



Clinic Characteristics:

Hennepin Healthcare is an integrated system of care that includes an acute care hospital, as well as a clinic system with primary care clinics located in Minneapolis and across Hennepin County.

Dental Therapists' roles:

Hennepin Healthcare employs two dental therapists who provide their full scope of practice and can refer patients to dental residents in a hospital-based General Practice Residency. This frees up the residents to gain experience in endodontics, prosthodontics, crown and bridge, and oral surgery.

This setting allows dental therapists to play a role in medical-dental integration through multiple programs:

- Bright Start, a maternal and child health program where they receive OB referrals all throughout the pregnancy, through due date and for the first year post-natal. Dental therapists provide exams, periodontal* and restorative care for these patients.
**Periodontal procedures are only in scope in Michigan if dually licensed as an RDH.*
- A school-based clinic and well child check-ups in the pediatric specialty clinic. A fluent Spanish-speaking dental therapist has been an asset for this community.
- Coordinated Care Clinics in which social work, psychiatry, and primary care provide wrap around care in one visit. These target people with 3 or more hospitalizations / year, people impacted by SDOH factors, and 'Positive Care Patients' who are dealing with substance abuse / addiction.
- Doing dental clearance for patients who will be having general anesthesia.

Recommendations for Michigan:

Dental assistants and front desk took a while to get in the groove of how to work with dental therapists. Support for their understanding of the roles and workflows is helpful.

Dental therapists cannot prescribe, although advanced dental therapists can dispense previously prescribed medication*. Adding prescription authority would be beneficial to dental therapists when they triage and stabilize patients with high levels of disease.

**Dispensing and administering (not prescribing) nonnarcotics is in scope for Michigan dental therapists.*

Communications are essential to building trust and confidence in individual dental therapists over time with their supervising dentists. Their experience has shown that the team benefits from having dental therapists share the patient load.