



*National Foundation for Women Legislators Annual Conference*

# State Strategies to Transform Oral Health

Andrew Peters

Associate, The Pew Charitable Trusts

November 20, 2014

# Mission

The Pew Children's Dental Campaign strives for cost-effective policies that will mean millions more children get the basic dental care they need to grow, learn and lead healthy lives.





# Why Kids' Dental Health?

1. Improve government performance – only 1/3 of Medicaid children receive care
2. Make sure kids are ready for school
3. There is strong evidence for solutions
4. Bipartisan support for change
5. The issue draws many partners

# Priorities

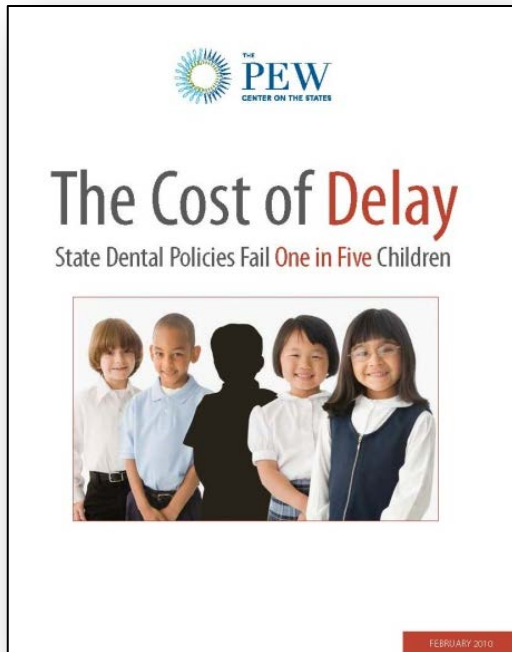
**PREVENTION** Fluoridation, Sealants

**ACCESS** Federal funding and more dental coverage

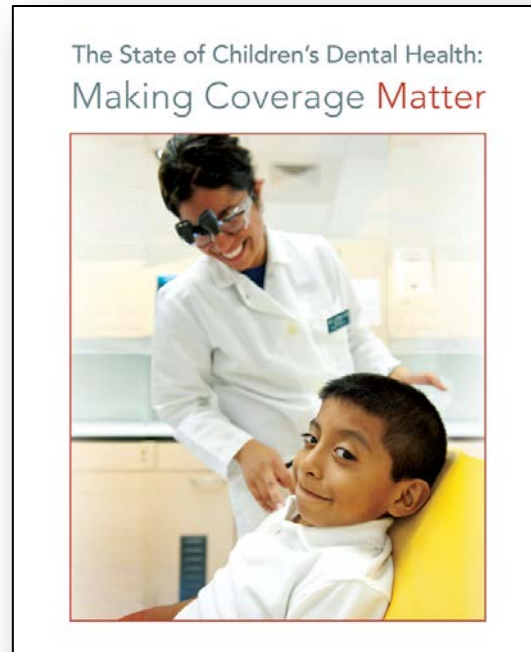
**WORKFORCE** New types of providers, and better use of existing providers



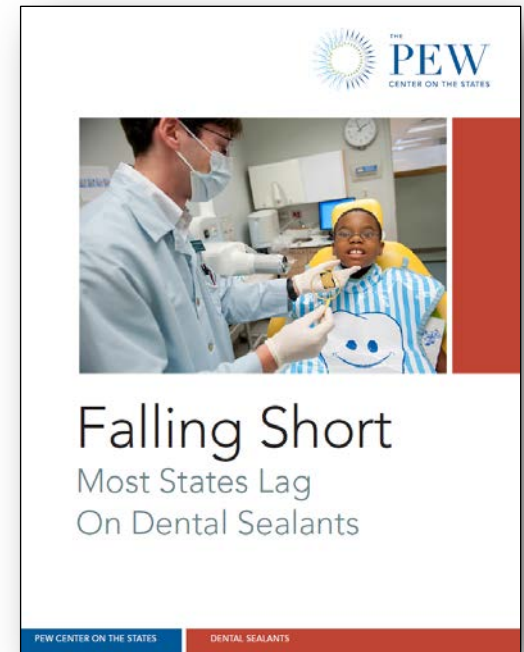
# Pew Research Reports: 50 State Assessments (Report Cards)



