



DentaQuest

Oral Health Colorado  
*Connecting Colorado's Oral Health Advocates*Colorado Coalition for the  
Medically UnderservedCARING  
COLORADO  
FOUNDATION  
A Health Grantmaker

DELTA DENTAL



**PLEASE SUPPORT HB15-1309!**  
**Interim Therapeutic Restorations by Dental Hygienists**  
*Representative Ginal & Senator Crowder*

## Background

While Colorado has been one of the more progressive states on dental workforce, the oral health community recognizes that there are still gaps in access to dental care for some communities in Colorado. We have been collaboratively working to address these gaps.

Fortunately, data indicates that Colorado has a robust and growing number of dentists and dental hygienists to meet demand for dental care in our state. We have existing dental workforce that is underutilized in our state, and have been proactive in seeking to use these existing team members to address access needs.

Perhaps one of the biggest opportunities within the existing dental system is preventive care. Dental hygienists play a primary role in delivering these preventive dental services. Colorado has been at the forefront of expanding access to preventive dental hygiene services, including being the first state to allow unsupervised or direct access delivery of dental hygiene services. Further, during last year's Sunset Review of the Dental Practice Act, the Colorado Dental Association and the Colorado Dental Hygienists' Association worked together to allow dental hygienists a limited prescriptive authority focused on preventive services like fluorides and topical antimicrobials. These allowances help ensure that more preventive dental services are available to the public without requiring a visit to the dentist.

Telehealth technologies have recently presented an additional opportunity to help address access needs. With dentist consultation and supervision through telehealth technologies, dental hygienists can be deployed in communities and trained to safely deliver a provisional treatment called an "Interim Therapeutic Restoration (ITR)." This procedure helps to temporarily stop the progression of decay in a tooth until the patient is able to see a dentist for permanent treatment. Allowing dental hygienists to perform the ITR procedure is another great way to ensure that the existing dental workforce is used to its full capacity, and that access needs are efficiently addressed.

## How would HB 1309 increase access to dental care?

Through HB 1309, interim therapeutic restorations are intended to be provided in a "dental home" model where dental teams deliver thorough and comprehensive care to rural and underserved patient communities. Some elements of this care may be delivered through "teledentistry" services, allowing telehealth-connected dental hygienists to perform preventive and provisional services in the local community – helping to address some geographic barriers. This telehealth model is expected to expand access to dental services and improve overall health outcomes. The ITR procedure can also be a valuable tool in providing responsive care for certain populations like the elderly, children or those with physical or developmental disabilities.

Dental hygienists who perform ITR would be required to complete training and work with the on-site or teledentistry supervision of a dentist. HB 1309 also:

- ☑ Establishes permit requirements to ensure necessary credentials are in place prior to performing the ITR procedure
- ☑ Outlines experience required to obtain a permit
- ☑ Ensures appropriate liability coverage
- ☑ Requires certain patient disclosures
- ☑ Ensures that a dentist provides a diagnosis, treatment plan and instruction prior to the ITR procedure being performed
- ☑ Allows reimbursement of telehealth services through Medicaid and CHP+ to help ensure sustainability of the model
- ☑ Sets a timeline for review of the expansion, allowing an evaluation of key successes and any challenges before making this model permanent in Colorado

The expansion of scope for dental hygienists proposed in HB 1309 has been a highly collaborative process between dentists, dental hygienists, and the oral health community. These organizations have worked together for the last year addressing components necessary to ensure that this expansion is efficient, safe, and appropriate for both patients and providers. We believe HB 1309 strikes a great balance of maximizing patient access to dental services, while maintaining the appropriate training, supervision and patient safety. We join together in asking your support for HB 1309.

**For more information, please contact:**  
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## Supporting Organizations

- Colorado Dental Association
- Colorado Dental Hygienists' Association
- Colorado Community Health Network
- Oral Health Colorado
- Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
- Colorado Coalition for the Medically Underserved
- Caring for Colorado Foundation, Smiles Dental Home Project
- Delta Dental of Colorado
- DentaQuest

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