,



Sharron R. Scott, Chief Financial & Operating Officer