2010



2011



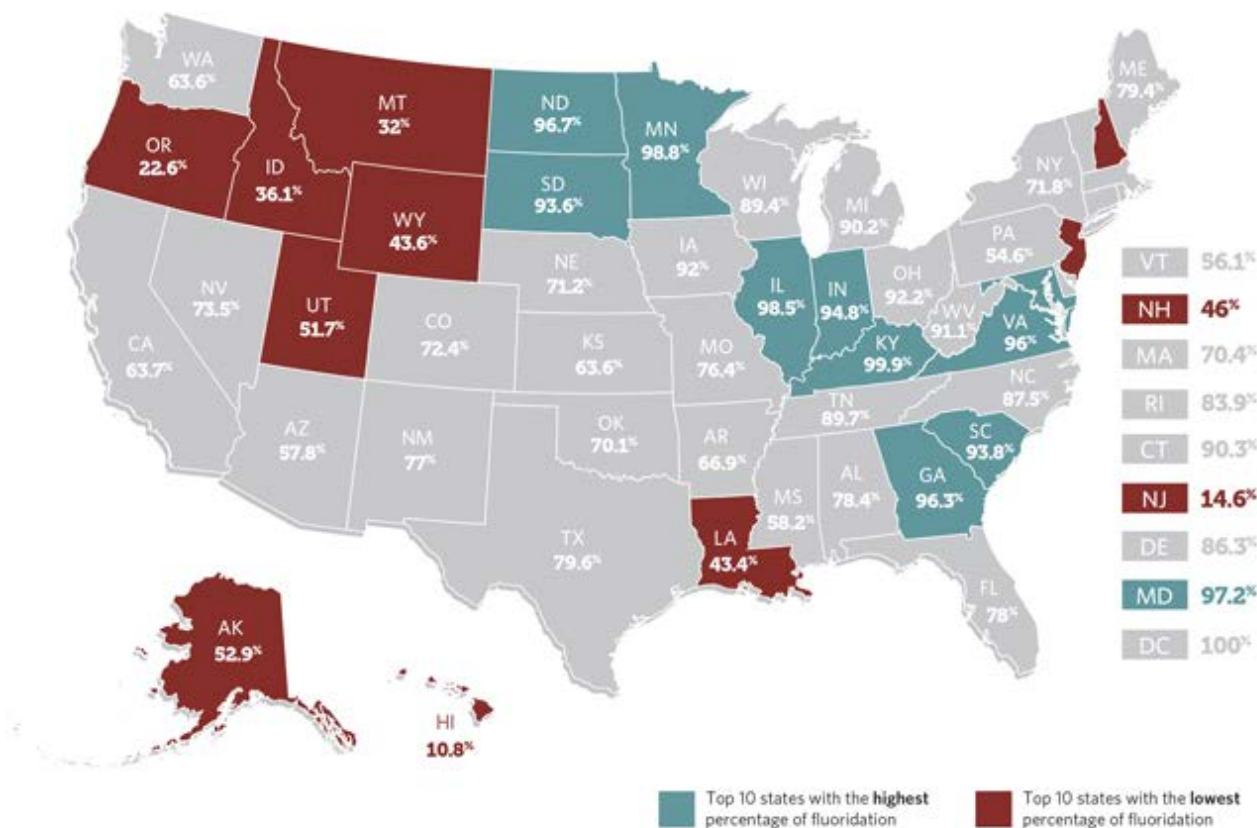
2013

[Pewtrusts.org/dental](http://Pewtrusts.org/dental)



# Community Water Fluoridation: The Top 10 and Bottom 10

The percentage of residents served by public water systems in each state who are receiving fluoridated water.<sup>1</sup>



# 72 million

Americans who are served by public water systems **lack** access to fluoridated drinking water

The CDC has recognized water fluoridation as one of "10 great public health achievements of the 20th century."<sup>2</sup>



