



Tribal Dental Therapy Law in Oregon

Tribes in Oregon: Burns Paiute Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation, Coquille Indian Tribe, Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Indians, Klamath Tribes.

Tribes in Support of Dental Therapy in Oregon: Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, the Coquille Indian Tribe, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation have worked in support of dental therapy.

Status: Law Enacted

Legislation: [H.B. 2528](#), 2021-2022 Legislative Session

Sponsors: Rep. Tawna Sanchez (D-43), Rep. Janelle Bynum (D-51)

Legislative History:

2011	Dental Pilot Project Bill Becomes Law
2017	Dental Therapists Begin Working at Tribal and Urban Indian Health Pilot Sites
01/19/2021	Statewide Dental Therapy Bill Introduced in House of Representatives, Referred to Committee on Health Care
04/19/2021	Advanced out of House Committee on Health Care
04/27/2021	Passed House of Representatives on a Vote of 38-17
06/01/2021	Advanced out of Senate Rules Committee with Amendments
06/22/2021	Passed Senate on a Vote of 20-9
06/23/2021	Passed House on a Concurrence Vote of 45-11
07/19/2021	Signed into Law by Governor Brown

Summary:

- Allows licensed dental therapists (DTs) to practice under a dentist as part of an oral healthcare delivery team. DTs must work under a written collaborative agreement.
- Provides for the state of Oregon to issue dental therapy licenses.



- Allows DTs to practice statewide, with each collaborative agreement specifying practice settings, level of supervision, and any other limitations.
- Enumerates the services a DT can perform, including administering specified medications.
- Requires DTs to dedicate a majority of their practice to underserved populations or in dental Health Professional Shortage Areas.
- Allows DTs that worked at an Oregon pilot site to apply for licensure.
- Allows a dentist to supervise up to three DTs.
- Allows DTs to supervise up to two dental assistants or expanded function dental assistants.

Tribal Inclusion: Section 6 specifically includes DTs working for a Tribe, Urban Indian health organization, or the Indian Health Service and allows them to operate under either their licensure or federal certification. DTs will need to hold a state license to perform services covered in the state law but not included in the federal CHAP's scope of practice.

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 practice agreement with the DT or as defined in statute.

Educational Requirements: The bill does not explicitly state education standards beyond requiring that until 2025, the DT has to graduate from a program that is approved by the Oregon Board of Dentistry or an out of state program that is accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA). After 2025, DT applicants will need to have graduated from a CODA-accredited program or have been a DT in the state's pilot projects. CODA mandates a three academic year program for DTs with no degree requirement.

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

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

Moving Forward: Tribal and Urban Indian pilot sites have demonstrated dental therapy's effectiveness in treating unmet oral health care needs in Oregon. As the pilot project authority winds down, this new law ensures DTs are able to continue working at the current pilot sites and at additional Tribes throughout the state.

Overall, the legislation is favorable to Tribes, allowing licensed DTs, as well as Dental Health Aide Therapists certified by the federal Indian Health Service, to practice the full range of their scope.