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Dental program seeks to help rural Alaska Natives

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A new health program seeks to assist Alaska Natives with dental care in rural areas where dentists are scarce.

The state is training dental health aides who will provide certain services such as cleanings, removal of cavities and placing of fillings. The first dental health aide is a Native woman who will work in the Bethel area.

The health aides will be overseen by a dentist but the American Dental Association and the Alaska Dental Society and the are concerned about the program. They say the training the aides receive is not enough.