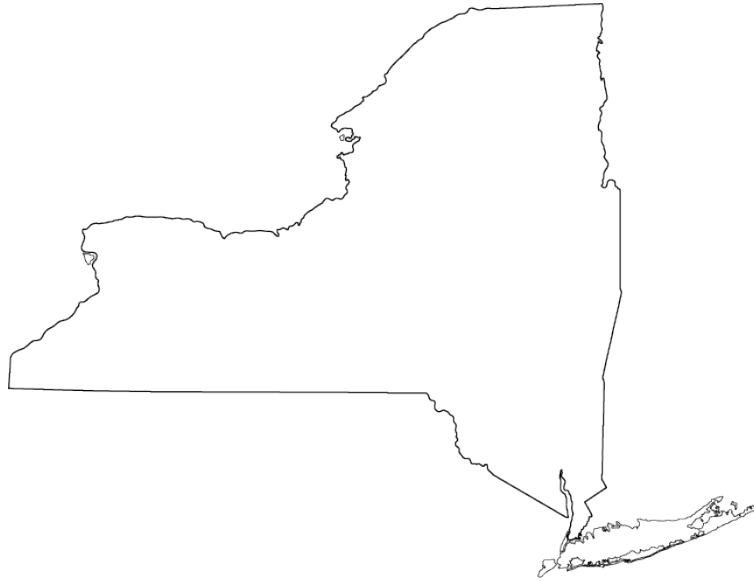
1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "2012 Water Fluoridation Statistic." Data covers only residents whose homes are connected to public water systems.

2 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Ten Great Public Health Achievements—United States, 1900–1999," <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00056796.htm>.



## **Louisiana: Drinking Water Revolving Loan Fund**

- Stable source of funding
  - Long-term solution



## **New York: Prior Notice Laws**

- Time to gather evidence
- Opportunity for education and discussion



# Fluoridation Resources

CAMPAIGN FOR  
**DENTAL HEALTH**  
life is better **WITH TEETH**

About

Blog

Act Now

Connect Locally

Learn

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

SCIENTISTS

PARTNERS

## FLUORIDATION: THE DEBATE OVER FLUORIDATED WATER

The debate over fluoridation goes back roughly 70 years to when communities began fluoridating water to prevent tooth decay. The issue: Is fluoridated water better for your health or not?

[Find Out Why](#)

## EDUCATION: CHANGE BEGINS WITH IT

Good teeth make us smarter and more successful. It's true. Because when kids miss school due to toothaches or other dental problems, grades suffer – not to mention self-esteem. And when adults have missing teeth, employability suffers. These are the problems. Now, some solutions.

## The Debate Over Fluoridated Water

### What's being debated?



WHAT DO SUPPORTERS SAY?



IS FLUORIDATION EFFECTIVE?



WHAT DO CRITICS SAY?



WHAT DO HEALTH EXPERTS SAY?



HOW DOES FLUORIDE WORK?



HOW COMMON IS FLUORIDE?



IS FLUORIDE DANGEROUS?



IS FLUORIDATION EXPENSIVE?



IS FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE ENOUGH?

