

# Adding a DHAT to the Dental Team

Steps to getting started





We want a DHAT!

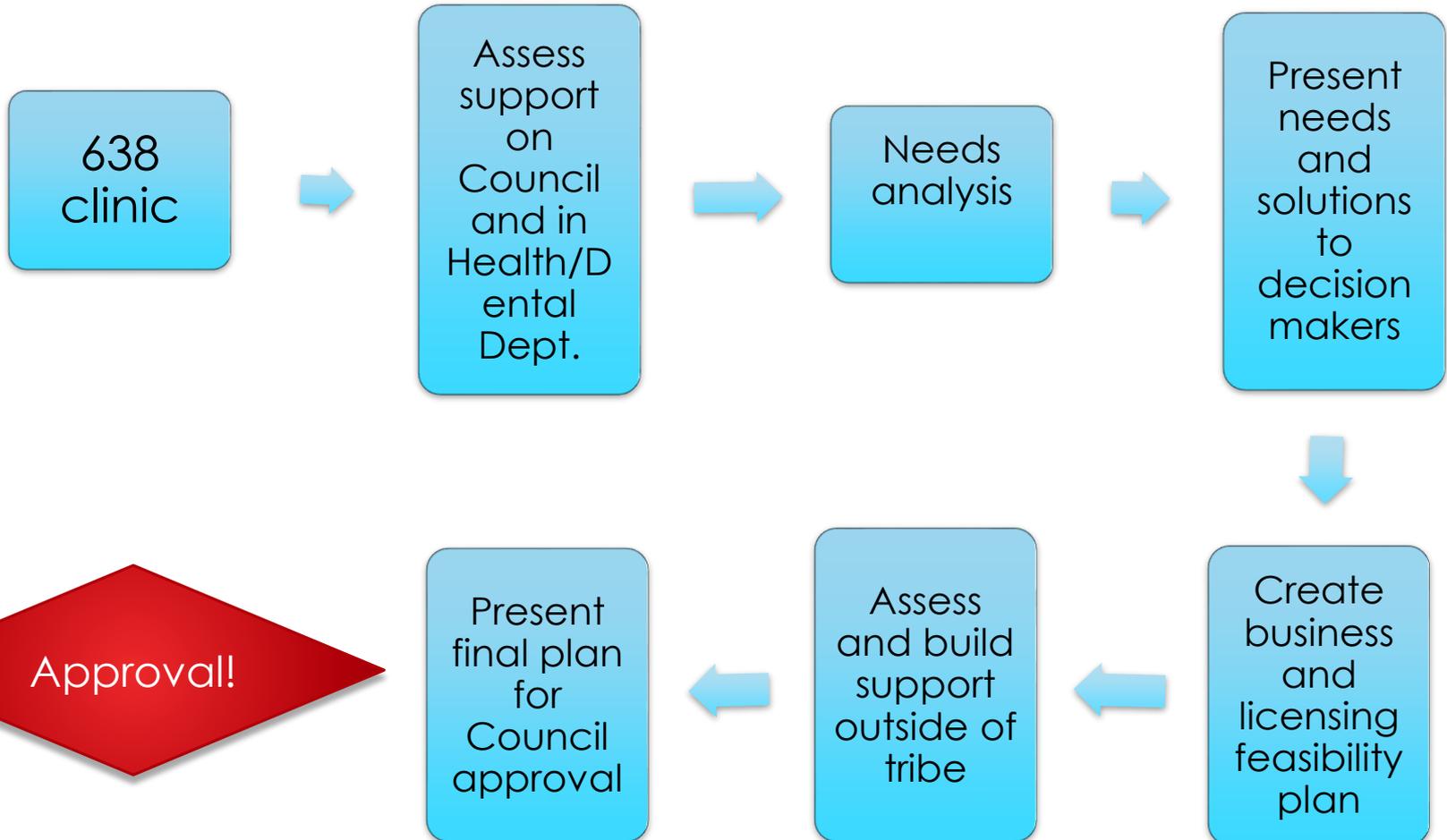


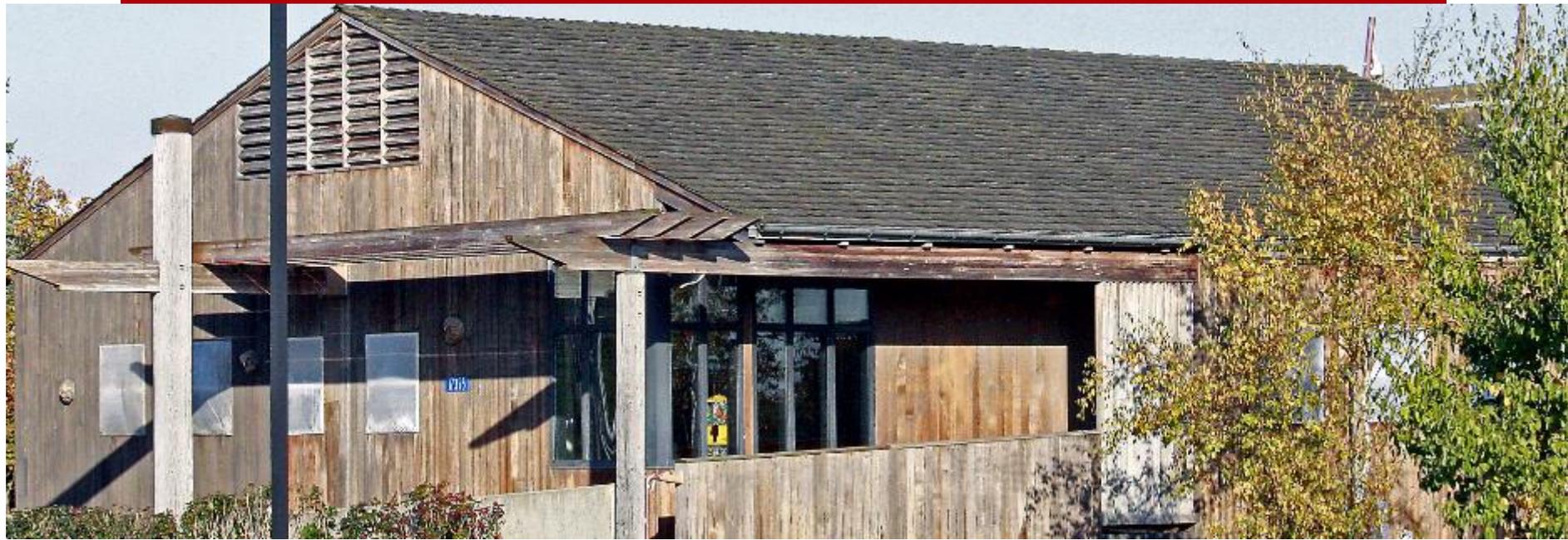


States with stars have statewide legislation or pilot authority that may allow DHATs to practice. Tribes in all other states currently have only one potential pathway: Sovereignty



## Potential Pathway to Starting a DHAT Program





IHCIA re-authorization language places restrictions on IHS resources being used to create Dental Health Aide Therapist programs in the lower 48. The effect is that dental clinics run by the IHS are not currently able to add DHATs to the dental team. Unless you are in AK, OR, CA, MN or ME, your clinic must be operated under the Indian Self Determination Act (638 compact or contract) for a DHAT pathway to exist.

# 638 clinic



Before launching into a full-fledged campaign, have some casual conversations with people who will be important supporters:

- **Dental Director**
- **Health Director**
- **Dental Team**
- **Tribal Councilmembers**
- **General Manager**
- **Legal staff**

The goal isn't to convince everyone at first, but rather to identify initial support, opposition, and specific areas of concern. This will help you prioritize your education efforts and identify information you need to gather to address concerns.



