



Oral Health Equity for Tribal Communities

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Community Catalyst

We're a national organization dedicated to building the power of people to create a health system rooted in race equity and health justice and a society where health is a right for all. Together with partners, we're building a powerful, united movement with a shared vision of and strategy for a health system accountable to all people.

300+ partner organizations at the local and state level

45+ states where we do our work

9 states where we've incubated health advocacy organizations



Oral Health in Tribal Communities

- Provider Shortages
 - Difficult to recruit and retain providers
- Lack of access
- High incidences of dental disease
- Low trust in oral health care delivery system



Dental Therapists: At-a-Glance

What can they do?

- Exams
- Oral health education
- Filling cavities
- Pulling baby teeth
- Pulling permanent teeth in limited circumstances

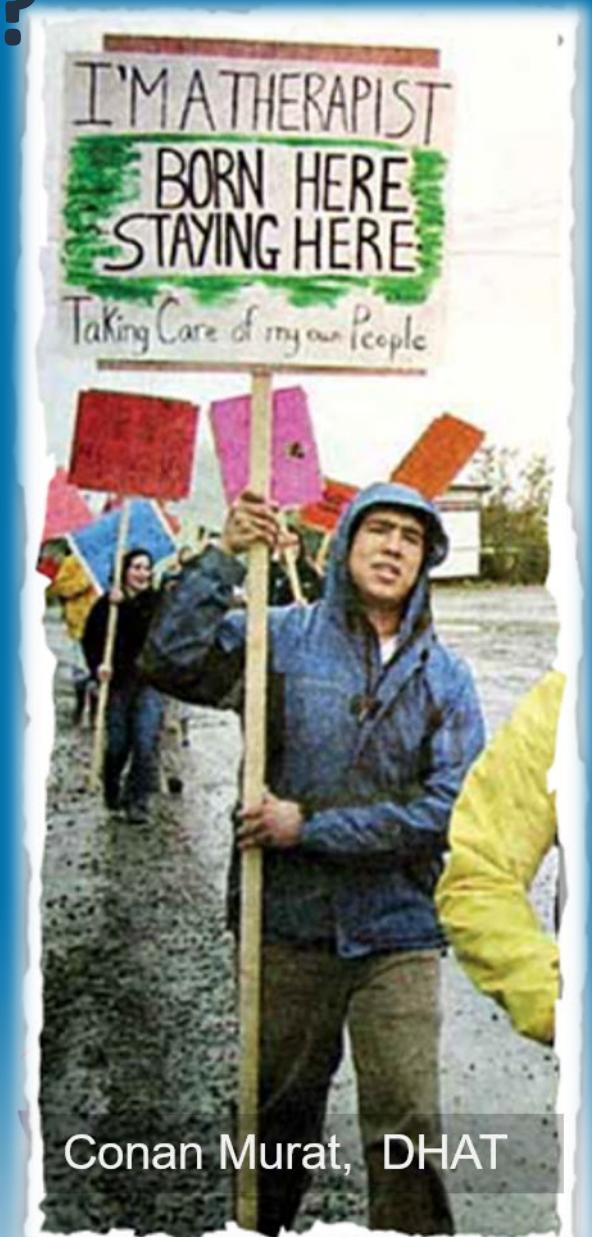
What's their education?

Minimum three academic year dental therapy program (some schools go year-round so it's only two calendar years)



What Makes Dental Therapy Different?

- Solution that came from Tribal communities, not imposed on them
- Empowers people in communities without good access to dental care to become the providers their community needs
- Attention paid to making education accessible



Conan Murat, DHAT

Working as a Team

Dental Therapist: works in office and community settings, does routine care (exams, fillings...)



Dental Assistant: works in office and community settings, assists other providers and does basic procedures services (X-rays, sterilization...)