**iLikeMyTeeth.org**

# Dental Sealants

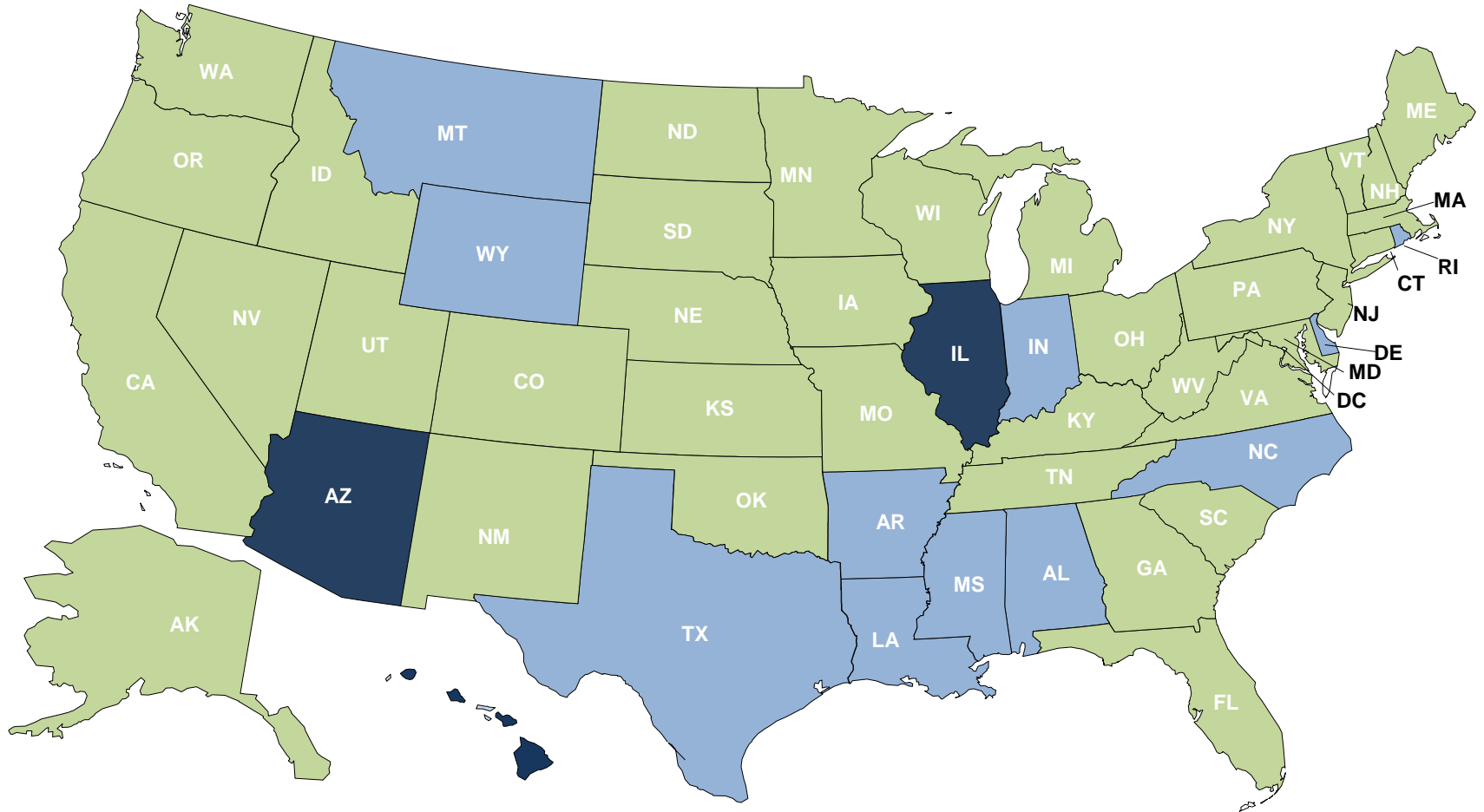
- Research on sealant policy
- Establishing school-based programs and making existing ones more efficient
- Bringing state practice acts up to date with clinical recommendations



## Falling Short

Most States Lag  
On Dental Sealants

# Dental Sealants





**Ohio:**

**Remove the prior exam**

- Hundreds of thousands in save costs
  - Save money, treat more children
    - Less missed class



# Hawaii:

## Establish school-sealant programs

- Solution to long-standing problem
- Huge evidence basis (60% effectiveness)

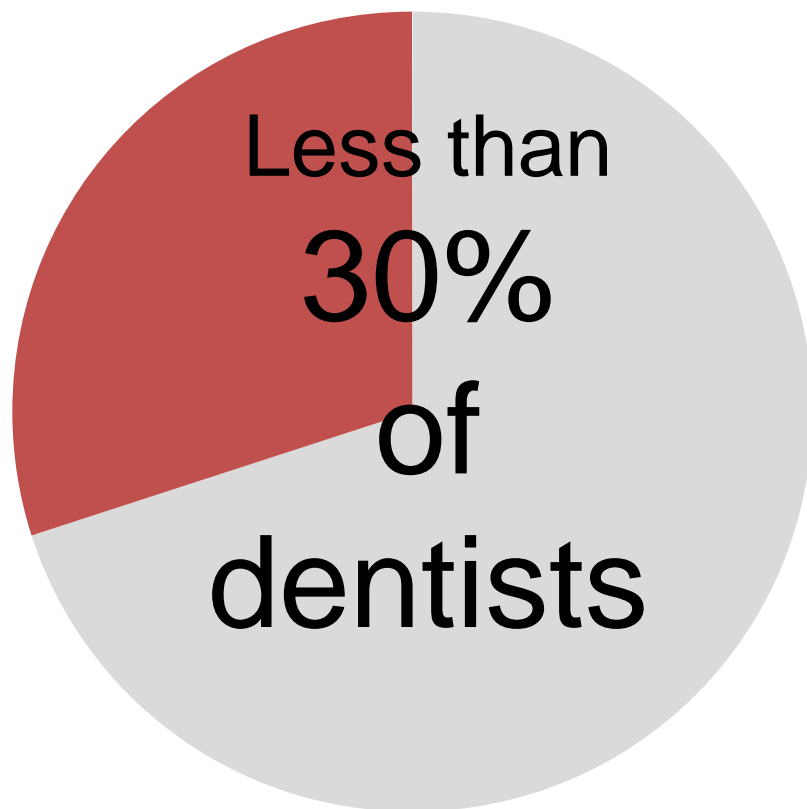


# Dental Workforce and Access to Care

*Mission of Mercy clinic in Cape Girardeau, Missouri on May 3, 2013. People camped out in line for two days to receive free dental care.*

