



NPAIHB

Indian Leadership for Indian Health

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OREGON TRIBES DENTAL HEALTH AIDE THERAPIST PILOT PROJECT



Kari Douglass,
Chickasaw Nation (NARA)



Alexandria Jones,
Coquille



Naomi Petrie,
CTCLUSI



Jason Mecum,
Coquille



Marissa Gardner,
CTCLUSI

I became a dental therapist in order to pursue a profession that intertwined my tribal heritage with providing healthcare services. Dental therapy provides that unique opportunity that teaches people how to provide culturally competent dental care in their unique tribal communities.

NAOMI PETRIE, CTCLUSI

ABOUT THE PILOT

Project #100, the Oregon Tribes Dental Health Aide Therapist Pilot Project, is sponsored by the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board in partnership with the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians (CTCLUSI), the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Native American Rehabilitation Association (NARA). The pilot educates and employs dental therapists to serve American Indian/Alaska Native patients, increasing access to care in those communities. The project was approved by the Oregon Health Authority in February 2016, and has recently been extended to operate through May 2022.

Five dental therapists graduated from the Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program, from 2017 to 2019. Two dental therapists are working at the CTCLUSI dental clinic, one at NARA, and two are working outside of the pilot until the new Coquille dental clinic opens in 2021.

The pilot operates under substantial monitoring and oversight by the Oregon Health Authority (OHA). Every quarter the project submits extensive data from our evaluation and monitoring plan that measures access outcomes, patient satisfaction, costs, and patient safety and quality of care. Chart reviews are completed weekly by the supervising dentist, monthly by an external evaluator, and yearly by qualified members of OHA's Pilot Project #100 Advisory Committee.

PILOT PROJECT #100 FINDINGS: SPOTLIGHT ON CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF COOS, LOWER UMPQUA AND SIUSLAW INDIANS DENTAL CLINIC

All data compiled from quarterly reports submitted by Mekinak Consulting to the Oregon Health Authority in accordance with Pilot Project #100 Evaluation and Monitoring Plan.



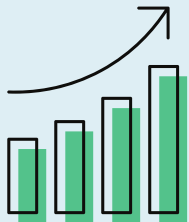
Shorter Wait Times

Dentist average wait time went from 10 to under 8 weeks in first 3 years. Dental therapist wait times have averaged 1.5 weeks throughout. Dentist wait time is expected to improve now that both dental therapists have completed preceptorship, and clinic has expanded from 3 to 7 chairs.



High Quality Care

99% of chart reviews rated acceptable by supervising dentist and external evaluating dentist. There have been no adverse events reported, and patients are either very confident (86%) or confident (14%) in the dental therapy services.



More Care Delivered

Since dental therapists joined the clinic, productivity has increased 70%, a clinic expansion was completed, and a community outreach program to serve tribal members outside of the clinic was developed (on hold during COVID).



Good Jobs Created

Two members of the Tribe completed the CODA-accredited Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program. They now have full-time, professional wage jobs serving their Tribe, and are building a culturally relevant dental care workforce in Coos Bay.



Population Served

The clinic serves the tribal populations for the CTCLUSI and Coquille Indian Tribe as well as members of other Tribes that live in the greater Coos Bay area. Eighty percent of patient care is billed to Medicaid or Indian Health Service Contract Purchases of Care.

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