

Native Oral Health in Michigan

Native Solutions to Native Health

American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) have a strong need for dental care in Michigan. Dental therapists can help meet the need.

Native oral health needs

AI/AN children

In the United States, AI/AN children ages 3 to 5 have four times as many cases of untreated tooth decay, when compared to White children.¹ Additionally, in 2012, 20% of AI/AN children in Michigan experienced untreated dental decay in their primary or permanent teeth.²

AI/AN adults

More than twice as many AI/AN adult dental patients suffer from untreated tooth decay than the general U.S. population and compared to any other racial or ethnic group.³ AI/AN adults are more likely to suffer from periodontal disease and have missing teeth.

Michigan's dental care shortage

A need for providers: Michigan has 345 dental health professional shortage areas and meets 6% of its population's oral health needs.⁴

A need for cultural representation: There are 11 federally recognized tribes in Michigan,⁵ but fewer than 1% of dentists and dental hygienists in Michigan are Native.⁶

Limited coverage options

Limited acceptance of Medicaid: About 69,971 AI/ANs live in Michigan.⁷ In 2016, over 75% (58,699) of AI/ANs in Michigan were enrolled in Medicaid, but due to a shortage of providers who accept Medicaid, dental care can be difficult to afford.⁸

Limited access to services provided by Indian Health Service (IHS): Access to IHS services can help cover costs outside Medicaid enrollment, but fewer than 15% (9,385) of AI/ANs enrolled in Medicaid in Michigan also had access to IHS services in 2016.⁹

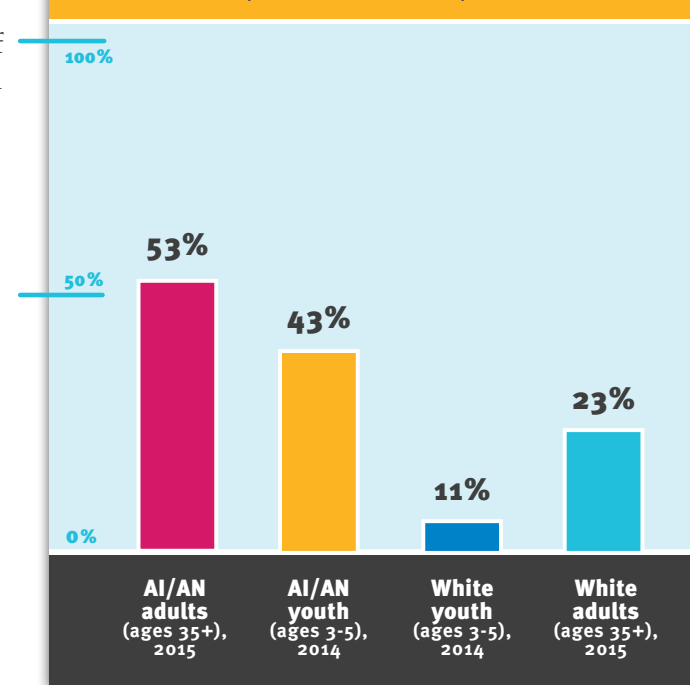
The population without coverage or access: Additionally, just over half (38,591) of this population were uninsured in 2016, around 14% (5,641) of whom also lacked access to IHS services.¹⁰

Dental therapists – A successful, Native-led solution

Dental therapists provide safe and high-quality care within a limited scope of dental services.

Their services free the dentist to do more advanced procedures for their patients, extending the reach of the dentist-led team. They increase access to oral health in places where it's hard to hire dentists. They are also members of the tribal and urban communities where they work.

Comparison of AI/AN and White youth and adults with untreated tooth decay (2014 and 2015)¹²



Status on state's authority: Limits and opportunities

Senate Bill 541 was signed into law on December 28, 2018. This allows dental therapist to practice after they have graduated from an accredited dental therapy education program and completed 500 hours of clinical practice under a dentist's supervision. They must work under dentist supervision and have a written practice agreement. Dental therapists are allowed to provide preventative and certain restorative dental services.¹¹

Native dental therapists offer culturally appropriate care, which leads to better outcomes for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Learn more

W.K. Kellogg Foundation dental therapy resource guide: <http://dentaltherapyresourceguide.wkkf.org>

W.K. Kellogg Foundation's video, "Alaska's Dental Therapists Are Bringing Back Smiles": <https://youtu.be/j8IRSp-1PpE>

National Indian Health Board Tribal Oral Health Initiative: <https://www.nihb.org/oralhealthinitiative/index.php>

National Partnership for Dental Therapy: <https://www.dentaltherapy.org>

Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board Native Dental Therapy Initiative: <http://www.npaihb.org/ndti/>

James Madison Institute brief, *Dental Therapists: Sinking Our Teeth into Innovative Workforce Reform*: <https://www.jamesmadison.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/PolicyBrief-DentalTherapy-v07-web.pdf>

¹ Phipps, K.R. & Ricks, T.L. (2015, Apr.). The Oral Health of American Indian and Alaska Native Children Aged 1-5 Years: Results of the 2014 IHS Oral Health Survey. *Indian Health Service Data Brief*. https://www.ihs.gov/doh/documents/IHS_Data_Brief_1-5_Year-Old.pdf

² Centers for Health Workforce Studies, School of Public Health, University of Albany, State University of New York. (2015, Apr.). *2015 Oral Health in Michigan*. www.midentalaccess.org/app/download/.../Oral_Health_MI_Report+FINAL.pdf

³ Phipps, K.R. & Ricks, T.L. (2016, Mar.). The Oral Health of American Indian and Alaska Native Adult Dental Patients: Results of the 2015 IHS Oral Health Survey. *Indian Health Service Data Brief*. https://www.ihs.gov/DOH/documents/IHS_Data_Brief_March_2016_Oral_Health%20Survey_35_plus.pdf

⁴ Henry J Kaiser Family Foundation. Dental Care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs), as of December 31, 2018. <https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/dental-care-health-professional-shortage-areas-hpsas/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

⁵ National Indian Health Board. (2019, Jan.) *Tribal Dental Therapy Law in Michigan*. <https://www.nihb.org/docs/states/TOHI%20State%20Legislative%20Tracker%20Bill%20Michigan.pdf>

⁶ Health Policy Institute. *Racial and Ethnic Diversity among Dentists in the U.S.* https://www.ada.org/~/media/ADA/Science%20and%20Research/HPI/Files/HPIgraphic_1117_6.pdf?la=en

⁷ U.S. Census. (n.d.). *The American Indian and Alaska Native Population: 2010*. *2010 Census Briefs*. <https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/c2010br-10.pdf>

⁸ Fox, Ed. (2018, Feb.). *Medicaid Enrollment 2010 to 2016 with and without IHS Access*. <https://public.tableau.com/profile/edward.fox#!/vizhome/AIANMedicMedicaidEnrollment2010to2016withandwithoutIHSAccess/MedicaidEnrollmentwithandwithoutAccessstoIHS2010to2016>

⁹ See Endnote 8

¹⁰ Fox, Ed. (2018, Apr.). *2010 to 2016 Uninsured with and without Access to IHS Access Map*. <https://public.tableau.com/profile/edward.fox#!/vizhome/BothwithandwithoutAccessstoIHS2010to2016/ChangeinUninsured2012and2016withandwithoutIHSAccess>

¹¹ See Endnote 5

¹² See Endnote 2



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