

# NATIVE DENTAL THERAPY INITIATIVE

*A project of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board*



August 2017

## News and Updates

### Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians welcome Oregon's first DHAT



Two years ago the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI) recruited one of their members, Naomi Petrie (left), to attend the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's DHAT Education Program. Naomi graduated in June and is now providing care at her tribe's dental clinic in Coos Bay.

CTCLUSI's Chief Warren Brainard stated, "I am very proud that we were the first in Oregon to recognize the importance of this program for both our community and all tribal people."

"In addition to expanding much needed care, this approach can create jobs in our tribal community, and extend economic benefit to our clinic and our patients. These economic benefits will translate positively to the health of our community at the same time growing the number of American Indian dental providers that can offer culturally competent care to our members," added Alexis Barry, CTCLUSI's Tribal Administrator.

DHATs are not currently licensed in Oregon, but can operate under an Oregon law approved in 2011 that promotes innovative and data-driven improvements to the state's oral health system through dental pilot projects. CTCLUSI is one of 3 sites partnering with the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board in the Tribal DHAT pilot—the first pilot approved by the state in February of 2016. The Coquille Indian Tribe and the Native American Rehabilitation Association are currently training students to become DHATs as well.

[Hear Naomi talk about why she jumped into this opportunity to serve her community in this short video.](#)

## News and Publications

indianz.com: [COOS, LOWER UMPQUA AND SIUSLAW TRIBES MAKE HISTORY WITH DENTAL THERAPIST](#)

The Washington Post: [THE UNEXPECTED POLITICAL POWER OF DENTISTS](#)

American Journal of Public Health: [INDIAN COUNTRY LEADS NATIONAL MOVEMENT TO KNOCK DOWN BARRIERS TO ORAL HEALTH EQUITY](#)

The Journal of Law Medicine and Ethics: [MAXIMIZING COMMUNITY VOICES: HOW THE LAW HINDERS AND HELPS](#)

Huffington Post: [A MAJOR VICTORY IN INDIAN COUNTRY](#)

Watchdog.org: [WASHINGTON TRIBE BEATS DENTAL LOBBY](#)

The Washington Post: [THE PAINFUL TRUTH ABOUT TEETH](#)

New Republic: [THE DEVASTATING EFFECTS OF DENTAL INEQUALITY IN AMERICA](#)

### Congratulations ANTHC/Ilisagvik DHAT Education Program!

**New facility.** As this year's DHAT graduates were celebrating their accomplishments, ANTHC was celebrating breaking ground for a brand new facility for the program (see picture, right). The new state-of-the-art facility will house all of the CHAP Education programs in Anchorage.

**New partnership.** ANTHC/Ilisagvik DHAT Education Program recently was recognized by the Saskatchewan Dental Therapist Association (SDTA) as an education program that meets their curriculum standards. This recognition opens the doors for Canadian First Nations people to attend the Ilisagvik program and return to work in First Nations communities.



# NEW DHAT STUDENTS ON THEIR WAY TO ALASKA!

**Asiah Gonzalez.** I live on the Swinomish reservation in Laconer, WA with my parents, two sisters and a dog. I've been interning at the Swinomish dental clinic for about a year. I chose this program because I get to help people with their oral health. I will come back home to Swinomish and get to work at the dental clinic again where I can help my people. It's a way of giving back to the community.



**Avena Finkbonner.** I come from the Lummi Indian Reservation. My Parents are Barbara Juarez (Finkbonner) and Avery Revey. I am a mother of 2 amazing children Siselya (12) and Akaiden (6) and I also care for my niece Ashley (18) who has one more year of High School. I graduated from the Dental Assistant program in 2014 and worked at the Lummi Dental Clinic part time and on call till they opened a full time position June 2016. The DHAT program has been a goal for me since I heard about it. I want to change the way that my community looks at going to the dental office, I want people to be happy and feel good about their selves and their teeth.



**Anna DeGraffenreid** . I am a Coeur d' Alene tribal member from Plummer in beautiful North Idaho. I reside on my reservation and work full time as an Expanded Functions Certified Dental Assistant at the Benewah Medical Center. I have three beautiful children —a twenty two year old daughter named Isabella, a fifteen year old daughter named Penelope and a twelve year old son named Quentin. I also am a grandmother to Laila who is 3 and Camron who is almost two weeks old. I have the most amazing husband named Doug. I am a daughter, a sister, an auntie and cousin to many in my community. Family is my life, dentistry is my calling and community is my heart!



**Arielle Cawston.** I am a member of the Colville Confederated Tribe. I was raised on the reservation, and in Olympia, WA. Knowing I wanted a career working back home on the Colville Reservation, I took an opportunity working for Indian Health Services (IHS) as a Dental Assistant Trainee. One of my first experiences working with IHS was attending the Portland Area Dental Conference where I met Daniel Kennedy, the first DHAT in Washington. Daniel's, story helped me see how I was in the right field. I happily celebrated when Governor Inslee signed Senate Bill 5079. This is a journey that I would like to be apart of. I am truly proud of my people and where I come from; we deserve the best.



**Kari Douglass.** I am a member of the Chickasaw Nation and am sponsored by NARA. Im 27, have a lab/Pointer mix named Leo and have lived in Oregon for 2 years. I'm the oldest of 5 and the first in my family to go to college. I was attending Mount Hood Community College for dental hygiene when I went to the NARA dental clinic and Dr. Ahmed told me about the DHAT program.



I was immediately interested as I would have more responsibility. I was also very interested in this program because I have wanted to be able to give back to the native community as my Tribe has paid most of my tuition the last three years I have been attending college. This is also going to be a great opportunity for me to learn about the Alaska Native culture.

**Angela Johnson.** I am half Native American from my dads side, Lummi and Tsawwassen first nation, and half Caucasian from my mom. I have 2 girls, a 9 yr old and my youngest just turned 1 on June 23rd. My boyfriend of 5 yrs now has a son Vincente. I have been a dental assistant for 3 years now, at Seamar Community Health Center and just recently joined Lummi dental clinic in March. I wanted to be a DHAT because of the amazing role they play in their community. I'm also hoping we set a good enough example for dentistry in general so offices like Seamar and Unity care can benefit from this position.



**Sarah Chagnon.** I am a member of the Swinomish Tribe. In the past 8 years I've had two children, worked multiple jobs, become a nationally certified medical assistant and obtained my Associates degree. I was applying for the dental hygiene program or the nursing program at my local community college when I heard about the DHAT position. I've always wanted to be an asset to the Swinomish Tribal Community. As a DHAT I could fulfill this dream. The importance of cultural competence and preservation has always been a motivator for me and now that I have been accepted into the program when I return home I look forward to working for the Swinomish community as well as getting more involved.



## Native Dental Therapy Initiative

Visit our website: [www.npaihb.org/ndti](http://www.npaihb.org/ndti)

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