Alaska’s Dental Health Aide Therapists

The American Academy of Dental Therapy, 2011

Mary E. Williard, DDS
CSG National and CSG West Annual Conference Health Committee- Hitting the Health Care Trifecta
Monday, August 11, 2014, Dena’ina Center, Anchorage, AK
Dental Therapists: A Definition

- Primary oral health care professionals
  - Basic clinical dental treatment and preventive services
  - Multidisciplinary team members
  - Advocate for the needs of clients
  - Refer for services beyond the scope of the dental therapist’s practice.*

*SASKATCHEWAN DENTAL THERAPISTS ASSOCIATION
DHAT curriculum adapted by AAPHD panel

American Association of Public Health Dentistry
- 11-person academic panel
- Model curriculum
- two-year, post-secondary
- Open access online:

The Journal of Public Health Dentistry, Special Issue: Workforce Development in Dentistry: Addressing Access to Care
Spring 2011 Volume 71, Issue Supplement S2
“A Review of the Global Literature on Dental Therapists”*

Dental Therapists:
• Decrease cost of care
• Improve access to care
• Provide care safely
• Public values the role of dental therapists
• Traditionally 2 years education


Supported by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation
Improved Access and Quality

- 25 certified DHAT
- 81 communities in rural AK
  - Over 40,000 people have access
- Continuity of care
  - Higher level of care possible
  - Dentist working up to their licensure

DHAT Aurora Johnson, NZ Educated
net annual revenue stream
- $125,000-$245,000 after costs
- Additional savings of ~$40,000 in avoided travel

19 DHATs generate 76 jobs
- $9m economic activity in rural Alaska
Keys to DHAT Success

- Not Mini Dentists
- 2 Year Education
- Cultural Competence
- General Supervision
- Appropriate Scope:
  - Diagnosis and Treatment Planning
  - Extractions
- Certification/ Recertification
- Community-based

Trisha Patton, DHAT student, taking x-rays
DHAT Educational Program

Address:
4200 Lake Otis Parkway, Ste 204
Anchorage, AK 99508

Mary E. Williard, DDS
907-729-5602

DHAT training is ANTHCsmile on Facebook
website: http://anthcoralhealth.org

Div. of Community Health Services- DHAT education