

Report: Rising Emergency Department Visits in Florida for Preventable Dental Conditions

Hospital and Emergency Department Billings Total Nearly \$1 Billion in 2024 for Non-Traumatic Dental Issues

TALLAHASSEE, FL, UNITED STATES, September 25, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- A [severe shortage of dentists](#) in Florida, especially in rural areas, has resulted in rising hospital and emergency department visits for treating preventable dental conditions, according to data provided by Well Florida Health Planning Council and Floridians for Dental Access. More than 146,000 Floridians sought help at emergency departments in 2024 an increase of 25% since 2021. Over 4,000 were hospitalized. This has resulted in a 77% increase now nearly \$1 billion - in total emergency and hospital charges.



More Florida children use hospital emergency rooms for dental pain than any other state in the nation.

More individuals in Florida than in any other state - nearly six million total - reside in Dental Health Professional Shortage Areas, defined by the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) as exceeding a population-to-dentist ratio of 5,000 to 1. Sixty-five of Florida's 67 counties are designated in full or in part as a Dental Health Professional Shortage Area. HRSA estimates Florida needs an additional 1,256 dentists to remove current shortages. Florida is currently the fastest growing state in the nation, so this shortage is expected to worsen.

“

More than 400 organizations and individuals in Florida formally signed on to support dental therapy legislation in 2025.”

Roy Miller, American Children's Campaign president

Florida's dentist-to-population ratio in August 2025 was 52.4 per 100,000 people. This ratio is significantly lower

than the national average of 59.5 dentists per 100,000 people, a figure cited by the [American Dental Association](#).

Florida's rural counties have the most extreme dentist shortages – two of every three have 10 or fewer dentists. Glades County does not have a single licensed dentist. Thirteen of Florida's 32 rural counties also had hospital and emergency department cost increases in 2024 for treating non-traumatic dental conditions that were higher than the state average.

According to Dr. Frank Catalanotto, president of Floridians for Dental Access, overall health can easily deteriorate when people do not receive dental care. "Several diseases and conditions are intricately linked to poor oral health, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and pre-term births," stated Dr. Catalanotto.. "A lack of access to care can lead to untreated tooth decay or other infections, leaving people without any option than visiting hospital emergency departments, where treatment is not only costly, but temporary," he added.

To expand dental access in Florida, dental workforce reform to authorize a new mid-level provider called dental therapists passed through the House Chamber in 2025. but stalled in the Florida Senate Advocates such as Dental Hygienists Alliance of Florida, American Children's Campaign, Floridians for Dental Access expect dental therapy legislation will be a key topic of discussion during the 2026 Legislative Session, with committee weeks beginning on October 6th and regular session on January 13, 2026.

"More than 400 organizations and individuals in Florida formally signed on to support dental therapy legislation in 2025," stated Roy Miller, president of American Children's Campaign. "The only group opposed was Florida Dental Association.

Dental therapists are mid-level oral health care professionals who would work under the supervision of a Florida-licensed dentist to provide the basic dental care that a growing number of children and adults can't get today — exams, fillings, and simple extractions. Dental therapists graduate from an American Dental Association CODA-accredited dental therapy educational program and complete the exact same licensing exam as dentists for the procedures they perform.

Dental therapists have practiced for 100 years worldwide in public and private settings (50 countries) and for about 20 years in the U.S. Every published study (approximately 1,500) found they expand access to safe, high-quality care. Fourteen states have authorized dental therapists to practice.

Karen Bonsignori
American Children's Campaign
+1 850-425-2600

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/852174795>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2025 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.