



TESTIMONY TO:

HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE

65TH NORTH DAKOTA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

House Bill 1256 1/18/2017

Chairman Weisz and Committee Members:

This testimony is in support of HB No. 1256 relating to the regulation of dental therapists in North Dakota. My name is Dana Schmit. I am a licensed Dental Hygienist in ND and President of the ND Dental Hygienist Association (NDDHA). I am a graduate of the ND State School of Science with an associate degree in dental hygiene. I am currently employed in a dental practice in rural western North Dakota and have practiced there for 6 years. I have also practiced in Wahpeton and in Fargo for three years working as a temp in various offices. I am also a mother of twins and unable to be here today due to work and home commitments.

The NDDHA is in full support of the addition of the Dental Therapist to the providers for dental services in our state. I have seen firsthand the need for another level of provider in my community and area of the state. During the most recent oil boom many of the people who came to our state did not have access to care. The dentists in the larger communities would not accept Medicaid patients or any other new patients and therefore these patients would go unserved. Fortunately, we saw many of these patients with tooth aches and unmet dental needs. Unfortunately, many of these patients ended up in the emergency room for dental care.

The addition of the Dental Therapist could provide the much needed education, evaluation, instruction, x-rays, simple extractions and provide the Dentist with the time to complete the more complex and higher level dental procedures. Keep in mind this professional would be licensed and under the supervision of the dentist.

HB 1256 would help meet the demand for affordable, routine dental care by authorizing dental therapists to be licensed by the Board of Dental Examiners to perform routine procedures under the supervision of a dentist. In fact, they would only work as part of the dental team led by a dentist. For your reference, I am including two versions of a chart which give you an indication of how many procedures a dental therapist can do compared to a dentist, hygienist, and registered dental assistant in North Dakota. As you can see, a dentist can do nearly 400 procedures compared to 94 for a dental therapist, 46 for a hygienist, and 30 for a registered dental assistant. Thank you so much for your time.

Thank you so much for your time. Please contact me with questions.

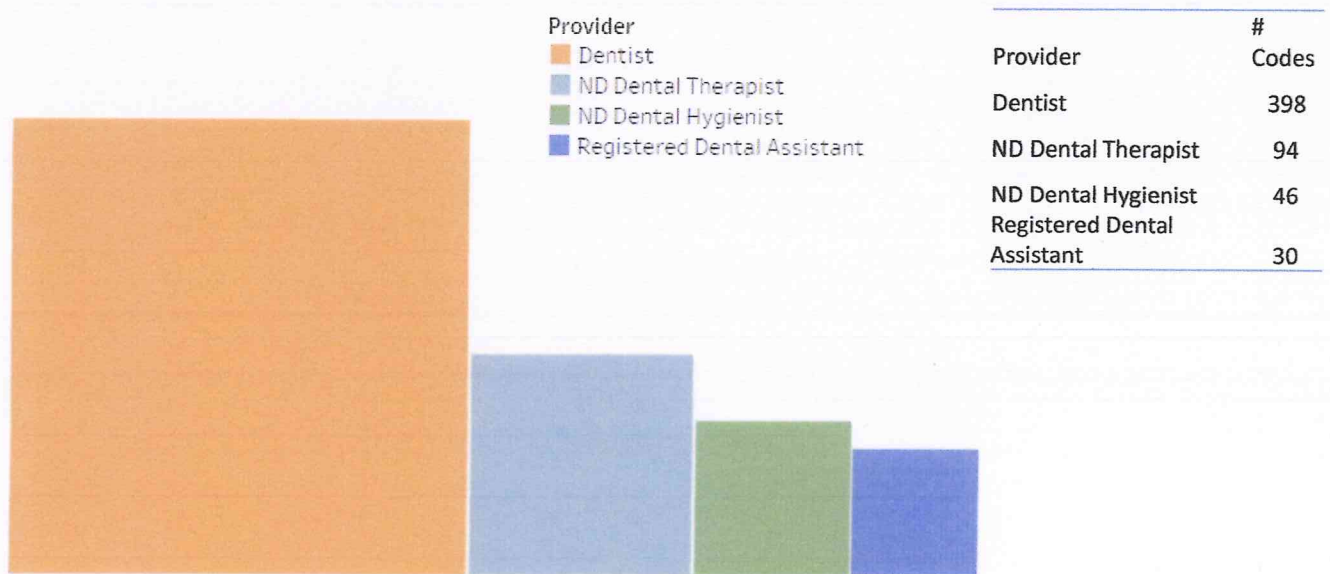
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Scope Comparison of ND Providers

- Colors represent the provider type; box size represents the number of allowed billable codes



Data sources: 2016 American Dental Association Codes on Dental Procedures and Nomenclature, ADA Commission on Dental Accreditation 2015 Accreditation Standards for Dental Therapy Programs, and North Dakota Admin. Code 20-01 through 20-05 (via the ND Board of Dental Examiners) current as of April 1, 2015.