

Impacts of Dental Therapists on the Efficiency and Capacity of Dental Teams: A Case Study

The Oral Health Workforce Research Center (OHWR) completed a study to describe the satisfaction of clinical providers, organizational administrators, and patients with the dental therapy workforce at Apple Tree Dental in Minnesota, the first US state to authorize dental therapy practice statewide.



Dental Teams Are Very Satisfied With the Addition of Dental Therapists (DTs)



DTs fit very well on dental teams while performing high quality work



Dentists can work more effectively and efficiently when teamed with a DT



Benefits of an Expanded Dental Team



Timelier service delivery with reduced wait times



Patients get more dental care needs met in one visit



DTs Feel They Are Valued Members of Their Clinical Teams



Patient Satisfaction Is High



Patients were very satisfied with all dimensions of their dental care:



Information and communication



Understanding and acceptance



Technical competence and treatment satisfaction

This brief is based on data collected from 2 surveys. The first assessed clinician and administration satisfaction with the dental therapy workforce within Apple Tree Dental's centers and programs, conducted February-April 2021. The second survey assessed patient satisfaction with their clinical providers at Apple Tree Dental, making comparisons across provider type, and was conducted February-August 2021.