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Dental Therapy Coalition Encouraged by Governor and Lawmakers' Dental Access Efforts

Madison, WI – A diverse coalition of dental access proponents support the creation of a dental therapist mid-level provider put forward by Governor Evers.

The Governor, like Representative Mary Felzkowski and Senator David Craig who continue their legislative effort to authorize dental therapy, seeks to address the dental workforce shortage in Wisconsin. Evers' dental package in the budget together with the reintroduction of the Felzkowski / Craig legislation demonstrates a bipartisan recognition of the dental access problem faced by rural, poor, and underserved citizens of Wisconsin.

Wisconsin ranks near the bottom in access to dental care for low-income children. The connection between oral health and overall health is well documented and advocates agree allowing dental therapists would improve access to care in our state.

A dental therapist is a highly educated and licensed oral health professional who works in conjunction with a dental care team under the supervision of a dentist. They provide evaluative, preventive, restorative dental care within their scope of practice. Authorizing dental therapists to a dentist-led team would increase access to dental care for underserved areas in Wisconsin.

In addition to over 50 countries, dental therapists are currently authorized in Michigan (2018), Arizona (2018), Vermont (2016), Maine (2014), Minnesota (2009), with tribal authorization in Alaska (2003), Washington (2017) and Oregon via state pilot authority (2011). Several other states are currently considering legislation.

Alliance of Health Insurers
Americans for Prosperity Wisconsin
Badger Institute
Children's Health Alliance of Wisconsin
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
City of Milwaukee
Delta Dental
Disability Rights Wisconsin
Disability Service Provider Network
Heritage Institute
Kids Forward
Milwaukee Latino Health Coalition
Oneida Nation of Wisconsin
Penfield Children's Center

Sixteenth St. Community Health Center
Southwestern Wisconsin Community Action Program, Inc.
The Arc Wisconsin
United Community Center
Waukesha County Community Dental Clinic
Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.
Wisconsin Assisted Living Association
Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments & Boards
Wisconsin Board for People with Developmental Disabilities
Wisconsin Dental Hygienists' Association
Wisconsin Hospital Association
Wisconsin Oral Health Coalition
Wisconsin Primary Health Care Association
Wisconsin Public Health Association