



APPLE TREE DENTAL

Access • Compassion • Excellence

Clinic Characteristics:

Apple Tree Dental is a non-profit fee-for-service organization whose services include pediatric, geriatric, and special care dentistry. Nine regional clinics provide comprehensive care and a mobile program operates year-round with on-site programs in collaboration with 200 community partners such as Head Start centers, schools, group homes, senior assisted living programs, long-term care facilities, and others.

Dental Therapists' roles:

Two members of the first graduating class of dental therapists in Minnesota in 2011 were the first of Apple Tree's dental therapists. Currently, there are 13 full-time and 2 part-time dental therapists on staff.

Dental therapists treat patients of all ages. Services within their scope of practice are delivered both in the outpatient clinics and the mobile program at community partner sites. They are also involved in teledentistry and outreach. For example, one advanced dental therapist completes a teledentistry visit with parents and patients who have been referred to Apple Tree's pediatric dentists. Triageing their needs and making sure that all needed information is complete has improved the efficiency of the pediatrics team and maximized availability of these specialty services.

In 2023, Apple Tree's dental therapists provided care to 14,304 patients. Of the \$7,762,278 value (billed charges) of services provided, 48% were restorative, 23% preventive, 19% diagnostic, 4% periodontal, and 6% all other procedure types.

Recommendations for Michigan:

At first, regulatory and reimbursement processes, such as credentialing with insurance plans, claims submission, and data collection, were confusing for employers. Convening appropriate stakeholders to create and clearly communicate requirements for dental therapists is recommended for smooth implementation and evaluation of impact.

Prior to their implementation, Apple Tree educated its staff and patients about dental therapists by creating written materials, scripts and revised workflow, plus staff training and discussion within team meetings. Strong acceptance is shown in infographic of a [qualitative analysis](#) by the Oral Health Workforce Research Center. Clear leadership support and organizational investment in advance preparation and education for the entire staff and patients result in strong acceptance by patients and teammates.

**Billed Value of 2023
Dental Therapy Services**

