

# Expanding Dental Therapy: Pathways to Success



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NATIONAL TRIBAL HEALTH CONFERENCE



# Dental Health Aide Therapists



- Model began in the 1920s, brought to US by Alaska Natives 2006 as part of Community Health Aide Program.
- Dental therapists practice in 54 countries, including the US (authorized in AK, MN, ME, VT, WA, OR)
- Alaska DHAT Education Program is a partnership between Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Ilisagvik Tribal College. It uses a 3 academic year/2-calendar-year curriculum and students graduate with a AAS degree.



- After 400 hour preceptorship, dental therapists can practice in remote or clinic settings under general supervision of dentist.



# DHAT Scope of Practice

**50 vs. 500 (dentist)  
procedures:**

Diagnosis and Treatment  
Planning,  
Prevention,  
Radiographs,  
Infection Control,  
Restorative,  
Pediatric,  
Urgent Care,  
Extractions,  
Community Projects,  
Clinic Management,  
Referral Process

**DHATs are primary oral health care providers**



DHAT, Ben Steward, examining patient



# DHAT model working in Alaska

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- Over 50 certified DHATs in 80 communities
- Over 45,000 Alaska Natives now receiving direct oral health care
- DHATs stay in their communities providing continuity of care
- Dental teams with DHATs allow everyone to practice at the full extent of their license

