

SB1377 Dental Therapy Heads to House Health Committee

This week dental therapy legislation faces its toughest challenge yet: The House Health Committee.

Senate Bill 1377 will be heard this **Thursday, March 15th, at 9am in House Hearing Room 4.**

Since our victory in the Senate, the dental lobby has doubled down on spreading misinformation and fear among every member of the House Health Committee. We have the facts on our side, but we can't succeed without your help.

Committee members MUST hear from us before Thursday.

Please TAKE ACTION NOW.

It's going to take more than signing into Request to Speak (RTS) to register your support. We must step up our game and CALL and/or WRITE the Committee members.

We expect committee members will receive many emails, so make it easy for them and indicate your position in the subject line: for example: "Please support SB1377". If you also happen to be a constituent, be sure to include that in the subject line as well.

Below are some main points to help you as you call and draft emails. Be sure to keep it succinct (no need to cover all points) and personalize the message by including specific experiences or insights, if possible. For the democrats, it might help to remind them that both the Latino caucus and Indigenous People's caucus have taken a position in favor of SB 1377.

1. Supervision: Dental Therapists work under the supervision of dentists:

- Dental therapists work under a collaborative practice agreement with a supervising dentist. The **DENTIST** determines what procedures the dental therapist can perform, the location they can work in, and the populations the dental therapist can serve.
- Dental therapists **MUST** be trained to the Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) standards, which are the **same standards** that dentists are trained to.

2. Dental therapy is safe and effective:

- Over 1,100 studies and assessments prove, without a doubt, that well-trained dental therapists are safe, effective and extend the reach of dentists. In fact, there has not been any, **ZERO**, malpractice claims against a dental therapist in the United States.
- Dental therapists are currently practicing in Alaska, Minnesota, Washington State, and Oregon and in 54 countries around the world.
- They receive **EXACTLY the SAME training** as dentists do for the procedures in their scope of practice. They take the SAME clinical exams for these procedures as dentists do, ensuring that dental therapists have the same clinical competency required for dentists.

3. Dental therapists reduce the cost of delivering dental care:

- Allied health professionals reduce overall costs for private practices, community health centers and hospitals in delivering health care. Dental therapists can do the same for dental care.

4. Arizona has a critical access to dental care problem:

- The dental lobby continues to argue that Arizona does not have a shortage of dentists but a distribution problem. Bottom line is that this doesn't matter: the fact is that in high income urban areas, there are plenty of dentists, but in rural, tribal and even low income areas within Arizona, dentists are few and far between.

5. Arizona's tribes face the most significant barriers to accessing oral healthcare. Nowhere in Arizona is the gap in access to care more acute:

- Arizona is home to 22 sovereign nations, and nearly 360,000 Native American people living on and off Arizona's reservations.
- 76% of Native American children in Arizona have a history of tooth decay. This rate is nearly 70% for Latino populations—both are significantly higher than national averages.
- IHS and Tribal Health Facilities are prohibited from getting reimbursement for dental therapy services UNLESS the Arizona legislature approves a scope of practice—powerful lobbying resulted in language being included in the Indian Healthcare Improvement Act that prohibits reimbursement for dental therapy until the state where the tribe is located passes dental therapy legislation. This is the only healthcare provider for which this prohibition exists.

Legislators to Contact: They ALL must hear from you so dental therapy can be heard by the full House of Representatives!

Representative Heather Carter, Chair, (R)- North Phoenix, Cave Creek, North Scottsdale

602-926-5503

hcarter@azleg.gov

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/HeatherCarterAZ/>

Twitter: @HeatherCarterAZ

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Representative Tony Rivero (R) - West Valley, Glendale

602-926-3104

trivero@azleg.gov

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/tonyriveroforazhouse/>

Twitter: @RepTonyRivero

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Representative Michelle Udall (R) – East Valley, Mesa

602-926-4856
mudall@azleg.gov

Twitter: @michudall

—

Representative Jay Lawrence (R) - Scottsdale, Fountain Hills

602-926-3095
jlawrence@azleg.gov
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/JayLawrencefortheHouse/>
Twitter: @JayLawrencefortheHouse

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Representative Maria Syms - (R) North Phoenix, Paradise Valley

602-926-4860
msyms@azleg.gov
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/maria.syms.7>
Twitter: SymsForAZ

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Representative Kelli Butler - (D) North Phoenix, Paradise Valley

602-926-5156
kbutler@azleg.gov
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/kellibutleraz/>
Twitter: @KelliButlerAZ

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Representative Tony Navarrete - (D) Phoenix

602-926-4864
tnavarrete@azleg.gov
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/votenavarrete/>
Twitter: @NavarreteAZ

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Representative Pamela Powers Hannley - (D) Tucson

602-926-4848
ppowershannley@azleg.gov
Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pamela.j.powers>
Twitter: @P2Hannley

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Representative Regina Cobb, Vice Chair (R) - Mohave, Lake Havasu, Bullhead City

602-926-3126

rcobb@azleg.gov

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/reginacobbforstaterep/>

Twitter: @recobbforazrep