



Tribal Dental Therapy Legislation in New Jersey

Tribes in New Jersey: None

Legislation: [Assembly Bill 1215](#), 221st Legislature

Sponsor: Assemblywoman Carol A. Murphy (D-7)

Legislative History:

01/09/2024 Introduced in State Assembly

Summary:

- Establishes the licensing process for dental therapists (DTs) in the state of New Jersey.
- Establishes a statewide clinical licensing exam for DTs.
- Allows licensed DTs to practice under a dentist as part of an oral healthcare delivery team.
- Enumerates services and procedures a licensed DT can perform.
- Requires 20 hours of Continuing Education every two years.
- Allows supervising dentists to limit the scope of practice within the collaborative agreement.
- Allows DTs to work in a public health facility, which includes other settings: inpatient facilities and outpatient clinics, long term care facilities, and state agency facilities, providing authorization by the supervising dentist set by a collaborative written agreement.
- Allows dentists to hire DTs, and allows DTs to supervise dental assistants and hygienists according to collaborative agreement.
- The supervising dentist may authorize a DT to provide services to a patient before the supervising dentist examines or diagnoses the patient if the authority, conditions, and protocols are established in a written collaborative management agreement.
- Allows the governor to appoint dental therapists to the state's Board of Dentistry
- Creates a pathway for New Jersey higher education institutions to develop dental therapy education programs.

Tribal Inclusion: There are no federally recognized Tribes based in New Jersey, but the law does allow for DTs licensed by a Tribe or another jurisdiction to apply for a state license.



General or Direct Supervision: Dental Therapists can practice under either general (dentist is available for consultation) or direct (the dentist is present in the room) supervision, depending on the written collaborative agreement between the DT and supervising dentist.

Educational Requirements: DTs must have graduated from a program accredited by the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) or a program substantially similar to CODA standards. CODA mandates a three academic year program for DTs with no degree requirement. A license may also be issued to any applicant from another state or jurisdiction of the U.S., including tribal jurisdiction, or from a foreign country in which the individual was licensed or issued credentials to provide DT if the applicant provides proof of completion of an accredited program in DT.

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

Medicaid Reimbursement: The legislation does not prevent dental therapists from billing for third-party reimbursement, including through the state’s Medicaid program, NJ FamilyCare.

Moving Forward: Assembly Bill 1215, pending before legislature shall not prohibit, restrict, or impose State licensure or regulatory requirements or obligations on the practice of DT on tribal lands or by a dental therapist who is employed by an urban Indian health program or a tribal health program authorized pursuant to the “[1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, “ Pub.L.930638.](#)”

The bill allows improvement for oral health access and an accessible career path for American Indians and Alaska Natives living there. A way to improve the bill’s impact on AI/AN population could be to provide reciprocity for the Indian Health Service’s certification of dental therapists working under the agency’s Community Health Aide Program. The bill follows expert recommendations for establishing the dental therapy workforce model, with few arbitrary requirements or restrictions.