

"The American Association for Community Dental Programs, represents hundreds of community based dental programs across the country and is committed to improving access to high quality cost effective dental care to the underserved.

We are in full support of dental therapist programs that utilize the CODA standards for educating and training dental therapists. Oral diseases are a neglected epidemic in our country. Credible evidence has demonstrated that the quality of dental care provided by dental therapists in their scope of services, is at least equal to that provided by dentists and helps provide services to vulnerable populations

Those who design programs and provide care in community based programs may well be the closest dental professionals to the inequities that have existed for many decades. It is extremely difficult to find dental providers who look like the community populations they serve. We often face a revolving door of dentists who seek greener pastures. High risk communities may lack the social amenities and cultural environment often sought by dentists. Constant turnover of staff is extremely inefficient and a waste of tax and/ or charitable dollars, while putting the dental program at risk for closure.

The dental therapist model works and helps high risk populations receive dental care they often don't receive.. After years of neglect of oral health in health policy and inadequate responses from the dental profession we have significant disparities in oral health of the most vulnerable,

Having the proven effective dental therapist model is a moral imperative so we may better provide quality prevention oriented and treatment services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Myron Allukian Jr. DDS MPH.