#### NATIVE DENTAL THERAPY INITIATIVE

A project of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board



October 2016

### **News and Updates**

# COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE PROGAM EXPANSION PROPOSAL NEARING END OF IHS CONSULTATION: COMMENTS DUE OCTOBER 27

Last June, in response to need for increased access to health care-including oral health care--in Indian Country, IHS Principal Deputy Director Mary Smith released a <u>draft policy statement</u> for consultation with Tribal Leaders. The expansion of Alaska's Community Health Aide Program to the lower 48 opens the doors to increased access to quality, tribally-based health care delivery systems. In an effort to hear from as many Tribes as possible, Director Smith extended the original comment deadline and has also convened two in-person and one phone consultation. Comments are due October 27--please get yours in today!

Read the Dear Tribal Leader Letter from IHS, which includes instructions on where to send your letter

Use a <u>template letter</u> drafted by Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board

#### In the News!

Indian Country Today: INDIAN COUNTRY LEADS HEALTH REVOLUTION SWEEPING THE US

The Register-Guard: DENTAL THERA-PISTS MIGHT FILL RURAL GAP

National Public Radio: A GOOD DENTIST IS HARD TO FIND IN RURAL AMERICA

Americans for Tax Reform: ATRF
POLL SHOWS OVERWHELMING BIPARTISAN SUPPORT FOR CREATION
OF MIDLEVEL DENTAL PROVIDERS

## ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM DHAT EDUCATION PROGRAM PARTNERS WITH ILISAGVIK COLLEGE

Excerpted from ANTHC.org—The curriculum for Alaska's Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) program was recently approved by the Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities, through ANTHC's partnership with Ilisagvik College in Barrow. This newly accredited degree program offers DHAT students the opportunity

to earn an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree.



Jason Mecum, Coquille Indian Tribe, Class of 2018 DHAT Education Program

In addition to the two-year AAS degree, which helps create broader career pathways for DHAT graduates, Ilisagvik will award a DHAT certificate upon completion of the first year of study. The program will still operate out of the existing sites in Anchorage and Bethel, but will now benefit from the institutional support available through Ilisagvik. During their course of study, DHAT students have access to the full range of student services at the Tribal college, including financial aid, scholarship resources, academic support and tutoring. For more information: <a href="http://anthc.org/dental-health-aide/">http://anthc.org/dental-health-aide/</a>.

#### WASHINGTON TRIBES GEAR UP TO PASS LAW TO SUPPORT TRIBAL DHAT PROGRAMS

Washington Tribes are going back to the state legislature in 2017 in order to pass a law that would remove barriers to tribes fully exercising their sovereign right and responsibility to care for the oral health of their members. This law would:

- Lifts restriction on Tribes to use IHS funds for DHAT programs
- Allow DHAT services to be reimbursed by Medicaid and be eligible for up to 100% federal funding
- Lay the foundation for educating and building a DHAT workforce here in Washington.

This is a voluntary law that allows tribes to choose the best methods to serve their own people and have the necessary funding to employ those methods.

Join NDTI in working to pass this important legislation! Add this issue to your Tribal or organizational legislative agenda, and keep up-to-date on action needed by following us on Facebook and Twitter.

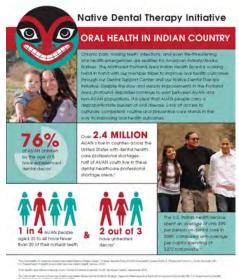
Read the 2015/2016 Tribal DHAT bill here.



Colville Vice Chairman Mel Tonasket rallies a group of Tribal leaders and lobbyists in pursuit of passing the DHAT bill this session!

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Questions or comments? Contact Pam Johnson, Native Dental Therapy Initiative, pjohnson@npaihb.org, 206-755-4309