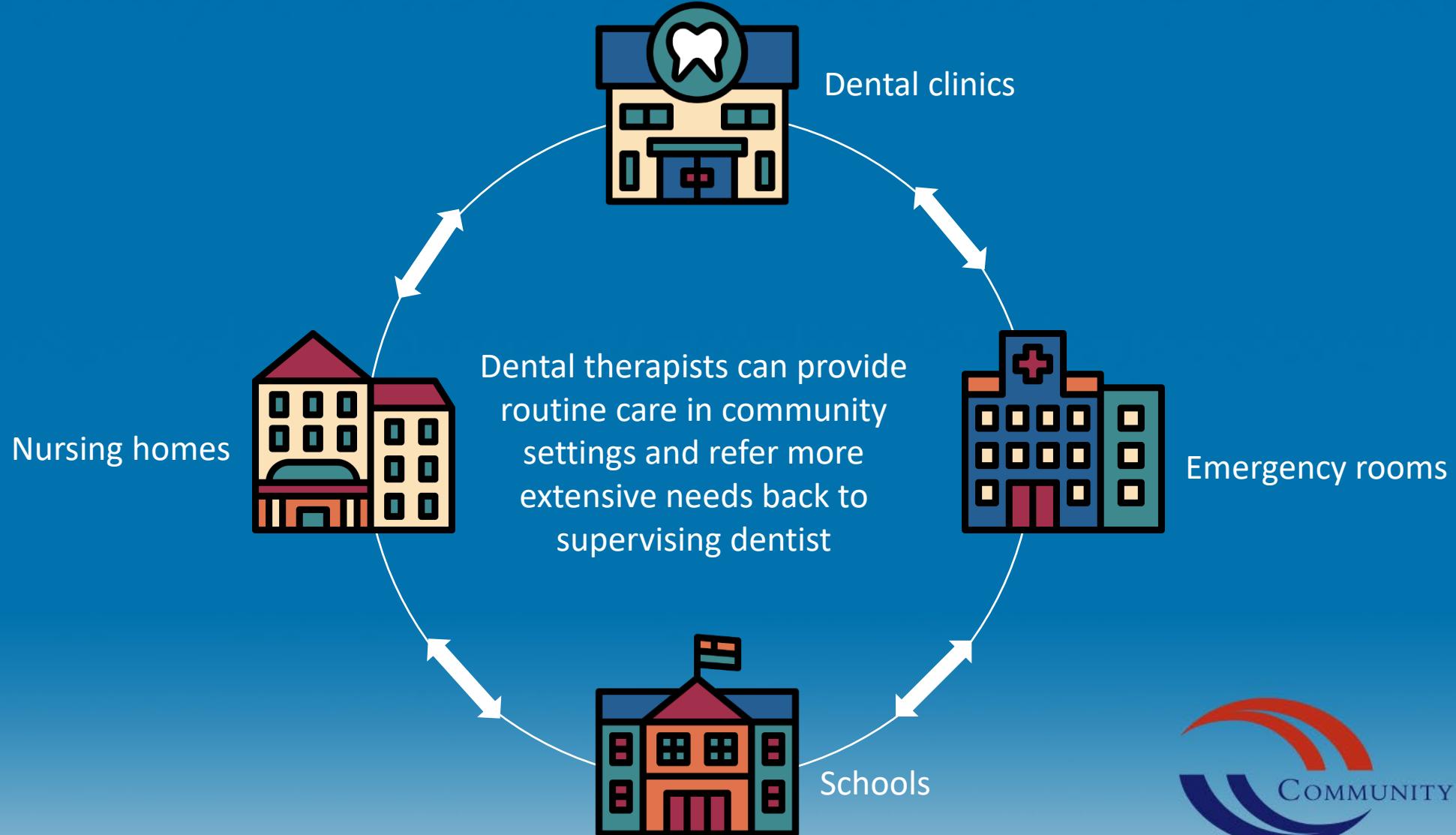


Dentist: supervises team, usually works in dental office, does complicated procedures (root canals, crowns...)



Dental Hygienist: works in office and community settings, does preventive care (cleanings, sealants...)

Care in the community



DT's Impact in Indian Country and Beyond

- Tribes that employ dental therapists report:
 - Shorter wait times (from >6 months down to 6 weeks in one case)
 - More preventative care
 - Fewer invasive procedures necessary
 - More revenue coming to dental facility
 - Especially true in Medicaid expansion states
 - Especially true in states with adult dental benefits in Medicaid
- But the most important outcome is...

