



## Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

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### **Dental Health Aide Therapist training center director to receive national *Distinguished Educator Award***

(Anchorage, AK) Dentist Mary Williard has said that her work with the Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) program is a career highlight. A national health organization agrees her contributions have been exceptional. An upcoming National Rural Health Association's (NRHA) award honors work performed with the potential to encourage, assist, enhance, expand, and improve rural health careers. The association has honored Dr. Williard for her work on education and curriculum development for DHAT.

"This award is a great honor," said an NHRA spokesperson. "We look forward to presenting it to Dr. Williard at the NRHA's Annual Rural Health Conference on May 8-10, 2008, in New Orleans, Louisiana." This was a competitive award, with many nominations, but the award committee determined that Williard's outstanding contributions need recognition.

"The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is very proud of the progress and accomplishments of the DHAT training center," said ANTHC CEO Paul Sherry, "and are particularly grateful for Dr. Williard's leadership and commitment."

Williard said the recognition is an honor, and she is pleased to be a part of the DHAT program, which "is already making such a difference for so many people." The DHAT program is the first of its kind, a unique solution to the Alaskan problem of getting dental health care to the most rural of our tribal communities. Tooth decay among Alaska Natives is 2.5 times the national average. DHAT will eventually help reduce the severe oral health disparities between Alaska Natives and other US people.

NRHA is a national nonprofit organization with more than 18,000 members.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium provides an array of health services to about 300,000 Alaska Natives and American Indians in Alaska.

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