



# THE Mukluk Telegraph

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSPAPER FOR THE CUSTOMER-OWNERS OF THE ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

APRIL - JUNE 2015

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# Building Better Access

The Alaska Native Health Campus is always making improvements to better serve our Alaska Native people. Some of the projects are more visible than others, such as the new parking garage on the north side of the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC). Other projects are improvements that allow us to effectively use the space we have and identify opportunities for improvements that reduce wait times and congestion. All of these campus improvement projects are part of a broader initiative to build better access to health for our people. ANMC is committed to delivering exceptional quality.

### Recent improvement projects include:

The Patient Housing Project for patients and families receiving care at ANMC reached another milestone as the construction contract was awarded to Neeser Construction, Inc. Look for construction to begin this



New room in Family Birthing Services for patient comfort.

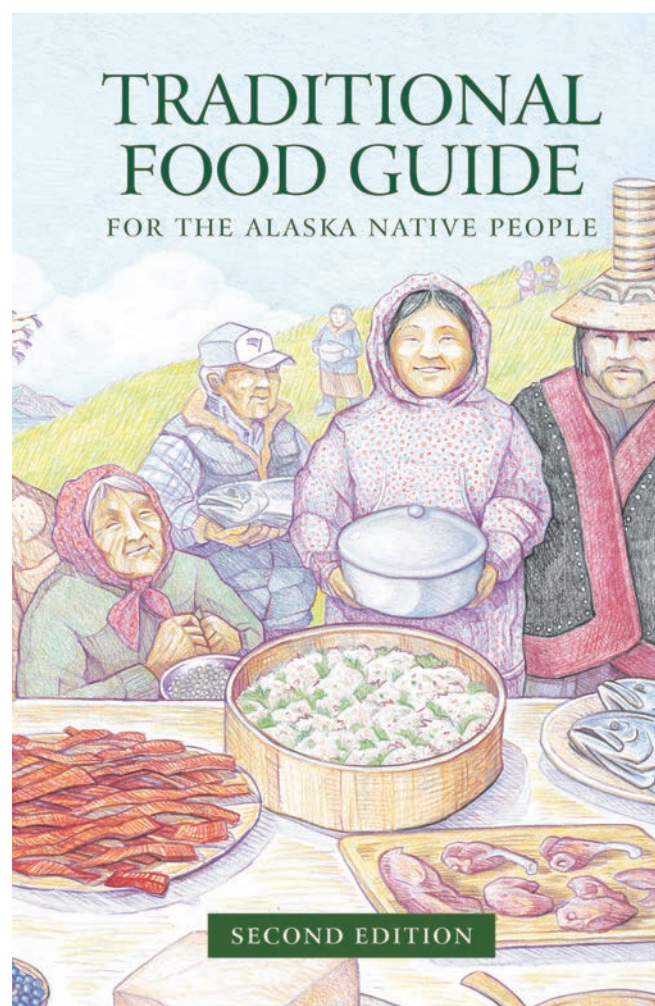
spring next to the new parking garage. The facility will have 202 beds for those traveling to Anchorage to receive medical treatment and will be ready for occupancy in fall 2016.

This spring, the Cardiology and Neurosurgery clinics on ANMC's first floor are expanding to accommodate more patient visits and both clinics will have improved waiting areas and check-in desks. The Cardiology clinic is expanding from six exams rooms

and three testing rooms to nine exam rooms and four testing rooms. The Neurosurgery clinic is expanding from four exam rooms to six exam rooms.

Construction finished in April for the Family Birthing Services unit, which includes the addition of three brand new Labor & Delivery rooms, six stand-alone OB Triage rooms, one C-Section OR and fully remodeled

SEE BETTER ACCESS, PAGE 3 ►



## Traditional foods support modern health

Traditional foods are an important part of our Alaska Native cultures and an excellent source of nutrition for health and healing. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and our Tribal partners around the state recognize the cultural importance traditional foods have for a person and their health, but providers and patients may need nutritional guidance for those managing chronic diseases or being treated for cancer.

To support those patients and health care providers, ANTHC published the Traditional Food Guide. Originally intended for cancer patients and released in 2008, the Traditional Food Guide is now in its second edition and available for sale through ANTHC and other retailers. Through the ANTHC Cancer Program, it will continue to be given to Alaska Native people who are recently diagnosed with cancer.

