What is SB2354?
This bill will create an Advanced Practice Dental Hygienist (APDH)
What is an APDH and how will this help ND?

**Advanced Practice Dental Hygienist (APDH)**
- A registered dental hygienist who has completed additional training, approved by the ND State Board of Dental Examiners, and receives a certification to work as an Advanced Dental Hygienist.
- APDHs can do preventive care like hygienists, but are also educated to provide a limited set of the most common procedures that dentists can currently do—such as filling cavities.
- APDHs must enter into a written collaborative management agreement with a ND dentist to define how the APDH can operate within that dentist’s practice.

**How Advanced Practice Dental Hygienists (APDH) Can Help**
- Untreated dental disease could be reduced if people had access to routine care—before they end up in expensive emergency rooms.
- Training hygienists to build on their preventive scope of practice and do some routine restorative care like filling cavities has increased access to care in other states like MN.
- ND’s proposal classifies this “hygiene plus” model as an “advanced practice dental hygienist” (APDH).
- An APHD’s scope of practice is approximately 75% preventive and 25% restorative.
- Because APDH’s are trained to do a much small number of procedures, they have a lower salary than dentists—lowering the cost per unit of care provided.
- Even for the uninsured, practices can use lower cost providers to provide care to more patients in a more affordable way.
- Using general supervision and telehealth technology—allowing dentists to supervise staff from a different site—can allow these practitioners to bring care directly to patients in nursing homes, schools, assisted living centers, and even patient’s homes.
- Apple Tree Dental in MN is a hub-and-spoke model that uses these types of dental practitioners to provide care to seniors in nursing homes and assisted living centers.

**What This Bill Will Do**
- Allow dentists and nonprofit dental clinics and programs to hire “advanced practice dental hygienists” (APDHs) to expand care to more people.
- Give tribal health systems more flexibility by allowing them to hire APDHs as well as other types of dental providers that already practice in other states.
- APDHs are always supervised by dentists. Dentists have the option to supervise them from off-site using telemedicine.
- APDHs cannot practice independently of dentists under any circumstance.
- APDHs must complete a rigorous educational program, complete 2,000 hours of practice under the supervision of a dentist, and pass an examination to demonstrate their competence.
- APDHs can work in community settings such as federally qualified health centers, nursing homes, schools, etc.
- APDHs may also work in private practice dental officers, provided they focus 25% of their time on underserved patients—including the uninsured or those on Medicaid.

To learn more about North Dakota’s problems with dental access, we encourage you to visit [www.nddentalaccess.com](http://www.nddentalaccess.com). You may also visit nddha.org for additional education materials on the benefits of an Advanced Practice Dental Hygienist.