



## Expanded Function Dental Assistants-What is the Business Case for Implementation

The integration of Dental Assistants (DA) who have received training as Expanded Function DAs (EFDA) may lead to workforce, operational, and financial benefits. Each FQHC needs to consider the investment in EFDA's, whether that includes paying to have existing DAs trained in these additional courses, or potentially paying a higher hourly rate or salary for a DA who have received this additional expanded function training.

An EFDA is a DA who has at least 2,000 hours of direct clinical care experience before taking EFDA courses. The EFDA must perform their expanded services under the supervision of a licensed dentist. Even once a DA has become trained as an EFDA, the dentist is still required to be onsite during all procedures.

Since EFDAs can perform more procedures than a standard DA (sealants, placing and finishing dental restorations, coronal polishing and scaling, monitoring nitrous oxide administration, anesthesia/sedation monitoring and more) the clinic can utilize the EFDA for those advanced skilled tasks rather than a registered dental hygienist (RDH) or dentist. This can give the RDH or dentist the ability to practice at the top of their license and may lead to increased employee satisfaction as their skills are being used for the more advanced procedures they were trained to provide. If a clinic chooses to upskill an existing DA as an EFDA, this can often lead to reduced turnover and improved job satisfaction. This saves the clinic money that may be lost due to turnover and loss of patient visits because of a staff vacancy. With workforce shortages plaguing both rural and urban FQHCs, recruitment of dentists and RDHs can be difficult and take months to years. Implementation of EFDAs into safety net clinics can help fill the gaps and ensure oral health services can be provided to patients.

Utilization of an EFDA may also allow the clinic to serve more patients or provide additional services which impacts operational and financial performance. Offering more services or additional patient slots can have a positive impact on revenue and patient outcomes. Expanding access to care for patients may allow wait times to be decreased. The National Association of Community Health Centers recently featured, Shawnee Health, an Illinois FQHC, to demonstrate how utilizing EFDAs increased their weekly appointments and revenue.

[Read the Shawnee Health Case Study](#)

### Additional Resources:

<https://www.danb.org/state-requirements/illinois-dental-assistant-qualified-in-expanded-functions>

<https://www.isds.org/continuing-education/dental-auxiliary-courses>

[https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/NAC\\_PolicyAndStrategyBrief\\_Table.pdf](https://www.nachc.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/NAC_PolicyAndStrategyBrief_Table.pdf)