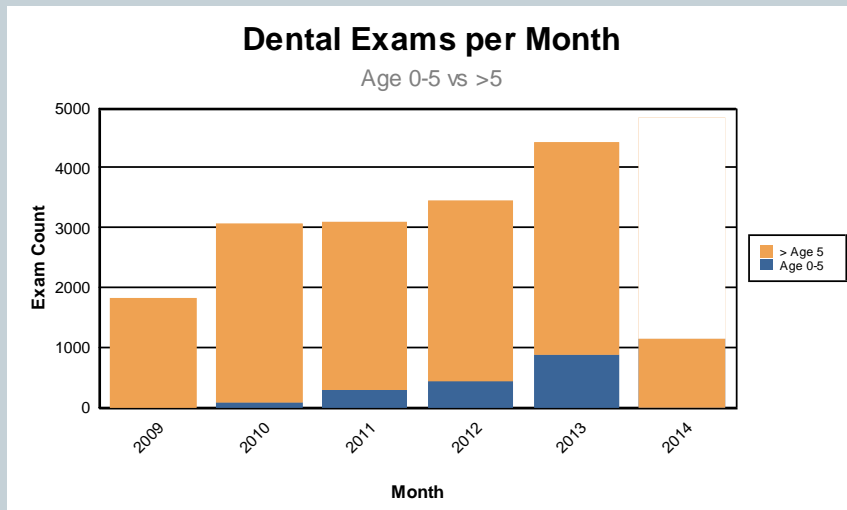


# Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation in Alaska

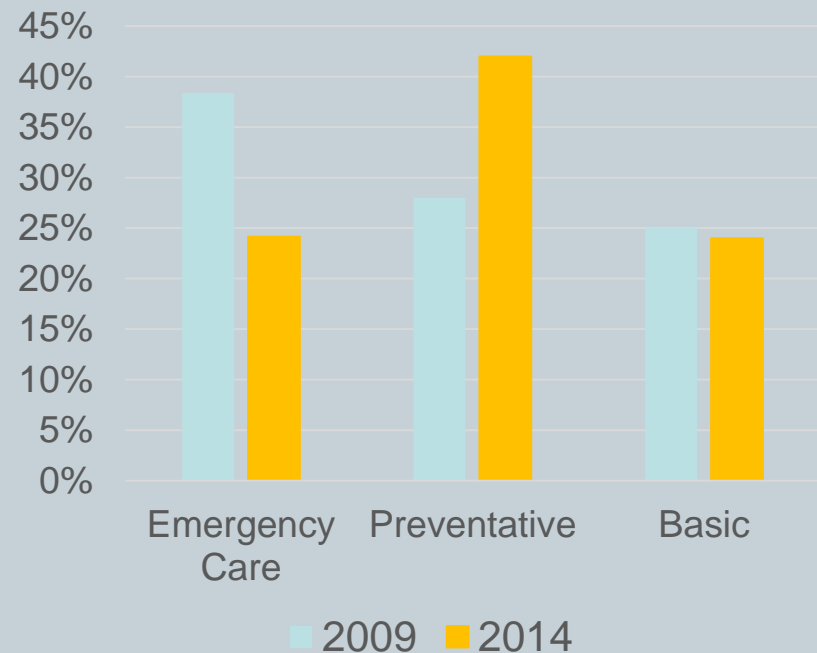


DHATs are increasing access to dental exams

DHATs are reducing costly emergency care

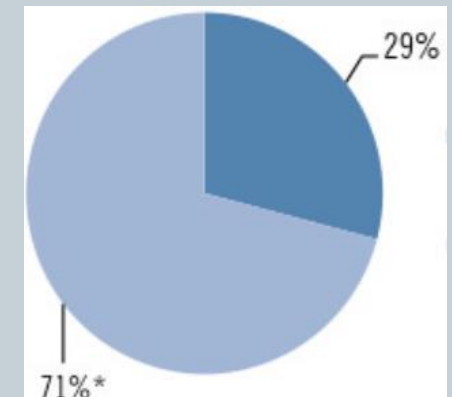
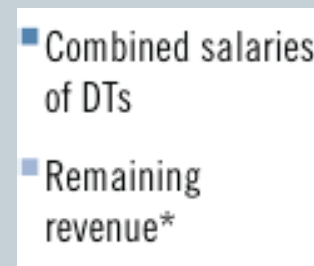
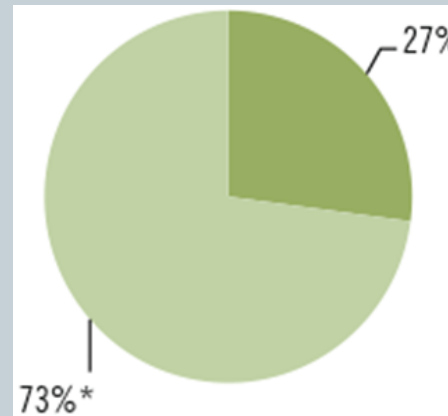


YKHC Service Distribution: 2009 vs. 2014



# Financial Impact of Expanding the Dental Team

According to a May, 2013 Community Catalyst study on the economic viability of dental therapists in Alaska and Minnesota, dental therapists cost their employers less than 30 cents for every dollar of revenue they generate.



**Total Revenue Generated by Advanced Dental Therapists and Dental Therapists in Minnesota - green**  
**Dental Health Aide Therapists in Alaska – blue**

[http://www.communitycatalyst.org/doc\\_store/publications/economic-viability-dental-therapists.pdf](http://www.communitycatalyst.org/doc_store/publications/economic-viability-dental-therapists.pdf);

Report conducted by Dr. Frances M. Kim, May 2013



# Communities with DHAT showing better outcomes

Children in communities with DHAT:  
2006-2015\*

**D-E-F-G extractions  
(front four teeth):**

**284% decrease**

**General Anesthesia:**

**44% decrease**

**Preventive care:**

**60% increase**



*\*Dental Therapists and Dental Utilization  
in Alaska's YK Delta: Chi D, Lenaker D,  
Mancl L, Dunbar M, Babb M*



# Adults: 2006-2015\*

Adults in communities with  
DHAT: 2006-2015\*  
**Extractions**

**26% decrease**

**Preventive Care**

**75% increase**



*\*Dental Therapists and Dental Utilization  
in Alaska's YK Delta: Chi D, Lenaker D,  
Mancl L, Dunbar M, Babb M*



# What is CHAP

- CHAP is a system of allied health professionals that work with supervising dentists, doctors, and mental health professionals at the community level that extend the reach of those providers
- CHAP providers are community members
- Community Health Aides
  - 4 levels CHA I, II, III, IV, and CHA/P
- Behavioral Health Aides
  - 4 levels BHA I, II, III, and BHA/P
- Dental Health Aides
  - 5 levels PDHA I, II, EFDHA I, II, and DHAT



# Community Health Aide Program

- ❖ **Community's Role in Selection**
- ❖ **Culturally Competent Care**
- ❖ **Competency based curriculum**
- ❖ **Team-Based Care**



