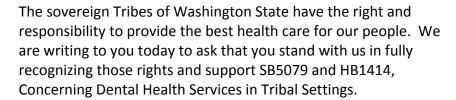


## Dear Legislator:



There is an oral health crisis in Indian Country, and it doesn't have to be this way. The Tribal Dental Health Aide Therapy (DHAT) program is one solution to the oral health crisis that will:

- optimize the oral health care system by improving the patient experience of care;
- increase and improve access and quality outcomes;
- increase the number of native oral health providers and;
- reduce the cost of care.

This bill is a tribal-led solution that adopts an evidence-based, culturally – competent care model with over a decade of demonstrated oral health quality outcomes in Tribal communities. The DHAT program is also economically efficient for Indian health programs because it increases access and lowers costs, while maintaining the same quality of care as that provided by a dentist. Even though tribes do not need this bill in order to move forward with integrating DHATs into our dental programs, we do need state authorization in order to use our Indian Health Service funding once DHATs are practicing. This is particularly important for tribes with fewer resources.

SB5079 and HB1414 do not require a tribal health program to adopt dental therapists but merely clears the way for tribes to choose to incorporate this provider into our oral health team if that is what the community and tribal leaders decide. It is a complement, rather than a replacement to other tools and resources available to tribal dental programs.

We respectfully urge you to support SB5079/HB1414.

Contact:

Davor Gurasic, Phone: 360-561-1923







































Lummi Nation

Chair, Timothy Ballew

Swinomish Indian Tribal Community

Chair, Brian Cladoosby

Nooksack Tribe

Chair, Robert Kelly

Sauk Suaittle Tribe

Chair, Norma Joseph

Upper Skagit Tribe

Chair, Jennifer Washington

**Tulalip Tribes** 

Chair, Melvin Sheldon

Stillaguamish Tribe

Chair, Shawn Yanity

Puyallup Tribe

Chair, Bill Sterud

Nisqually Tribe

Chair, Farron McCloud

Port Gamble Tribe

Chair, Jeromy Sullivan

Suguamish Tribe

Chair, Leonard Forsman

Squaxin Tribe

Chair, David Lopeman

Chehalis Tribe

Chair, Don Secena

Jamestown S'Klalum Tribe

Chair, Ron Allen

Lower Elwha S'Klallum Tribe

Chair, Frances Charles

Makah Tribe

Chair, Nate Tyler

Hoh Tribe

Chair, Maria Lopez

Quileute Tribe

Chair, Chas Woodruff

Quinault Tribe

Chair, Fawn Sharp

Cowlitz Tribe

Chair, Bill Iyall

Shoalwater Bay

Chair, Charlene Nelson

Yakama Nation

Chair, JoDe Goudy

Confederate Tribes of the Colville

Reservation

Chair, Michael Marchand

Spokane Tribe of Indians

Chair, Carol Evans

Kalispell Tribe

Chair, Glen Nenema

Samish Nation

Chair, Tom Wooten

Affiliated Tribes of NW Indians

Executive Director, Terri Parr