



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #TUL-05-003

TITLE: Dental Health Aide/Therapists

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WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the people that our member organizations are entrusted to serve are afflicted with an unusually high rate of dental disease not being fully addressed by the current level of dental staffing and availability of dental staff; and

WHEREAS, the NCAI recognizes the need to have trained dental providers residing in the community to offer educational, preventive, restorative, and palliative services; and

WHEREAS, training for Tribal members to offer these services is instrumental in elevating the importance of good dental health on a consistent basis; and

WHEREAS, after their preceptorship, the Dental Therapists will be able to perform the following services under the general supervision of their dentists:

- Diagnosis of dental caries
- Preventive Services
- Cleanings, sealants, patient education and fluoride treatments
- Restorative Services
- Fillings, stainless steel crowns
- Palliative Services
- Pulpotomies and simple extractions; and

WHEREAS, with a Dental Therapist, appointments can be made when needed, not just when a dentist is visiting; Dental Health Aides will be able to work with the patient and the dentists at their regional health organization to keep their patient’s teeth healthy. Dental Health Aides will provide dental care by working with dentists just as Community Health Aides work with doctors to provide medical care; and

WHEREAS, The World Health Organization shows that Dental Health Aide Therapists now work in 42 countries, including Australia, Great Britain, and Canada; studies show Dental Health Aides provide quality care in these countries; and

WHEREAS, organizations with a profound interest in public health support Dental Health Aides Therapists, including the Indian Health Service, under Director Dr. Charles Grim, himself a dentist, the State of Alaska’s Department of Health and Social Services, and the American Association of Public Health Dentistry; and

WHEREAS, few dentists are interested in providing dental care in remote rural areas, where travel is unpredictable and time-consuming, especially in winter.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby completely support the Dental Health Aide Therapist Program for Alaska Natives and American Indians; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was adopted at the 2005 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the 62nd Annual Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma on November 4, 2005 with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary

Adopted by the General Assembly during the 2005 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians held from October 30, 2005 to November 4, 2005 at the Convention Center in Tulsa, Oklahoma.