

Sponsor statement

A temporary dental license would allow the dental board to grant a temporary license to fill two specific needs: a dental specialist who is suddenly incapacitated and a small community that would otherwise not have access to care.

Alaska has a limited number of dental specialists, many who serve multiple small communities. Of the 647 licensed dentists in Alaska, 136 dentists are specialists as defined by the American Dental Association. Of the nine dental specialties eight - oral surgery, orthodontics, periodontics (gums), endodontics (root canals), pedodontics (kids), prosthodontics (replacing teeth), public health and oral pathology (oral diseases) have specialists in Alaska while one does not have a single specialist in Alaska – oral radiology (x-rays) .

The dental specialists in Alaska are limited in number and fully scheduled. If a specialist is suddenly incapacitated there is no reserve to draw from and potentially multiple small communities could be without specialist care for an extended period of time.

Small communities have historically had a hard time recruiting healthcare practitioners and the trend seems to be worsening. A temporary dental license would allow the dental board to maintain dental care in these communities until a fulltime dentist can be found.

A temporary dental license bill will allow the dental board, at its discretion, to grant a temporary license in times of need. The dental board is in the best position to evaluate the need to circumvent the transitional licensing program for dentists in exceptional circumstances.