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## Find Support within Tribe

No matter what information you eventually present to decision-makers at the Tribe, you will be aided by having site specific information about your Tribe's capacity to serve member's oral health needs. Some initial questions to investigate:

- **Is everyone at our tribe seeing a dental provider?**
- **What is the wait time for an appointment?**
- **Do we have frequent turnover in our dental providers?**
- **Is it hard to recruit providers to work at our clinic?**
- **Do we have AI/AN providers at our clinic?**

This does not need to be a formal research project, but you will want to be able to characterize the “problem” if you want to present DHATs as part of the solution.



# Needs Analysis

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- Make sure as many key players are in the room as possible for the first serious DHAT conversation
- NDTI can provide you with general materials and powerpoint slides about what a DHAT is and the successes in AK, WA and OR
- Present your needs analysis
- Outcomes for the meeting could be to just educate, to come back with answers to questions, or to get approval to move forward with exploring program, financial and legal feasibility



## Presenting to Decision Makers

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## Resources:

- DHAT Education Program—approx. 70K/student per year (includes stipend and living expenses for student)
- Potential facility/operator expansion
- Funding for % of Dentist and DA time working with DHAT—can't use IHS resources
- Ability to bill Medicaid for DHAT services?

## Licensing:

- Does your tribe have the capacity to create and sustain a functioning licensing board with powers to license and discipline DHATs and other providers?
- Are there other tribes in your area that would want to pool resources for a regional licensing board?

Once you have the go ahead to further explore a DHAT program, there are some big pieces to figure out.



# Business and Licensing Plans

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This is an endeavor based on Sovereignty and the rights and responsibility Tribes have to provide for their members. You may still need support outside the tribe to fully realize your plans.

- **Does your Tribe need approval from BIA to change tribal codes?**
- **Will Federal CMS and your state Medicaid agency recognize your tribally licensed providers and reimburse for DHAT services?**
- **Will your state Dental Licensing Board/Department of Health recognize your licensing code and processes for licensing, discipline and revocation?**
- **Are there allies that will support both Sovereignty and DHATs in public conversations?**



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## Find Support Outside Tribe

What are some of the potential Council Decisions along the way?

- Creation of Licensing Division
- Creation of Licensing Code
- Budget Revisions
- Resolution in support of DHATs
- Student Enrollment/Employment Agreements
- Compact revisions to include DHAT as a provider



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# Council Approval



What if IHS runs my clinic or my tribe does not have the capacity to build a program on our own?





Change the Laws!



# Building Momentum for Dental Therapists



Map courtesy of WK Kellogg Foundation

- Find out who else in your state/region is interested in oral health access or may be working on state legislation, including your Area's Indian Health Board
- Meet with your local legislators and start educating them about oral health needs in Indian Country and DHATs as a solution
- Talk to your regional IHS team about wanting a DHAT. They need to hear from everyone who is considering this as a solution!
- Join the national tribal working group on Dental Therapy



## Building the Movement

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### **Native Dental Therapy Initiative**

Christina Peters, Project Director, 206-349-4364, [cpeters@npaih.org](mailto:cpeters@npaih.org)

### **Swinomish Indian Tribal Community**

John Stephens, Programs Administrator, 360-466-7216, [jstephens@swinomish.nsn.us](mailto:jstephens@swinomish.nsn.us)

### **Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians**

Vicki Faciane, Health and Human Services Director, 541-888-7515, [vfaciane@ctclusi.org](mailto:vfaciane@ctclusi.org)

### **Coquille Indian Tribe**

Kelle Little, Health and Human Services Administrator, 541-888-9494 [kellelittle@coquilletribe.org](mailto:kellelittle@coquilletribe.org)

### **Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium DHAT Educational Program**

Mary Williard, Director, Oral Health Promotion, 907-729-5602, [mewilliard@anthc.org](mailto:mewilliard@anthc.org)

### **WK Kellogg Foundation**

[www.wkkf.org/what-we-do/healthy-kids/oral-health](http://www.wkkf.org/what-we-do/healthy-kids/oral-health)

### **Pew Charitable Trusts**

<http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/projects/childrens-dental-policy>

### **Community Catalyst**

<http://www.communitycatalyst.org/initiatives-and-issues/initiatives/dental-access-project>



# Resources

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