MIDWEST ALLIANCE OF SOVEREIGN TRIBES
Resolution No. 002-16

Support for the Dental Therapist Model in Tribal Communities

WHEREAS, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes (MAST) is an inter-tribal organization representing thirty-three (33) federally recognized tribes and four (4) inter-tribal organizations in the States of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana and Iowa, each having sovereign authority to govern their own affairs, and

WHEREAS, American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) 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 AIAN children experiencing dental caries before the age of two and:

WHEREAS, there are few dental disease prevention programs that target AIAN children, and other oral health issues unique to the AIAN population such as:

- Over eighty percent of AIAN children aged 2-4 years have dental caries;
- Eight out of ten (80%) AIAN children between 6-9 years of age have a history of decay in their primary or permanent teeth compared to 45% of children in the general U.S. population;
- Almost half of 6-9 year old AIAN children (47%) had untreated decay. This compares to 17% of 6-9 year old children in the general U.S. population;
- Despite a trend towards reduction in tooth loss in the U.S. population, older data indicate 25 percent of AIAN people aged 25 to 44 years have fewer than 20 natural teeth;
- Among all persons aged 55 years and older, nearly 75 percent have fewer than 20 natural teeth;
- Fifty-nine percent of AIAN adults have periodontal (gum) disease;
- Seventy-eight percent AIAN adults, 55-64 years and 98 percent of elders (65 or older) have at least one tooth removed because of decay, trauma, or gum disease, and

WHEREAS, these disparities can be directly attributed to a lack of dental health professionals in the Indian health system in which IHS dental providers have a patient load of 2,800 patients per provider, while general population providers have approximately 1,200 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, as Tribal leaders, we have a responsibility to our people to utilize safe and viable means to address the oral health needs of our people, and

WHEREAS, the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses and supports the self-determination of Alaska Natives who have chosen to improve the oral health of their children and families by utilizing an effective, safe and competent workforce solution in their community.
WHEREAS, The Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses supports the sovereign decision of Swinomish Indian Tribal Community as they pursue adding Dental Therapists to their dental team; and

WHEREAS, The Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses understands that 52 countries and two states now train and support mid-level providers working in partnership with dentists to increase access to care similar to the way nurse practitioners and physician assistants work with medical doctors; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes endorses does hereby support expansion of the Dental Therapy to Tribal communities outside of Alaska, and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes is working with the Coordinating Council of the National Indian Health Board, other Area Indian Health Boards, and the Indian Health Service, as well as other agencies within the Department of Health and Human Services, to provide support to change Federal or state policy to enable dental therapists to be more accessible through the development of the dental therapy provider systems established by the Alaska Therapists for the benefit of their member communities.

AND BE IT, FINALLY RESOLVED that this shall be the policy of the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes.

CERTIFICATION

As President of the Midwest Alliance of Sovereign Tribes, I do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution No. 002-16 was passed on April 27, 2016, at a duly called meeting at which a quorum was present with 17 voting for, 0 voting against, and 0 abstaining.

Aaron Payment, President