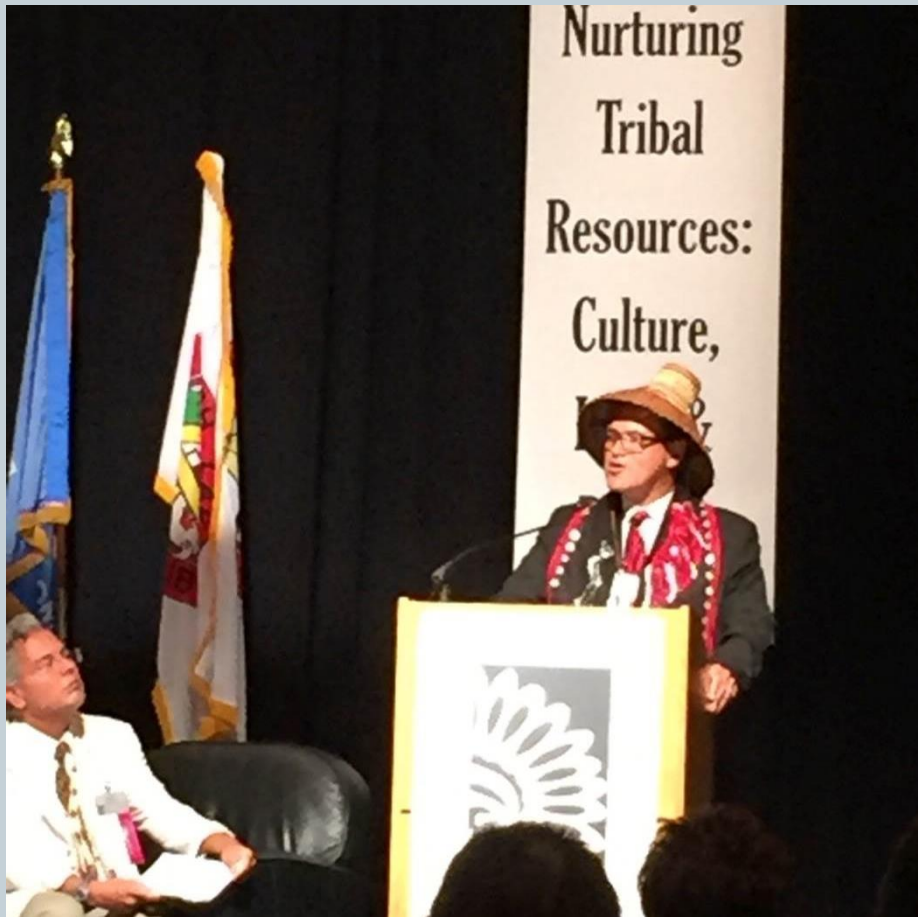
# Expanding DHAT Framework to lower-48

Expansion of the Community Health Aide Program  
*“shall exclude dental health aide therapist services from services covered under the program...”*

*“...shall not apply in the case of an election made by an Indian tribe or tribal organization located in a State (other than Alaska) in which the use of dental health aide therapist services or midlevel dental health provider services is authorized under State law...”*



# Sovereignty in Action



June 2015  
Swinomish  
Chairman and  
NCAI President  
Brian Cladoosby  
announces  
Swinomish will  
use Sovereignty to  
license DHATs in  
their tribal health  
system



# January 2016: Daniel Kennedy first DHAT in lower 48



# February 2017: Washington State authorizes DHAT in Tribal Settings



# So what exactly is in the new law?

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1. Authorization of DHAT services under certain conditions
2. Medicaid eligibility and state participation



# Oregon Pilot Authorization

Oregon Dental Pilot Projects were authorized by state legislation in 2011 to evaluate access and improved quality to oral health care by:

- Teaching new skills to existing categories of dental personnel
- Developing new categories of dental personnel
- Accelerating the training of existing categories of dental personnel
- Teaching new oral health care roles to previously untrained persons



# NPAIHB Partner Sites: Tribal Dental Health Aide Therapist Project



# Naomi Petrie, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians: First DHAT in OR



# NARA Dental Clinic (OR)



Ben Steward  
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua  
Experienced DHAT



# Measurable Outcomes

*What evidence is there that the pilot has expanded access to dental services and education to targeted Tribal communities?*