The first edition of the Traditional Food Guide was designed to support Alaska Native cancer patients who wanted to continue to eat their comforting and nutritious wild foods during treatment. Some health care providers were not familiar with the foods and

SEE TRADITIONAL FOOD, PAGE 12 ►



# Health coverage for all Alaskans

A new report from the State of Alaska shows that 41,000 low-income Alaskans not currently eligible for Medicaid health coverage would be eligible under new guidelines, and bring \$145 million in new revenue to Alaska.

Medicaid expansion has been in the news across the U.S., as 28 states across the country have expanded Medicaid eligibility to provide health coverage to uninsured Americans under a provision of the federal Affordable Care Act health reform law. Alaska Gov. Bill Walker and the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) presented findings in February that outlined the benefits and positive economic impact for Alaska if the Alaska Legislature elects to accept federal Medicaid expansion funds. Both reports project positive health, fiscal, and economic benefits while providing further understanding of the potential impacts of Medicaid expansion in Alaska.

“The Healthy Alaska Plan: A Catalyst for Reform” collects new data on the number of people who would be eligible for Medicaid and references previously completed Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium reports from the Urban Institute and Northern

## Benefits of Medicaid expansion

### Economic

- \$145 million in new state annual revenue
- \$6.1 million in savings for the State of Alaska
- 4,000 new jobs created by 2017
- \$15.50 in federal matching funds for every \$1 Alaska invests
- Lower costs for care for uninsured Alaskans currently paid for by the Tribal Health System, individuals and businesses with health insurance, and the State of Alaska
- State coordination with the Alaska Tribal Health System to increase community resources and strengthen systems of care and improvements in services for seniors and Alaskans with disabilities.

### Health

- Health coverage for 41,000 uninsured Alaskans
- Increased access to preventative and primary care such as check-ups and flu vaccines
- Regular management of chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart conditions and pain management

### Social

- Peace of mind for Tribal members

Economics. A full copy of the plan and more information on Medicaid expansion is available on a new DHSS webpage, The Healthy Alaska Plan at [dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Pages/default.aspx](http://dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Pages/default.aspx).

The State outlines recommendations based on the report that includes paths to achieving comprehensive Medicaid

traveling out of state, seasonal workers such as commercial fishermen, people who own or work for small businesses and those working part-time.

- Long-term health and wellness impacts from regular access to health care before small problems become larger and more deadly.

## Let the Alaska Legislature know that you support Medicaid Expansion

You can help make Medicaid expansion in Alaska a reality by letting the Alaska Legislature know that you support the Healthy Alaska Plan for healthier Alaskans and a healthier economy

- Write a letter or email to your Alaska state representatives and tell them to support Medicaid expansion
- Tell family and friends why you support Medicaid expansion and the health of Alaska
- Keep up to date on Medicaid expansion at the State Healthy Alaska Plan webpage: [dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Pages/default.aspx](http://dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Pages/default.aspx) or the Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association website: [ashnha.com/policy-and-advocacy/medicaid-expansion/](http://ashnha.com/policy-and-advocacy/medicaid-expansion/)

Alaska money from creating a more efficient Medicaid payment system, but also save money for the State, the Tribal Health System, and individuals by providing health care coverage that helps keep people healthy.

Gov. Walker’s plan reflects a commitment to improving the entire Alaska health system for Alaska Native people. Medicaid expansion has a direct effect on the ability of our Tribal Health System to improve capacity and access to care for underserved Alaskans, including non-Natives living in rural areas that rely on the Tribal Health System.

The State Healthy Alaska Plan webpage references a report released by ANTHC in 2013, “Healthier Alaskans Create a Healthier State Economy.” The Healthy Alaska Plan notes similar results from Medicaid expansion for the fiscal and economic vitality of our state, and the health of individuals and families.

reform along with expansion that best serves the total Medicaid-eligible population and the more than 41,000 Alaskans newly eligible under expansion. These reforms promise to not only save

## Informed and inspired!



Put the pulse of Alaska Native health in your hands with **We Are Getting Healthier** and **Hot Topics in Alaska Native Health**, two popular publications created by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. The publications provide information, trends and tips to help our people stay informed and live healthier.

Read copies of Hot Topics in Alaska Native Health and We Are Getting Healthier at [www.anthc.org/news](http://www.anthc.org/news).

### THE MUKLUK TELEGRAPH

The Mukluk Telegraph is the official newspaper of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

The paper is published quarterly and distributed at no charge to customer-owners, employees and partners of ANTHC statewide.

