

Does the dentist who sued to stop dental aides in Bush have a plan?
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Does Dr. Robert Brandjord have an alternate plan to provide dental care in rural Alaska after his lawsuit to stop rural dental health aides ("Groups sue to stop rural dental aides," Feb. 1)? Has he even been to a village or the dental clinics at Alaska Native Medical Center and seen the long line of people wanting emergency care, or looked at the waiting list for those who want dental care? Or would he like us to revert to the old days where someone with a severe toothache took a shot of liquor and pulled their own tooth with pliers? Talk about irreversible damage.

I consider myself to be a well educated, middle-age woman living in a village. Prior to coming to Ruby, I lived in Anchorage, had dental insurance and regular dental care. In Ruby there is no dental clinic. The closest one is 235 air miles away and a \$400-plus airfare. So when I developed some cavities, I waited too long and have a lot fewer teeth than when I came here. I used to look down on people with poor dental health. But now my own experience has opened a more tolerant outlook and the realization that not everyone can hop in a car and drive to a dentist. What does Dr. Brandjord suggest I do?

---- Edna Peters

Ruby

Editor's note: The writer is vice president of the Tanana Chiefs Health Board, but the views expressed here are her own.