



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians
Resolution #ABQ-19-065

**TITLE: Creating a Position Description for Dental Health Aide Therapists within
the Office of Personnel Management**

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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 and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 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 National Indian Health Board (NIHB), established in 1972, serves all federally recognized AI/AN tribal governments by advocating for the improvement of health care delivery to AI/ANs, as well as upholding the federal government's trust responsibility to AI/AN tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, AI/AN People have a higher prevalence of dental caries and untreated tooth decay in all age groups compared to the general United States population, with many AI/AN children experiencing dental caries before the age of two, yet there are few dental caries prevention programs that target AI/AN children and other oral health issues persist for the AI/AN population; and

WHEREAS, these disparities are directly attributed to a lack of dental health professionals in the Indian health system whereby Indian Health Service (IHS) dental providers have a patient load of 2,800 patients per provider, while general population providers have approximately 1,500 patients per provider and the IHS experiences a very high dental provider vacancy rate, with estimates that 26 percent of the dental positions within the IHS are vacant, which contributes to the lack of access to dental health services; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Native Villages determined that the most expedient and successful approach to resolving their dental crisis was to send their members to New Zealand to learn how to provide dental care to their communities as Dental Health Aide Therapists (DHATs) and presently provide DHAT training through the two-year educational program managed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium; and

WHEREAS, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has not created a position classification standard or position description for DHATs outlining the major duties, responsibilities, and supervisory relationships of the position.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) will work with NIHB in calling upon OPM to immediately begin working with tribal nations, through tribal consultation, to create a position classification standard and position description for DHATs; 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 by the General Assembly at the 2019 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians, held at the Albuquerque Convention Center, October 20-25, 2019, with a quorum present.



Fawn Sharp, President

ATTEST:



Juana Majel Dixon, Recording Secretary