



Dental Therapy – AzDHA worked with the Dental Care for Arizona coalition in support of this legislation which began as SB 1377 but ended up as HB 2235. A first of its kind in the Southwest, the bill was signed by the Governor on May 16th and will go into effect on August 3rd. The law establishes dental therapy and outlines requirements and permissions for dental therapists. Some highlights include:

- Requires an applicant for dental therapy licensure to be a licensed dental hygienist, graduate from an accredited dental therapy education program, pass a clinical exam (WREB or equivalent) and AZ jurisprudence exam;
- Requires dental therapy education to be accredited by the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA), the same organization that accredits dental hygiene and dental programs;
- Defines a scope of practice that is consistent with that established in the CODA Standards for Dental Therapy Education Programs (e.g. oral evaluations, radiographs, all preventive services, limited restorative procedures including simple, non-surgical extractions, direct restorations, preformed crowns on primary teeth, pulp capping, minor adjustments on removable prostheses, etc.);
- Limits dental therapists to practicing in Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) or FQHC look-alikes, community health centers, nonprofit dental practices that provide care to low-income and underserved populations, or private dental practices that provide care for community health center patients of record;
- Allows dental therapists to work under direct supervision of a dentist OR pursuant to a written collaborative practice agreement after practicing 1,000 hours under direct supervision;
- Limits to four the number of collaborative practice agreements that a dentist can enter into with dental therapists.

AHCCCS Dental Benefit for Pregnant Women – AzDHA worked with the Arizona Oral Health Coalition in support of SB 1445 which would have added a \$1,000/year dental benefit for this population. It was in the final stretch with considerable support but ultimately succumbed to other budget priorities, most notably education funding (think Red for Ed). We will try again next year!

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) – Arizona calls its Medicaid CHIP KidsCare. What began as HB 2127 ended as SB 1087 and unfortunately failed in the Senate. Its purpose was to remove the trigger that automatically freezes the KidsCare program if the federal funding contribution drops below 100%. It allows the state to decide to freeze the program or kick in more money when appropriated state and federal monies are insufficient to fully fund CHIP. Any interruption in funding in the future could throw these children's healthcare into jeopardy, including oral healthcare.

Health Care Workforce Data – HB 2197 was signed by the Governor on May 16th and will require an initial group of five health licensing boards to collect certain data from applicants beginning January 2020. The dental board is not included in this initial group but is expected to be added in the future. This measure will provide better data about health professional workforce in order to improve capacity and distribution.

Sunrise Reform Bill – The governor signed SB 1034 that improves our overly burdensome and politically contentious process for expanding scope of practice for professions like ours or establishing new health care professions. AzDHA supported this bill.