How are we doing?

Have a suggestion or a compliment for the Mukluk Telegraph?

We would love to hear from you. E-mail the ANTHC Marketing Department at [marketing@anthc.org](mailto:marketing@anthc.org).

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The Mukluk Telegraph is available online at [anthc.org/news](http://anthc.org/news).

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## MISSION

Providing the highest quality health services in partnership with our people and the Alaska Tribal Health System

## VISION

Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world

## VALUES

Achieving excellence  
Native self-determination  
Treat with respect and integrity  
Health and wellness  
Compassion



**BETTER ACCESS, FROM PAGE 1 ►**

Post-Partum rooms. During construction patient safety and comfort have been our top priority.

Opened in 1997, ANMC is now 18 years old and experiencing the growing pains and challenges expected of a facility its age. To improve the care environment and provide the best service for our people, ANMC's Maintenance and Facilities team is refreshing inpatient rooms in the Critical Care Unit and on the hospital's fourth and fifth floors. This project is a collaboration between ANMC's Maintenance and Facilities, Nursing, Customer Experience and Housekeeping teams. To improve the care environment, work continues

to refresh inpatient rooms, known as the Healthy Rooms Initiative. Updating a hospital room interior includes: patching and repairing walls and giving rooms a fresh coat of paint; refinishing wood trim and replacing baseboard trim; replacing curtains and repairing or replacing broken fixtures, lights and any other damaged components; replacing countertops and sinks, where needed; repairing or replacing plumbing components, as needed; and deep cleaning the floors, fixtures and tile – all within 48 hours, with most work completed in less than 28 hours. Since the Healthy Rooms Initiative started in early 2014, 56 rooms of the 78 identified have been turned over.



Operating room designed for cesarean delivery.

**Tweet, Tweet! Follow ANTHC on Twitter @ANTHCtoday**

*Thank You*

8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL  
*Raven's Ball*  
GALA FOR ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH

THESE LUMINARY SPONSORS HELPED MAKE OUR EVENT A SPECTACULAR SUCCESS:

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**The Affordable Care Act and YOU!**

Confused by the Affordable Care Act?

Having trouble filling out your Indian Status Exemption application?

Have more questions?

ANTHC has the answers!

Learn more at [www.anthc.org/aca](http://www.anthc.org/aca), [healthreform@anthc.org](mailto:healthreform@anthc.org) and (907) 727-7777.



# New Pharmacy services for patients

The ANTHC Pharmacy provides many behind-the-scenes services to our patients and people across Alaska, filling prescriptions in person and via the automated refill hotline, in addition to educating and counseling patients on their medications. Medication education and safety is one of the greatest areas of focus for the ANTHC Pharmacy.

“We take the time to review medications with our patients because we want people to be educated about the medications they’re taking, which empowers them to be an active member in their health care,” said Kara King, Outpatient Pharmacy Manager.

ANTHC also has a Discharge Pharmacy inpatient service that has two pharmacists who counsel hospital patients on their medications at their bedside before they are discharged, ensuring patients have a thorough understanding of their medications and have a chance to ask any questions about them before they leave the hospital. ANMC was the first hospital in Alaska to offer this service.

The ANTHC Pharmacy also provides a service called Mediset for patients who need additional assistance in managing their medications. Pre-packaged medications are hand-delivered weekly to the more than 500 patients in the Anchorage bowl receiving this service. Patients must be referred by their provider to be eligible for Mediset services. The medication box is labeled with the days of the week, with four different compartments for each day to make it as easy as possible for our patients to properly take their medication.

“Mediset is a crucial service for patients who need a little extra help effectively managing their medications,” said King. “By providing pre-packaged medications to them on a weekly basis, we are adding an extra level of safety and eliminating any confusion on when to take each medication.”

The expansion of the Mediset service has required the pharmacy to get creative with their space, as this service has several dedicated employees who are packaging the prescriptions for delivery. They



ANTHC Pharmacy works to provide patients the safest, most efficient medication services possible.

added high-density rolling shelves to the area, as well as moved things around for maximum efficiency of their area.

The ANTHC Pharmacy also recently received funding for a Strategic Initiative for Medication Reconciliation, which involved hiring two pharmacy technicians to assist with compiling medication histories for all inpatients at the ANMC hospital. This initiative will help ensure our patients are taking the correct doses of their

medications and that they are not being prescribed medications that will interact negatively with medications they are currently taking.