- Many Americans lack dental insurance
- Maldistribution of dentists
- Few dentists accept Medicaid
- Too few children on Medicaid get dental care

Few Dentists Accept Medicaid  
*2012 survey of 33 states*



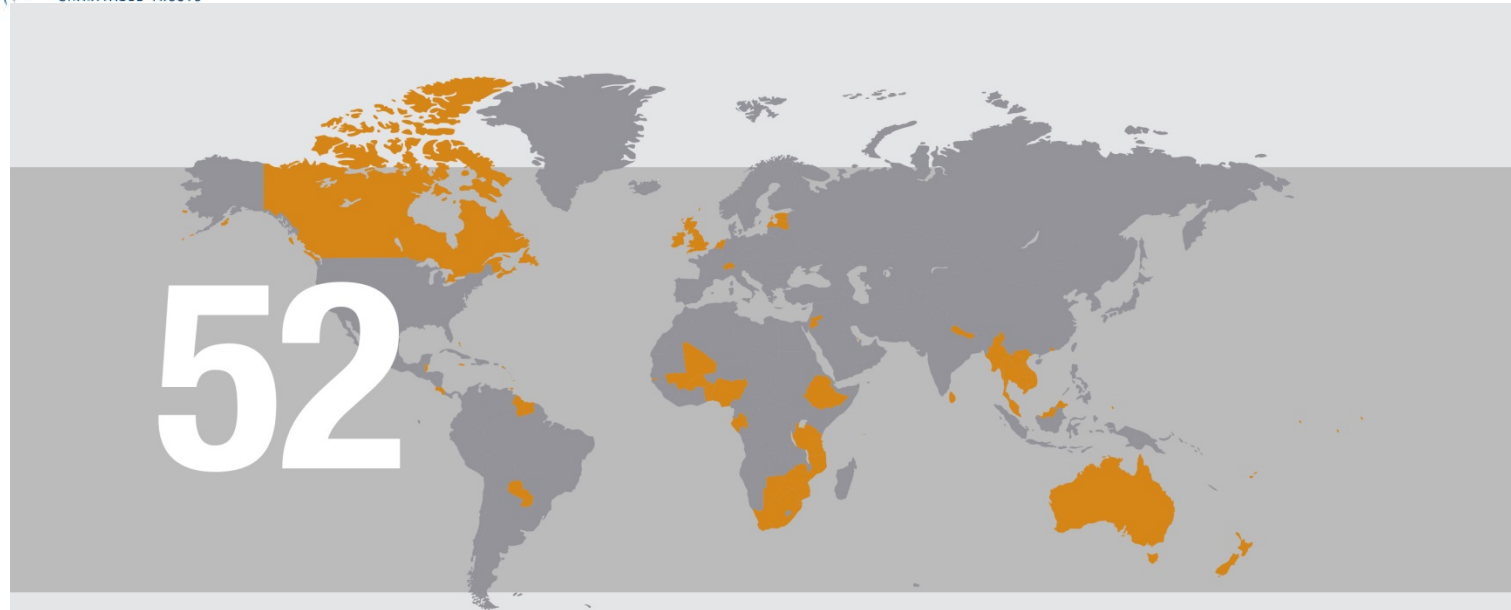
Filed  
**50**  
claims or  
more

## What are mid-level providers?



- They fill roles similar to nurse practitioners or physician's assistants in medicine
- Scope of practice: preventive and routine restorative care
- Models vary by scope of practice, settings for practice and supervision requirements





Number of countries outside the United States that use dental therapists and other midlevel professionals to expand care to more people.<sup>6</sup>

6 David A. Nash et al., "Dental Therapists: A Global Perspective," International Dental Journal 58 (2008): 61-70.

## *Study in 5 clinical settings...*

Increased access to  
care?

