

Executive Office
6737 W. Washington Street
Suite 2360
West Allis, Wisconsin 53214
414.276.4520
414.276.8431 FAX



Legislative Office
122 W. Washington Avenue
Suite 600
Madison, Wisconsin 53703
608.250.3442
608.282.7716 FAX

WDA Opposes LRB 1947

The Wisconsin Dental Association opposes LRB 1947 authorizing the licensure of dental therapists in Wisconsin, circulated by Rep. Mary Felzkowski and Sen. Dave Craig, and respectfully asks that legislators refrain from co-sponsoring the bill.

- **WDA remains skeptical of the long-term viability of dental therapists as a solution to the lack of access to oral health care.**
- **Several important questions remain unresolved, including:**
 - The cost of creating a new, licensed profession
 - Why a new class of provider is necessary when **Wisconsin does NOT suffer from a shortage of oral health professionals, despite inaccurate claims to the contrary**
 - The wisdom of adding a new provider to the Medicaid program without an additional investment in an already-underfunded system
- **Previous dental therapy programs have met with limited success**
 - Minnesota's program, first passed in 2009 and the only one operating in the country, has resulted in only 85 dental therapists working in the state
 - **Dental access in Minnesota has declined every year since the implementation of the program**
 - Despite 40 years of government subsidy, a previous dental therapy program designed to alleviate access to care issues in Canada failed, with the last school closing in 2011
- **Despite claims that this comes at no additional cost to the taxpayer and is a "free market solution", dental therapy has required government subsidy to survive in every state and country in which it has been tried.**
 - Minnesota's DT program only started due to a \$45 million grant from the federal government
 - Vermont's program recently sat dormant until a \$400,000 grant from the federal government
 - Other models have been limited entirely to tribal lands and Federally Qualified Health Centers, both of whom receive significant subsidy from the federal government, unlike private providers.

Please contact Matt Rossetto at 608-250-3442 or mrossetto@wda.org with questions.

Advocate...Educate...Empower...Serve