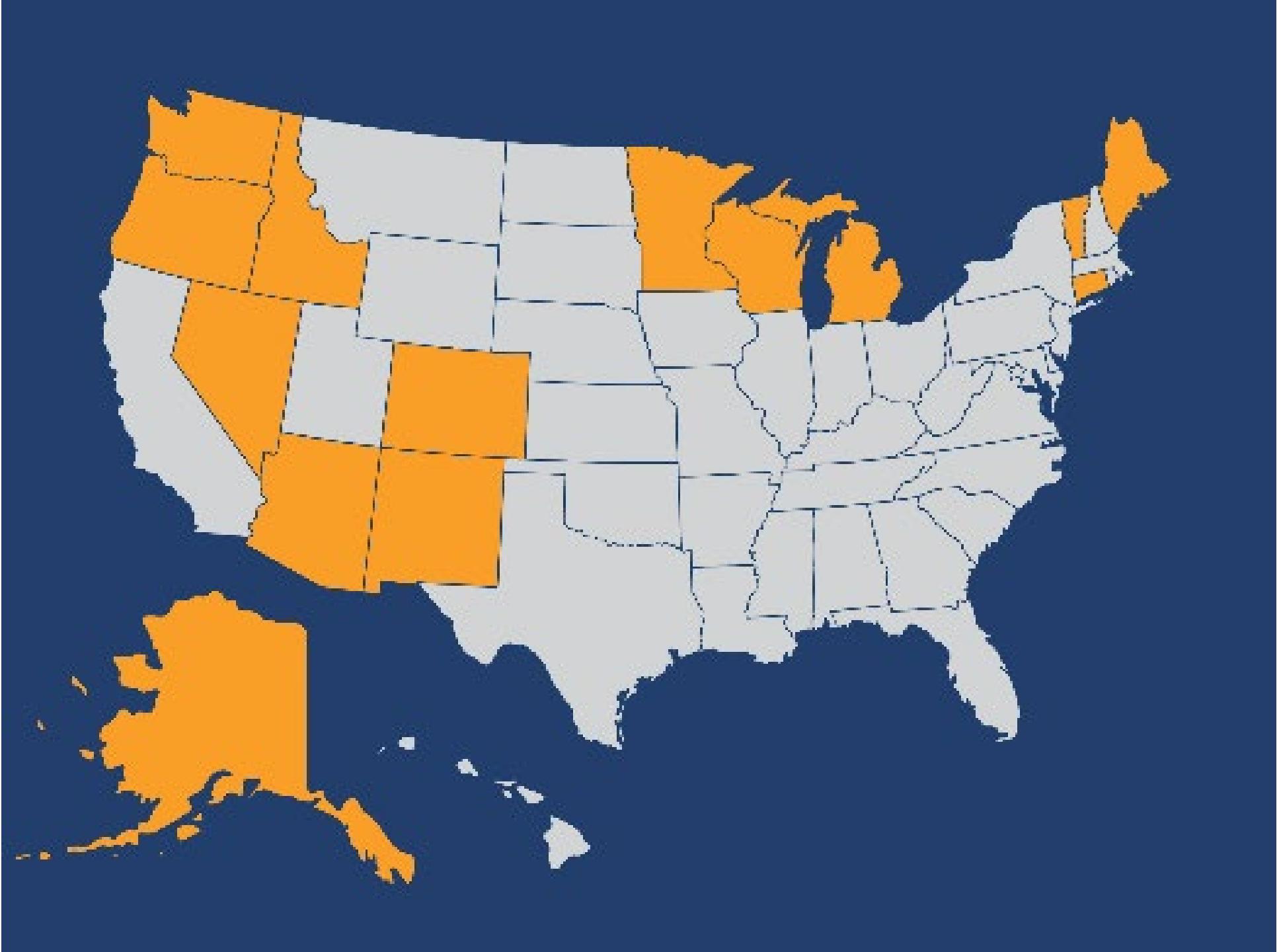


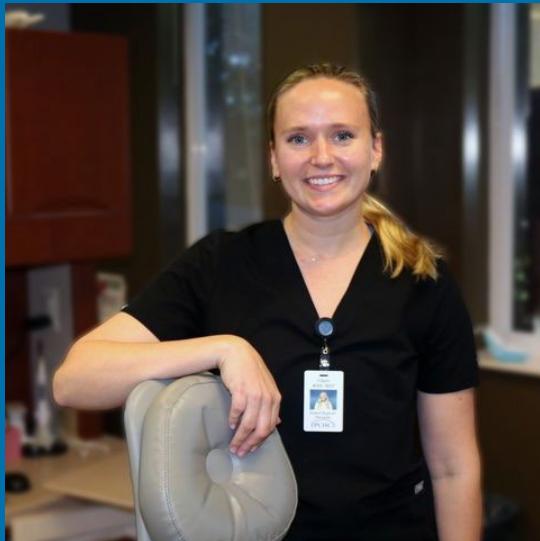


A Snapshot: Dental Therapy Today

- Currently working in 5 states (AK, ME, MN, OR, WA)
- Authorized in at least some settings in an additional 9 states (AZ, CO, CT, ID, MI, NM, NV, VT, WI)
- Three accredited education programs (AK, WA, & MN) are currently open
- More education programs are in development (MI, MN, WA, & WI)







Real dental therapists from across the country!!!



Thank you!

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