



Central Component Scholarship Application

Scholarship is for all MC Dental Hygiene students (freshman and seniors)
\$350 monetary award and one-year professional membership reimbursement

Award will be presented at the General Membership Meeting on 5.4.2025

Name: Tejaswi Lakshmi Kota

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

SADHA EXPERIENCE (include positions and committees if applicable)

I am currently serving as the freshman representative for community outreach

Dental Therapy

There is a category of dental hygiene practice called the dental therapist that is being proposed by the NJDHA to the NJ state legislature. By knowing what the dental therapy model is and how your scope of practice would be enhanced to manage access to care, would you embrace this new practice model?

Why or why not? What are the benefits of being a member of your professional organization?

Please submit your response in 500 words or less.

Please Submit Application via email to CentralNJDHA@gmail.com by January 20, 2025

(please include scholarship name in the subject)

Embracing the Dental Therapist Model: A Path to Enhanced Care and Accessibility

As an aspiring dental hygienist and first-year representative of community outreach, I am inspired by the potential of the dental therapist model. This innovative approach could address significant gaps in oral healthcare and expand access to underserved communities. My experiences, both in the U.S. and India, have shown how transformative accessible care can be, and I am confident this model can make a meaningful difference.

The dental therapist model brings essential benefits to the forefront:

Improved Access to Care: Many communities face systemic barriers to dental care due to economic, geographic, or societal challenges. Dental therapists can work in diverse settings, such as schools, community centers, and nursing homes, ensuring timely and effective oral healthcare for underserved populations. My experience working in poor communities has shown me how many people lack access to care. Dental therapists can bridge this gap by bringing care directly to those in need.

Prevention and Early Intervention: As a dental hygienist, I understand that our role extends beyond treating oral health issues. We screen for conditions like high blood pressure and detect oral cancers or precancerous lesions, referring patients for further evaluation when necessary. While we cannot legally diagnose, this proactive approach helps patients understand their situation and seek timely care. Imagine the impact when underserved communities receive education and early intervention on issues like the link between tobacco use and oral cancer. Dental therapists can magnify this impact, working alongside hygienists to benefit entire communities.

My confidence in this model stems from hands-on experiences in outreach programs. During my dentistry studies in India, I visited schools to educate children about oral hygiene and conducted basic check-ups in deprived areas. My work in community centers exposed me to the realities faced by individuals without access to even basic dental care. These experiences reinforced my belief in the power of affordable, accessible care to transform lives, and I see the dental therapist model as a vital tool in achieving this.

The Benefits of Professional Membership:

Being a member of a professional organization, such as the New Jersey Dental Hygienists' Association (NJDHA), is critical to supporting initiatives like the dental therapist model. Membership offers continuing education, networking opportunities, and advocacy platforms to drive change. For someone like me, who values community and collaboration, professional membership is an essential tool for contributing meaningfully to the field.

In conclusion, the dental therapist model offers a transformative solution to improve access, focus on prevention, and serve underserved populations. My outreach experiences have shown me the power of accessible care, and I am eager to contribute to this change. By embracing this model, we can create a healthier, more equitable future.

Thank you for this opportunity to apply for the Central Component Scholarship.