



# Incorporating Dental Therapists into your program

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# Evaluate needs of the community

Is a dental therapist the best choice?

- ▶ Data and resources available for planning and determining needs and desires of the community
  - ▶ <https://www.ihs.gov/DOH/index.cfm> Oral Health Survey Information
  - ▶ Area Dental Officer
  - ▶ Local dental program director and staff
  - ▶ Tribal Leadership
  - ▶ Patients
  - ▶ Local Oral Health Coalition (If available), schools, CHRs

# Evaluating Needs cont.

- ▶ Look at current staffing – Expanded Functions Dental Assistants, Dental Hygienists, Dentists, Others (Nurses, CHRs, CHAP, mobile providers)
- ▶ Look at resources and challenges
  - Clinic utilization and efficiency issues
  - Community locations
  - Transportation issues
  - School programs

# Evaluate Options



Provider	Role
Expanded Functions Dental Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Place filling material in prepared teeth</li><li>• Basic Cleanings</li><li>• Oral hygiene instruction and prevention activities</li></ul>
Dental Hygienist (Depends on program and licensure)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Complex dental cleanings</li><li>• Prevention activities</li><li>• Recall appointments</li></ul>
Dental Therapist (Depends on program)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Basic restorative procedures</li><li>• Simple tooth extractions</li><li>• Examinations, routine cleaning, and prevention activities</li></ul>
CHAP, CHR, Nursing etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Prevention, Access to care</li></ul>

# How could these provider types be used in your specific program?



<b>Provider</b>	<b>Possible Utilization</b>
Expanded Functions Dental Assistant (EFDA)	Multiple roles in and out of the clinic including prevention programs, Increasing efficiency in clinic
Dental Hygienist (RDH) (Depending on state)	Oral health screening, telehealth and referrals. Elder care issues, treatment for homebound.
DT (RDH) (Depending on licensure)	Above RDH activities plus other restorative, simple extractions, and emergency palatative care
Dental Therapist	Provide prevention and operative dentistry in remote locations. Supplement dental staff in clinic. E.g. assist with dental emergency walk-in patients.

# How could these provider types be used in your program?

**Community Dental Health Coordinator (CDHC) CHAP, Nursing etc.**

**Provide preventive care and referrals in schools and remote locations.  
Consult with dentists using telemedicine.**

# In Summary

- ▶ Each community has their own unique needs, resources and priorities.
- ▶ Additional provider models offer the opportunity for increased access to care, additional services, increased efficiency and outreach.
- ▶ A thorough evaluation should be completed in order to plan your dental program's activities.