

**THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF
SANTA FE COUNTY
RESOLUTION NO. 2018- 110**

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION IN THE 2019
LEGISLATIVE SESSION TO AUTHORIZE THE PRACTICE OF
DENTAL THERAPY AND GOVERN THE TRAINING AND
LICENSURE OF DENTAL THERAPISTS IN NEW MEXICO**

WHEREAS, a healthy community is a key goal for Santa Fe County (“County”); and

WHEREAS, the County has taken an active and strategic role in setting priorities for and funding health care; and

WHEREAS, dental care is strongly linked to overall health, with research showing associations between chronic oral infections and heart and lung diseases; stroke; diabetes; and low-birth-weight, and premature births; and

WHEREAS, Hispanic, Native American, and African American children bear the highest burden of dental disease and the highest learning consequences of dental problems, such as missed school days, lost sleep, and the inability to pay attention in the classroom; and

WHEREAS, as a practical matter, access to dental care is limited even for those who are insured, because of the lack of providers who accept Medicaid, the lack of full dental coverage for most people on Medicaid, the lack of dental coverage for people who have subsidized health plans through the Health Insurance Marketplace (“Exchange”), and the shortage of dentists in rural parts of Santa Fe County; and

WHEREAS, the County Health Care Assistance Program provides substantial funding for Federally Qualified Health Centers for dental services for indigent patients who lack dental insurance, including immigrants who have no access to dental insurance; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, the County committed \$50,000 to support the provision of free dental care by “New Mexico Mission of Mercy,” held at the Santa Fe Convention Center in April 2016, which provided over 1,000 County residents with free dental care, including dentures, root canals, and other procedures; and

WHEREAS, dental therapists are mid-level practitioners supervised by dentists and offer routine and preventive care, such as cleanings, fillings, and basic restorative care, and would provide care in more community settings across the County and the state; and

WHEREAS, the New Mexico Public Health Association has long supported legislation authorizing dental therapy, which has been in existence for over twelve years in Alaska and over

seven years in Minnesota, as well as more recently in several other states, including the neighboring state of Arizona; and

WHEREAS, Santa Fe Community College wants to offer dental therapist training; and

WHEREAS, training dental therapists will create livable wage jobs in local communities; and

WHEREAS, if enacted into law, dental therapy legislation would help address the significant shortage of dental practitioners and the lack of access to dental care for many County residents; and

WHEREAS, following the recommendation of the County Health Policy and Planning Commission, the Board of County Commissioners supported legislation in the 2017 legislative session that authorized the practice of dental therapy in the New Mexico.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of County Commissioners supports legislation in the 2019 Legislative Session that authorizes the practice of dental therapy in New Mexico, including the training and licensure of dental therapists.

**PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED THIS 9TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 2018.
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

By: Anna Hansen
Anna Hansen, Chair

ATTEST:
Geraldine Salazar
Geraldine Salazar, Santa Fe County Clerk

Date: 10/9/2018

APPROVED AS TO FORM:
R. Bruce Frederick
R. Bruce Frederick, Santa Fe County Attorney

Date: 10/2/18



COUNTY OF SANTA FE)
STATE OF NEW MEXICO) ss BCC RESOLUTIONS
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I Hereby Certify That This Instrument Was Filed for Record On The 10TH Day Of October, 2018 at 11:32:47 AM And Was Duly Recorded as Instrument # 1869740 Of The Records Of Santa Fe County



Witness My Hand And Seal Of Office
Geraldine Salazar
Deputy County Clerk, Santa Fe, NM

Estrella Martinez