



## Tribal Dental Therapy Legislation in Florida

**Tribes in Florida:** Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida, Seminole Tribe of Florida

**Tribes in Support of Dental Therapy in Florida:** No Tribes in Florida have passed resolutions of support.

**Status:** Legislation Pending in State Legislature

**Legislation:** [S. 604](#), 2021 Legislative Session

**Sponsor:** Sen. Jeff Brandes (R-24)

**Legislative History:**

01/28/2021 Bill Introduced in Senate; Referred to Health Policy & Appropriations Committees

**Summary:**

- Establishes the licensing process for dental therapists (DTs) in the state of Florida.
- Allows licensed DTs to practice under a dentist as part of an oral healthcare delivery team.
- Enumerates the services a DT can perform, encompassing the entire CODA-approved dental therapy scope of work, and additional services, including administering anesthesia after being trained to do so.
- Requires DTs complete between 24 and 36 hours of Continuing Education every two years, to be determined by the Board of Dentistry.
- Limits DTs to practicing in public health and underserved community settings, including Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas.
- Allows dentists to require stricter supervision or more limited scope of practice within the Written Collaborative Management Agreement.
- Does not restrict the number of DTs a dentist can hire.
- Provides reciprocity for DTs licensed in other jurisdictions, including Tribes.
- Creates a Council on Dental Therapy to advise the Board of Dentistry.
- Three years after enactment, requires the Department of Health to report on DT effectiveness, quality and safety, and development of DT education programs.
- Establishes a Council on Dental Therapy to advise the state Board of Dentistry.



- Allows health access settings to receive adult Medicaid reimbursement for services performed at mobile dental clinics.

**Tribal Inclusion:** Section 15 explicitly includes facilities run by the Indian Health Service or a Tribe as eligible practice settings for DTs.

**General or Direct Supervision:** Supervision can be direct (dentist is present in the room), or general (dentist is available for remote consultation) under the terms of each dentist's Written Collaborative Management Agreement with the DT. The agreement must also include the number of preceptorship hours a DT must complete before working under general supervision.

**Educational Requirements:** The bill does not state education standards beyond requiring the DT to have graduated from a program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). CODA mandates a three academic year program for DTs with no degree requirement. DTs applying for a license before 2025 may graduate from a non-accredited school that substantially conforms to the CODA requirements.

**Dual License Requirement:** A licensed DT does **NOT** need also to hold a dental hygienist license.

**Medicaid Reimbursement:** The legislation allows for DTs to bill for third party reimbursement, including through the state's Medicaid program.

**Moving Forward:** Dental therapy legislation introduced in the Florida Senate during the 2019 session died in committee. Tribes in Florida have expressed interest in exploring how dental therapy could benefit their communities, and support for the legislation has been growing.

The 2021 version of the dental therapy bill explicitly includes Tribal and Indian Health Service facilities. This key inclusion will provide clarity to Tribes and is a change from the 2019 legislation. Advocates in the state should continue raising awareness of the need for solutions like DT in expanding oral health access to the American Indian/Alaska Native population.

Overall, the bill is favorable to Tribal adoption of dental therapy, with few barriers that would weaken the workforce model's potential for reducing Florida Tribes' unmet oral health needs.