Yes

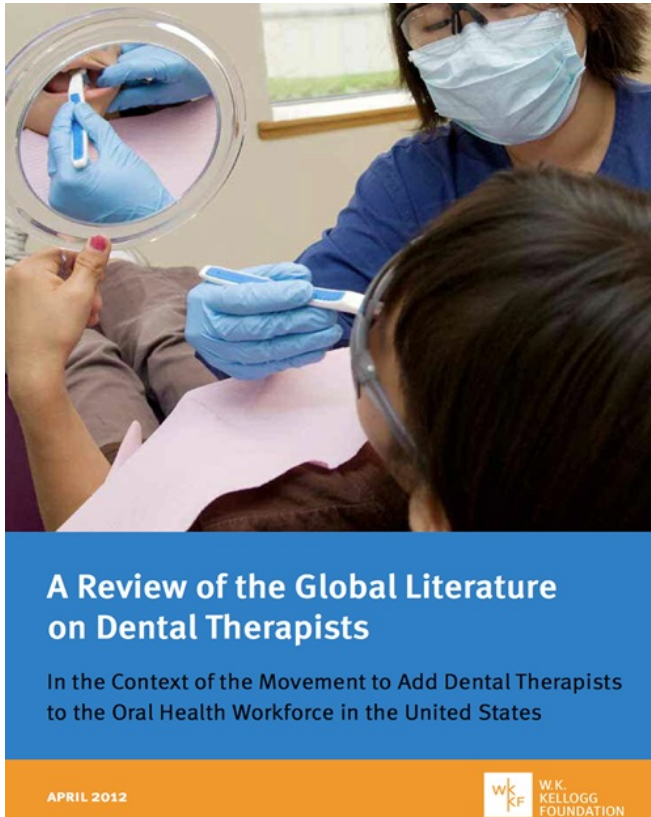
Added net revenue?

Yes

Dentists performing more  
complex procedures?

