

TRAINING FOR DENTAL ASSISTANTS

"Open wide. Say ahhh!" You are in a Public Health Service dental clinic. A pretty Alaskan Native girl assists—a certified Dental Assistant, trained by the U.S. Public Health Service. She is a high school graduate with post-graduate study at Mt. Edgecumbe PHS Hospital in a highly skilled profession.

Dental assistant graduates fill positions wherever the Division of Indian Health has dental clinics, in Alaska and other states.

Dental assistant training began at Mt. Edgecumbe in the 1950's. At first girls studied during their senior year. In 1963 it was changed to an 18-week course after graduation.

In April, 1968, training will

expanded and improved to cover a full ten months. This professional training is accredited by the American Dental Association and the American Dental Assistant Association of which the girls can become members.

The last class of 1967 was graduated on December 15. The seven girls have been posted to Mt. Edgecumbe, Bethel and Kakanak in Alaska, and to clinics in Washington and in South Dakota. Several of them came here from other states.

Dental assistants from earlier classes work with the Public Health Service in Barrow, Kotzebue, Fairbanks, Nome, and Juneau.

The dental assistant has an important job. She aids the dentist in clinic or

hospital. She works in a white uniform and cap in a clinical atmosphere, and is responsible for the cleanliness of the office and dental tools.

She has training experience from the ordinary dental check-up to the serious emergency. As the receptionist and secretary to the clinic she meets the patients, handles the phone and files, and makes appointments.

Working conditions are clean. The pay is good. The hours are regular.

The PHS dental assistant might be any Eskimo, Aleut, or Indian girl, from any village, town, or city in Alaska. She applies for training at a Public Health Service office or through the Bureau of Indian Affairs Branch of Employment Assistance.

The BIA arranges to fly her to Mt. Edgecumbe—part of their responsibility in the program. If needed, the BIA also gives her personal assistance funds with which to get settled, and transports her to her new job after graduation.

Board and room at Edgecumbe are provided by the hospital, and the Public Health Service gives each trainee a modest monthly allowance.

Training is daily except weekends, with three dentists, an instructor, and graduate dental assistants.

Mt. Edgecumbe PHS Hospital has five operatories, a laboratory, and a classroom. Trainees participate in lab and clinic demonstrations, class work, and experience assisting in every phase of clinical and clerical work.

The clinic is busy, handling the dental needs of 650 boarding school students as well as students from other schools in the Sitka-Mt. Edgecumbe area.

At all times the students live, work, study, and act as dental assistant trainees soon to become important members of the U.S. Public Health Service medical team.

As a federal service trainee each girl gets annual and sick leave benefits and credit towards Civil Service retirement.

Retirement? Yes. The career opportunities in this field are wide open. Dental assistants are needed in many Indian Health Dental Clinics. Certification, promotion, travel, further study, and employment security are benefits of the profession.

Interested? Stop in or write to your nearest Public Health Service facility or Bureau of Indian Affairs office of Employment Assistance.

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Nominations for Representatives Sought By CAA

Any group, agency, or organization wishing to nominate a representative to the North Star Borough Community Action Agency Board of Directors shall do so in writing prior to February 10, 1968. Mail your nomination to: Community Action Agency, P.O. Box 1049, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

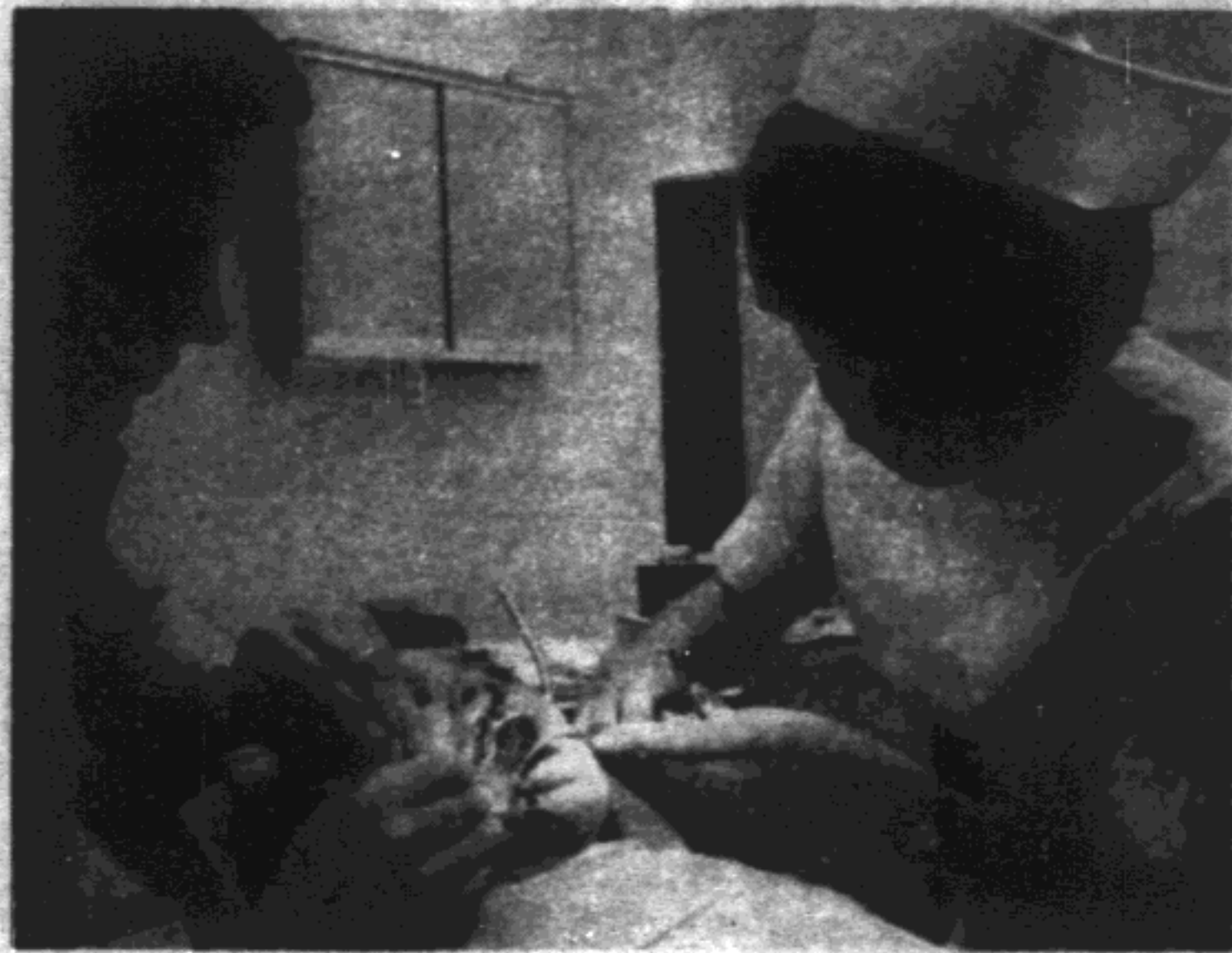
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SAY AHHHI—Mrs. Ramona Hamar graduated from Dental Assistant training at Mt. Edgecumbe in 1962. She now works in the PHS dental clinic in Juneau, here assisting James Benson, D.D.S., with a young patient.

—BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS Photo

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