

Dental Therapy is Working in Washington



Tribes in Washington are increasing access to oral health care, creating a workforce from their own communities, and partnering with Skagit Valley College to build an accredited dental therapy education program to meet the needs of a culturally relevant, modern dental team.



*Northwest Portland Area
Indian Health Board*
Indian Leadership for Indian Health

Dental Therapy is working in Washington

- Daniel Kennedy, DHAT, was the first dental therapist in Washington State, hired by the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community in January 2016 before state legislation passed
- Rochelle Ferry, DHAT, was the first dental therapist hired after state legislation passed, joining the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe Dental Clinic in February 2018
- Jason Mecum, DHAT, graduated from the Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program in June 2018 and was recently hired by the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe

Dental Therapy workforce is growing

- There are currently six students from the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Lummi Nation, Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, and Tulalip Tribes completing their education at the Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program and will return to serve their communities in 2019 and 2020

Dental Therapy workforce will be trained in Washington

- The Washington Dental Therapy Education Program is a collaboration between Skagit Valley College and Swinomish Indian Tribal Community, and is set to open doors fall of 2020
- DHAT Education Advisory Committee, Swinomish, and Skagit Valley College will use the Alaska Dental Therapy Education program as a basis for the Washington Dental Therapy Education Program because it incorporates both CHAP standards and CODA requirements
- Swinomish broke ground in April 2018 for the clinic expansion to accommodate year two of the education program

State is working with Tribes to secure Medicaid reimbursement

- May 2018 CMS denies Washington State Plan Amendment.
- State has appealed the denial
- Swinomish petition to join the appeal as a party has been granted NPAIHB petition to submit an Amicus brief has been granted, NPAIHB has submitted a petition on behalf of the 43 federally recognized Tribes in WA, OR, and ID
- Hearing is set for December 18-19 in Seattle, Washington