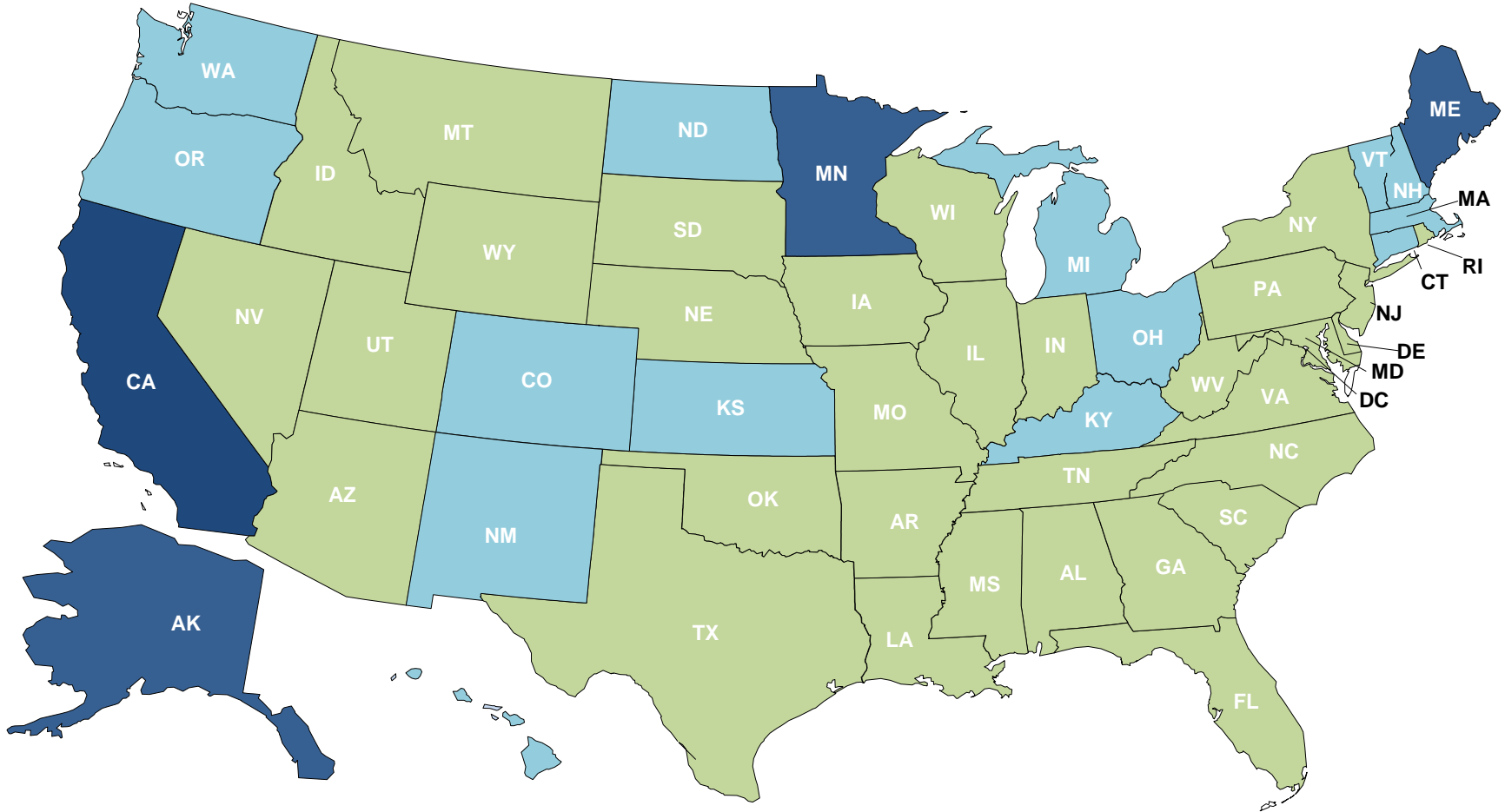
Yes

## Evidence on safety of dental therapists



Review of **1,100 studies** show that dental therapists deliver safe, effective care

# New Provider Types | 2014



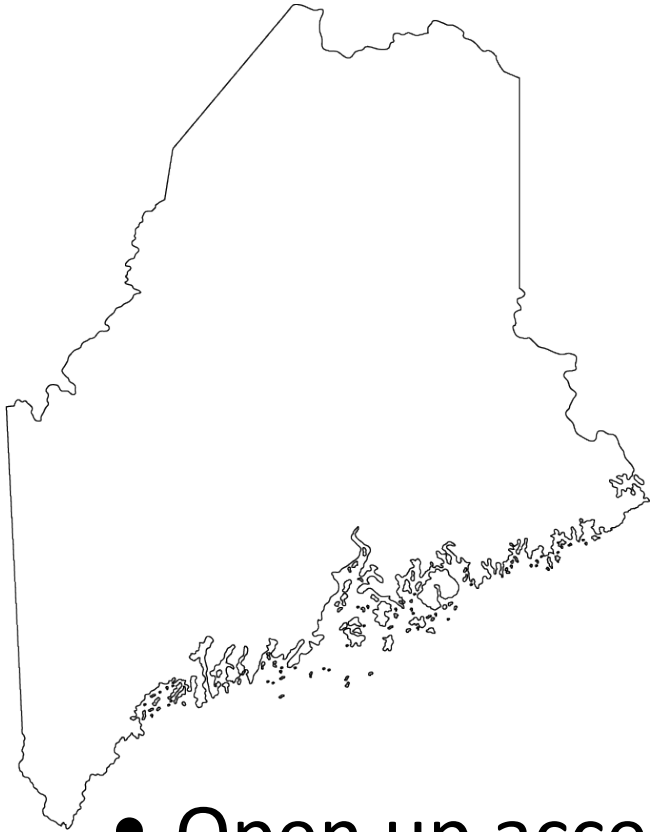
States Considering Dental Therapy

Current Therapy Models



# California: The Virtual Dental Home

- Use existing providers for effectively
  - Changes the traditional system and brings care to the underserved



# Maine: Authorize dental therapy

- Open up access for Medicaid population
  - Can perform restorative care
    - Extends reach of dentist



**Contact:** Andrew Peters, [apeters@pewtrusts.org](mailto:apeters@pewtrusts.org)

Learn more at [iLikeMyTeeth.org](http://iLikeMyTeeth.org) and  
[pewtrusts.org/dental](http://pewtrusts.org/dental)

**Keep informed:** Receive Pew's monthly e-newsletter, *Dental News & Views*. Send an email to Mary McNamara, [mmcnamara@pewtrusts.org](mailto:mmcnamara@pewtrusts.org), with the words “Sign me up” in the subject line.