# Innovative Training Program for Dental Health Aide Therapists to Provide Midlevel Dental Care in the Alaska Bush

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## Learning Objectives

- Introduce one model for training mid-level dental professionals to address dental needs in Alaska Native communities

- Give an overview of the competency based curriculum in the DENTEX program for Dental Health Aide Therapists - DHAT

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## Learning Objectives

- Understand the role of the DHAT to provide culturally sensitive community based dental prevention, education services and primary care treatment to manage caries and other oral diseases

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## Learning Objectives

- Understand the role of the DHAT as a midlevel dental professional with a specific scope of practice operating remotely under general supervision

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## Dental Therapist History

- W.H.O. cites 42 countries that utilize Dental Therapists
- New Zealand has 88 yrs experience and Canada has over 38 yrs

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## Dental Therapists

- Function as part of the dental team under the supervision of a dentist
- Equipped to help provide the educational, preventive and safety net services that are most needed
- Exceptional safety record under general supervision for children and adults

## DENTEX Training Program

- Collaboration
  - University of Washington MEDEX Northwest Physician Assistant Training Program, Seattle WA
  - Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), Anchorage, AK
- Two year program based on models from
  - New Zealand
  - UK
  - Canada
  - Singapore
  - Others

## DENTEX Training Program

- Distinctly designed to address the Alaska Native Tribal health care needs
- Integration into community-based medical prevention programs
- New mix of skills that include behavioral and public health skills needed to affect change



## Mission Statement

- DENTEX is an Alaska based program that educates dental    health aide therapists to provide dental care to Alaska Native    communities in the Alaska bush

## Mission Statement

- DENTEX, the University of Washington School of Medicine's Dental Health Aide Therapist Program, is committed to training Alaska Native dental health professionals to practice dental therapy with dentist supervision

## Mission Statement

- The program provides a narrowly focused, competency-based, primary care curriculum that emphasizes community level dental disease prevention for the underserved  Alaska Native populations

## The Alaska DHAT Model

**Traditional Dental Education**
- University Based

- High cost investment
  - 4 + 4 Years DDS/DMD
  - General Practice
    - Specialty: +2 years

- Practice location
  - Mostly urban

**Midlevel Education**
- Community Based
  - Rural community recruited

- Low cost investment
  - 2 years Certificate
- Independent practice with Dentist supervision
- Practice location
  - Rural community based practice

## Requirements-Application

- HS diploma or GED
  - Preference given to applicants with some college level academics
- Tribal Association sponsorship
- Prior experience in dental or medical setting preferred

## Selection

- References
  - Tribal Association
  - Employer or community leader
- Personal statement
  - "Why I want to be a DHAT"
- Admission interview

## Curriculum Features

- Competency based training with frequent exams and feedback
- Led by full-time onsite dentists
- Modular lectures by dental school faculty
  - University of Washington
  - University of Minnesota
  - Baylor
  - University of Florida
  - University of Alaska
  - Dental hygiene faculty
- Culturally respectful and sensitive

## Class 2, Year 1
### with US Senator Murkowski and faculty



## DENTEX Curriculum
## Year 1: Anchorage

- Anatomy & Physiology
  - Online course
- Basic dental clinical environment skills
- General health sciences
- Oral health sciences

## DENTEX Curriculum
## Year 1: Anchorage

- Community dentistry and behavioral management techniques
- Development of a high level of practical clinical skills
  - Simulation
  - Direct patient contact



## DENTEX Curriculum
## Year 2: Bethel, Alaska

- 39 weeks of clinical instruction (1600 hrs) with direct supervision
- Community dentistry and prevention
- Village practice rotations
  - fly into rural Bush location with avg. 200-400 people

## DENTEX Curriculum
## Year 2: Bethel, Alaska

- Telemedicine communication training
- Special topics:
  - Maternal oral health
  - Diabetes
  - Geriatrics
  - Equipment repair
  - Research - data collection

## Class I, Year 2

## DHAT Practice Continuum

- Independent practice with remote dentist supervision
- Primary care team approach
  - Integrated part of the delivery system
  - Work with dentists, physicians, PAs, NPs and nurses
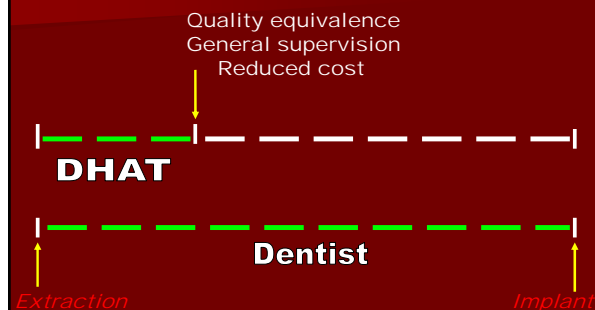- Not a second level of care

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## DHAT Practice Continuum



- Biological approach to oral disease
  - Reduce infectious caries and periodontal bacteria in the oral cavity
- Clinical practice focus
  - Basic pediatric dentistry
  - Adult palliative care
- Limited specific scope of practice

## Practice Continuum Complexity



Quality equivalence
General supervision
Reduced cost

DHAT

Dentist

Extraction                          Implant

## Prevention Based Curriculum

- Focus on behavior change
  - Motivational interviewing
  - Risk assessment for dental disease
  - Triage



## Nontraditional Worksite



## Certification after Graduation

- Additional 400+ hours of preceptorship
  - Direct supervision at tribal base location
- Scope of practice
  - Based on demonstrated clinical skills
  - Guided by tribal base location needs

## Recertification Requirements

- Logging of twenty-four hours continuing education annually
- Recertification every 2 years

## Quality Control and Safety

- Quality Control performed by dentists
  - Case discussion: pre/post
  - Direct observation
  - Chart review

- Oversight and authorizing entity
  - Community Health Aide Program Certification Board (CHAP-CB)

## Practice Model
## Dental Therapist



- Living and practicing in a village
- Itinerant regional practice
- Emphasis on prevention
- Strong links to schools and community
- Opportunity for continuity of care

## www.dentexak.washington.edu



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Welcome to DENTEX

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