*How has the pilot improved clinic productivity, ensured patient safety and quality dental care, and influenced patient satisfaction with services?*

*How has the pilot impacted the productivity of the oral health team and the costs of dental care in the tribal communities?*





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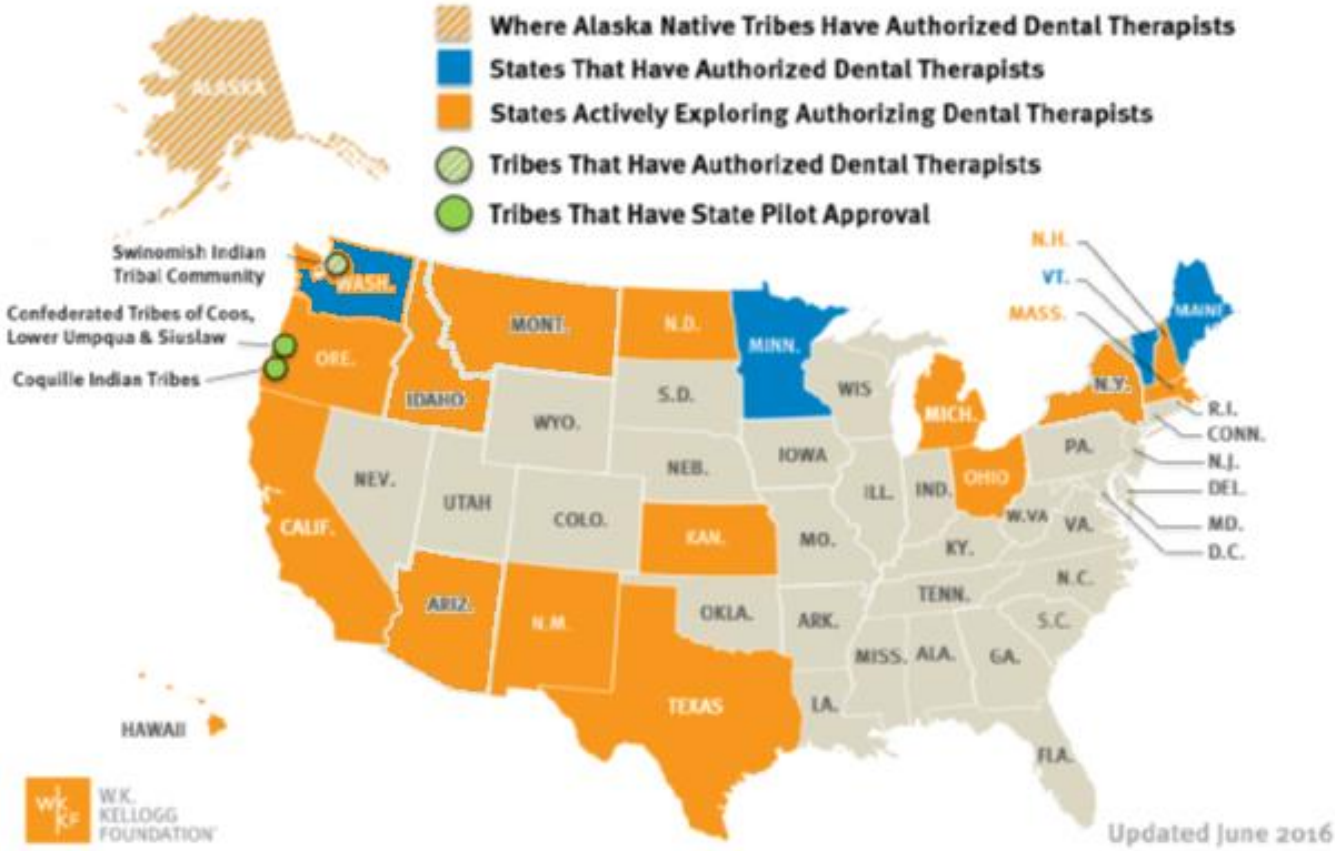
# What we are working on

- Develop infrastructure to support CHAP and DHAT programs
- Training and Workforce Development
- Ongoing Education Campaign
- Evaluate DHAT project sites
- Authorization in Idaho
- Permanent Authorization in Oregon



