

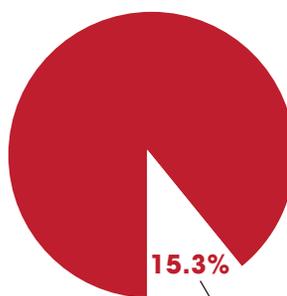
# Native Dental Therapy Initiative

## DENTAL HEALTH AIDE THERAPISTS MODERNIZING THE DENTAL TEAM



### DENTAL HEALTH AIDE THERAPISTS

Dental Health Aide Therapists (DHATs) are part of a dentist-led team. Dental therapists were first introduced to the United States over 10 years ago by a consortium of Alaska Native tribal health organizations. Thanks to their leadership and courage, over 40,000 Native Alaskans now have access to regular dental care for the first time



**84.7%**

of the care dental therapists provide is **PREVENTIVE** and **ROUTINE**.

**15.3%**

Other procedures in Dental Therapist scope of practice

### HIGHLY TRAINED AND SKILLED PROFESSIONALS

DHATs in Alaska are recruited from their communities and go back to serve their communities.

DHAT training includes:

- One year of comprehensive and rigorous coursework
- 3,000 hours of clinical training
- 400 hour dentist-supervised preceptorship
- Mastery of 46 procedures in 2 years. Dentists learn 500+ procedures in 4 years of dental school

By the time they begin practicing, Dental Health Aide Therapist have as much clinical experience in the procedures they are certified to perform as a dental school graduate.

### DENTAL HEALTH AIDE THERAPISTS

- Educate patients about oral health and prevention
- Perform dental evaluations
- Give fluoride treatments
- Place sealants
- Clean teeth
- Place fillings
- Perform simple extractions

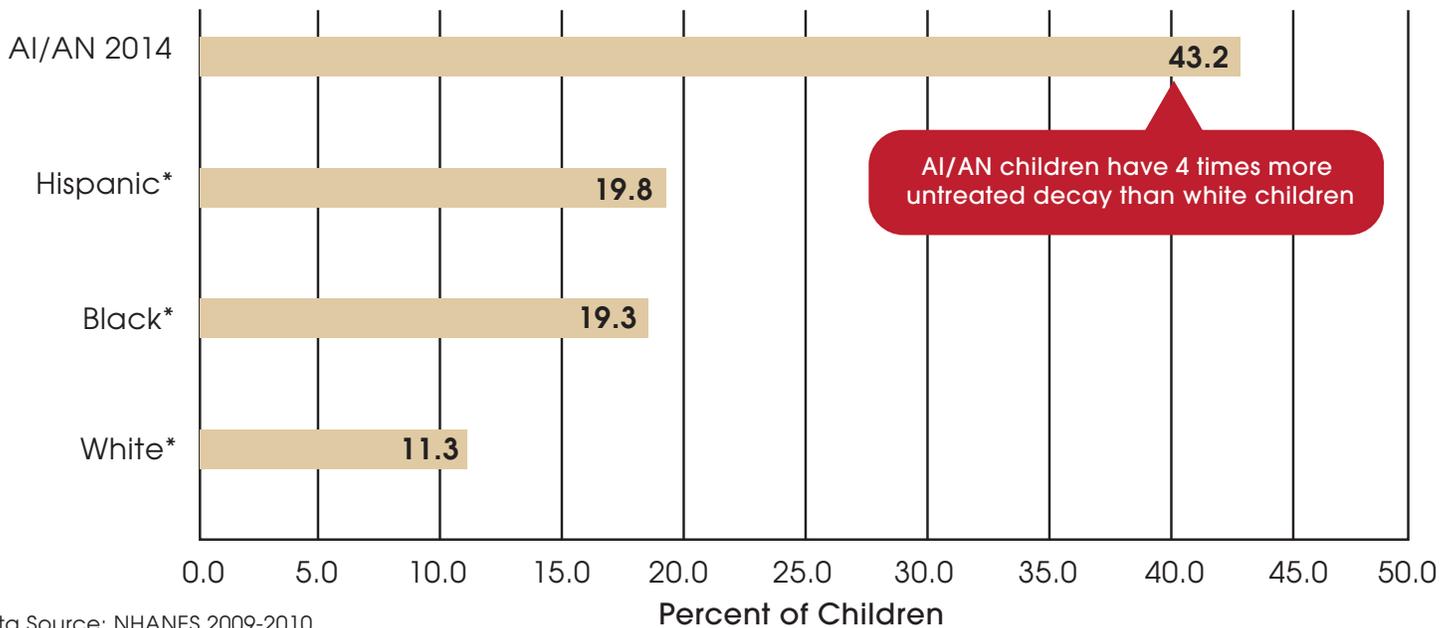
## URGENT NEED IN INDIAN COUNTRY

With more untreated tooth decay and periodontal disease than any other population group, the state of oral health among American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ ANs) is simply unacceptable. Especially for children, too many live in pain, miss school and, in extreme cases, risk life-threatening infections because there are not enough dentists where they live or because they cannot afford dental care. The current dental workforce is inadequate. Indian Country has, on average, about half the dentist-to-population ratio of the national average, and about one-fifth of the dental positions within the Indian Health Service (IHS) are vacant.



## AI/AN CHILDREN HAVE MORE TOOTH DECAY THAN OTHER POPULATIONS

Percent with Untreated Decay Among Children 3-5 Year of age



## TRIBAL COMMUNITIES NEED THE RELIABLE, CULTURALLY COMPETENT CARE DHATS OFFER

- DHATs expand access to consistent, routine, high quality oral health care.
- Grow the number of AI/AN oral health care providers available to tribal communities.
- Create a more efficient and effective oral health team that brings care where it is needed most.
- Establish cost effective solutions to oral health challenges into tribal communities.

In Alaska, dental therapists have been able to expand care to 40,000 people who didn't have access before.

