

MIDWEST ALLIANCE OF SOVEREIGN TRIBES

Resolution No. 002-16

Support for the Dental Therapist Model in Tribal Communities

WHEREAS, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST) is an intertribal organization representing the thirty-three (33) federally recognized tribes and four (4) intertribal organizations in the States of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Iowa, each having sovereign authority to govern their own affairs; and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people have a higher prevalence of dental caries and untreated tooth decay in all age groups compared to the general United States population, with many AI/AN children experiencing dental caries before the age of two; and

WHEREAS, there are few dental caries prevention programs that target AI/AN children, and other oral health issues persist for the AI/AN population such as:

- Over eighty percent of AI/AN children aged 2-4 years have dental caries;
- Eight out of 10 (83%) AI/AN children between 6-9 years of age had a history of decay in their primary or permanent teeth, compared to 45% of children in the general U.S. population;
- Almost half of 6-9 year-old AI/AN children (47%) had untreated decay. This compares to 17% of 6-9 year-old children in the general U.S. population;
- Despite a trend toward a reduction in tooth loss in the U.S. population, older data indicate 25 percent of AI/AN people aged 35 to 44 years have fewer than 20 natural teeth;
- Among all persons aged 35 years and older, nearly 75 percent have fewer than 20 natural teeth;
- Fifty-nine percent of AI/AN adults have periodontal (gum) disease;
- Seventy-eight percent AI/AN adults 35-44 years and 98 percent of elders (55 or older) have at least one tooth removed because of decay, trauma, or gum disease; and

WHEREAS, these disparities can be directly attributed to a lack of dental health professionals in the Indian health system in which IHS dental providers have a patient load of 2,800 patients per provider, while general population providers have approximately 1,500 patients per provider and the IHS experiences a very high dental provider vacancy rate, with estimates that 26 percent of the dental positions within the IHS are vacant, which contributes to the lack of access to dental health services; and

WHEREAS, as Tribal leaders, we have a responsibility to our people to utilize all safe and viable means to address the oral health needs of our people; and

WHEREAS, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses and supports the self-determination of Alaska Natives who have chosen to improve the oral health of their children and families by offering an effective, safe and competent workforce solution in their community;

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known as the Dental Therapist, and

WHEREAS, The Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses supports the sovereign decision of Swinomish Indian Tribal Community as they pursue adding Dental Therapists to their dental team; and

WHEREAS, The Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses understands that 52 countries and two states now train and support mid-level providers working in partnership with dentists to increase access to care similar to the way nurse practitioners and physician assistants work with medical doctors; and

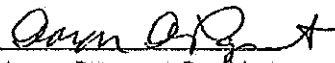
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses does hereby supports expansion of the Dental Therapy to Tribal communities outside of Alaska; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes is working in close cooperation with the National Indian Health Board, other Area Indian Health Boards, and the Indian Health Service, as well as other agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, to provide support to change Federal or state policies to make oral health care services more accessible through the development of the dental therapist provider closely modeled by the Alaska Therapists for the benefit of their member communities.

AND BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that this shall be the policy of the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes.

CERTIFICATION

As President of the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes, I do hereby Certify that the foregoing Resolution No.002-16 was passed on April 27, 2016, at a duly called meeting at which a quorum was present with 17 voting for, 0 voting against, and 0 abstaining.


Aaron Payment, President

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