# Momentum for modern dental teams is growing

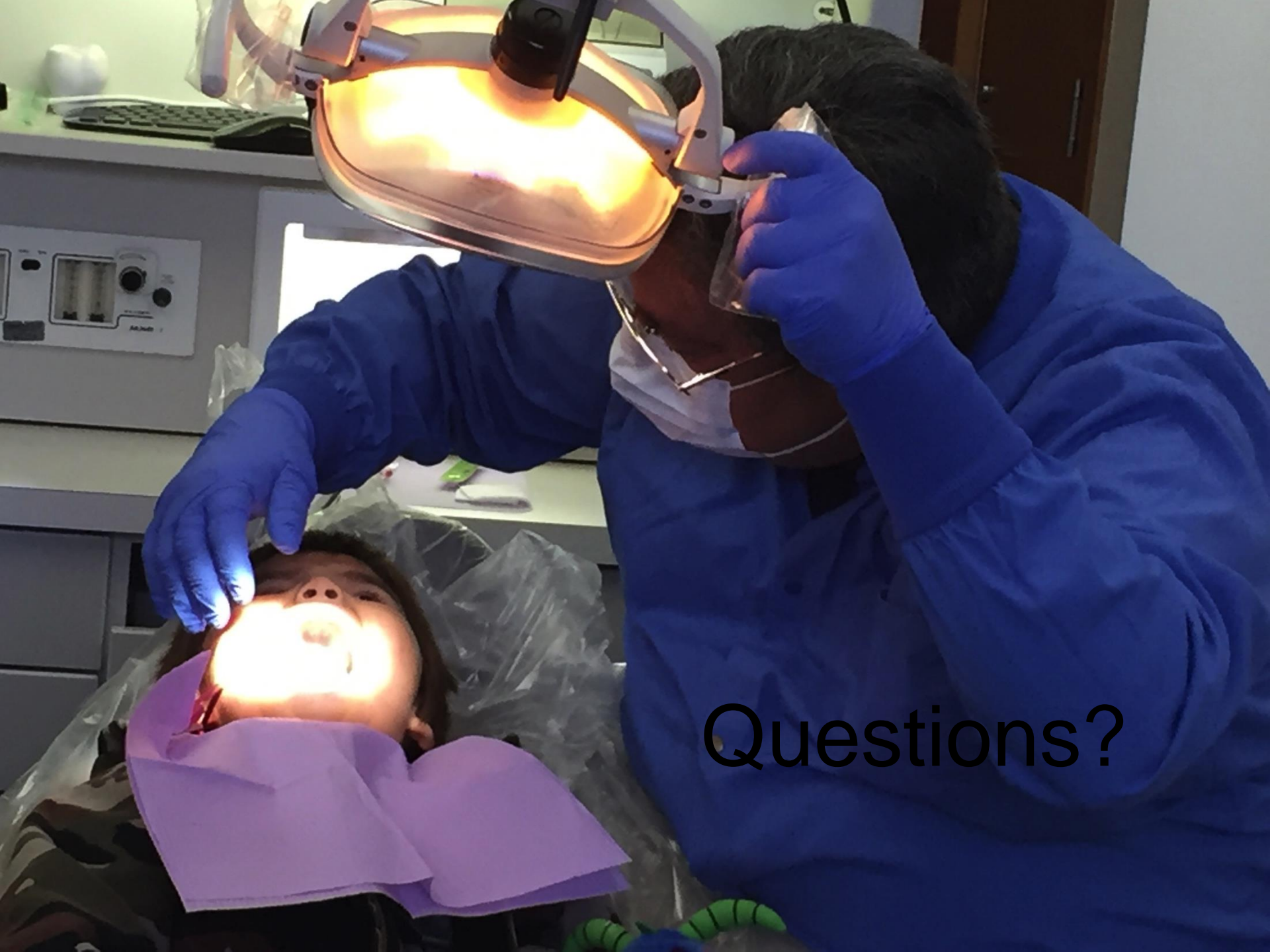
## Building Momentum for Dental Therapists



# Policy Matters!

- What are pre-requisites?
- What are education requirements?
- Are there restrictions on where dental therapists can practice?
- Are there restrictions on who they can see?
- What is the level of supervision?
- Is there a pathway for licensure for federally-certified DHATs





Questions?