

# CHAP OVERVIEW

THE COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM (CHAP) IS A MULTIDISCIPLINARY SYSTEM OF MID-LEVEL BEHAVIORAL, COMMUNITY, AND DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS EMBEDDED IN CULTURALLY-TAILORED HEALTH PROVIDER EDUCATION PROGRAMS AND AREA LEVEL REGULATORY INFRASTRUCTURE THAT ALLOWS FOR A HEALTHCARE DELIVERY SYSTEM THAT IS RESPONSIVE TO THE NEEDS OF THE TRIBAL COMMUNITIES.

IN 2016, THE INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE (IHS) CONSULTED WITH TRIBES ON EXPANDING THE PROGRAM, AND IN 2018, FORMED THE CHAP TRIBAL ADVISORY GROUP (CHAP TAG) TO EXPAND CHAP TO THE LOWER 48 STATES. IN 2024, THE NATIONAL CHAP BOARD, A FEDERAL BOARD THAT SERVES UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE IHS DIRECTOR, WAS ESTABLISHED, SUNSETTING CHAP TAG AND MOVING TO CHAP IMPLEMENTATION IN THE LOWER 48 STATES.

IN 2018, THROUGH THE INDIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT, CHAP WAS NATIONALIZED LEGALLY ALLOWING LOCAL TRIBES, TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND TRIBAL HEALTH CARE SYSTEMS TO EMPLOY PROVIDERS TO BETTER SERVE THEIR COMMUNITIES NEEDS BY INCREASING ACCESS TO HOLISTIC CARE.

CHAP HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL HEALTH CARE MODEL FOR ALASKAN COMMUNITIES FOR OVER 50 YEARS AND CONSISTS OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDES (CHA), DENTAL HEALTH AIDES (DHA), AND BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDES (BHA). THERE ARE OVER 500 COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE PRACTITIONERS (CHA/PS) IN ALASKA. BY WORKING WITHIN THE GUIDELINES OF THE ALASKA COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE MANUAL (CHAM), THEY CAN ASSESS AND PROVIDE EMERGENT, ACUTE, AND CHRONIC CARE TO THEIR COMMUNITIES. ALASKA'S TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM EDUCATES AND EMPLOYS FOUR LEVELS OF DENTAL HEALTH AIDES. THE HIGHEST LEVEL PROVIDING THE MORE COMMON DENTAL TREATMENTS LEAVING DENTISTS AVAILABLE FOR THE HIGHER ACUITY TREATMENT PLANS NEEDED FOR PATIENTS IN NEED OF A HIGHER LEVEL OF CARE. BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AIDES ARE THE MOST RECENT ADDITION TO ALASKA'S CHAP AND ARE A STAPLE IN MANY COMMUNITIES. THEY ARE A VILLAGE-BASED COUNSELOR, HEALTH EDUCATOR, AND ADVOCATE WHO IS TRAINED TO WORK WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO ADDRESS BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TOPICS THAT AFFECT INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, OR WHOLE COMMUNITIES.

THESE CHAP PROVIDERS ARE THE FRONTLINE SUCCESS STORY OF PROVIDING HOLISTIC HEALTH CARE TO COMMUNITIES THAT LACK ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE. IMPROVED CARE, OUTCOMES, AND COMMUNITY POINTS TO THE SUCCESS OF THE CHAP MODEL IN ALASKA AND THE DESIRE TO REPLICATE THE PROGRAM OUTSIDE OF ALASKA. THEY PROVIDE DIRECT SERVICES USING A COMBINATION OF TRADITIONAL AND WESTERN MODELS OF CARE. THE MANUALS USED BY EACH DISCIPLINE WERE CREATED USING THE ALASKA COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES WHICH PROVIDE REGULATION AND SCOPE OF PRACTICE GUIDELINES FOR THESE FRONTLINE HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.

WHILE THIS PROGRAM HAS BEEN A SUCCESSFUL AND SUSTAINABLE OPTION TO ALASKA FOR DECADES, IT WASN'T UNTIL 2018 THAT IT WAS NATIONALIZED WITH THE INDIAN HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT ACT. WITH THE HELP OF THE ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM, TRIBES, TRIBAL CHAP GRANTEES, NORTHWEST PORTLAND AREA INDIAN HEALTH (BOARD (NPAIHB), AND TRIBAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDER (PROGRAM (TCHPP), AND NUMEROUS STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS, PORTLAND AREA HAS PAVED THE WAY FOR THOSE OF US IN THE CONTIGUOUS UNITED STATES. THE PORTLAND AREA IS THE FIRST IHS AREA TO SET UP AN AREA CERTIFICATION BOARD TO CERTIFY ITS CHAP PROVIDERS; A REQUIREMENT TO PRACTICE AS A CHAP PROVIDER. THE PORTLAND AREA CURRENTLY OFFERS EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR DHA, BHA, AND THE FIRST COHORT OF CHA STARTED JUST THIS YEAR. FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE TRAINING PROGRAMS PLEASE VISIT [TCHPP.ORG](http://TCHPP.ORG).

CURRENTLY THERE ARE 4 TRIBAL CHAP GRANTEES IN OKLAHOMA. ALL ARE WORKING TOGETHER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH OKC AREA IHS OFFICE, OKLAHOMA HEALTH CARE AUTHORITY, OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY, AND MANY OTHER STAKEHOLDERS AND PARTNERS TO ESTABLISH AN AREA CERTIFICATION BOARD, AREA STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES, CURRICULUM, PRACTICAL TRAINING PROGRAMS, AND FOUNDATIONAL LOGISTICS FOR A SUCCESSFUL CHAP IMPLEMENTATION FOR OUR AREA'S TRIBES.