“Often times patients who are in the hospital are not the best historians, as they’re sick and not always able to recall exactly what medications and the dosage they are taking,” said Gary Givens, Pharmacy Director. “This initiative will help reduce dosing errors, errors of omission and the

prevention of medications that do not interact well together, ultimately keeping our patients safer.”

Additional safeguards in the pharmacy include counting machines, called robots, making it much safer for the dosing and packaging of medication for our patients, and all prescription bottles have a picture and description of what the medication should look like, adding an extra level of safety for our patients.

4TH ANNUAL

# Golf Classic

TEERING OFF FOR TRIBAL HEALTH

*July 24, 2015*

MOOSE RUN GOLF COURSE, JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON





# Preventative Health: The ANTHC Diabetes Program

Once rare, today there are 4,900 Alaska Native people with diabetes; an eightfold increase since 1985. The ANTHC Diabetes Program provides clinical care at the Alaska Native Medical Center and through specialty clinics across the state. Care is offered through a team approach and includes visits with a medical provider, pharmacist, podiatrist and registered dietitian. Such quality care prevents the most serious complications – including vision loss, kidney damage, heart disease and amputations – and improves the quality of life for the person living with diabetes. The program also provides community education about diabetes

prevention. Lifestyle changes help people with diabetes to maintain good blood sugar control and avoid complications. Diabetes can also be prevented through lifestyle changes which include:

- Eating foods found in nature. Processed foods (soda, snack or, fast foods) contain excess sugar, fat and little fiber. Traditional foods that are fished (salmon), hunted (caribou), gathered (fireweed, tundra tea and other plants) or grown (vegetables) are healthier choices.

- Exercise often. Do what you can for as long as you can every day. And if you sit all day doing projects or at work, get up and move at least 10 minutes for every hour that you sit.

- Don't use tobacco which can lead to cancer, heart problems and amputations

- Get enough sleep. Less than seven hours of sleep can lead to weight gain and poor blood sugar control.

- Look for healthy ways to manage stress. Seek out activities you enjoy and that help you tame tension. These include walking, dancing, knitting or gardening. Relaxing techniques like deep breathing, writing in a journal, prayer or meditation can help too.

- Breastfeeding longer than three months has been shown to protect

both mother and baby from obesity and diabetes.

The ANTHC program is one of more than 20 Tribal diabetes programs funded by the Special Diabetes Program for Indians.

For more information about these programs contact the ANTHC Diabetes Program at (907) 746-1125.



## We're listening!

At the Alaska Native Medical Center, we listen to our customer-owners so we can provide the very best care and service.

If you have a concern, comment, question, referral or compliment, please contact the ANMC Customer Experience team. Email us at [customercontact@anthc.org](mailto:customercontact@anthc.org) or call (907) 729-3990 or toll free at (877) 223-9284.

**Thank you!**

## ANMC's ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics have moved!

The ANMC ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics are in a new location to better serve our people.



**New location:**  
The ANMC ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics have moved into a medical building at 3801 University Lake Drive. The clinics are located on the second floor of the building. Our phone number remains (907) 729-1400 and our hours of operation are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

**Why the move?**  
As ANMC's population grows and the need for services increases, we decided to move into increased space to meet the needs of our people from across Alaska. The new location for the ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics allows us to better serve our people.

**Directions from the hospital:**

1. From Diplomacy Drive, turn right on Tudor Centre Drive
2. Turn left on Ambassador Drive
3. Turn right on Elmore Road
4. Go through the roundabout and then take the first right on University Lake Drive
5. The clinic is located in the first building on the left (2nd floor), 3801 University Lake Drive



**ALASKA NATIVE MEDICAL CENTER**



The Alaska Native Medical Center is jointly owned and managed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation.



# Around ANMC: ANMC Hospital Highlights

## New treatment for hepatitis C shows promising results

ANMC strives to provide the highest quality of care. Our staff is constantly working to improve patient experiences and outcomes. ANTHC's Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program provides life-changing treatment for our people with hepatitis C. Hepatitis C is a blood-borne virus that attacks the liver and can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, liver failure and death.

Hepatitis C affects between 2 to 3 percent of Alaska Native people, similar to U.S. population rates. Approximately 3 to 5 million people in the U.S. have hepatitis C. Until recently, hepatitis C treatment was not very effective and was accompanied by many side effects.

Prompted by the development of more effective hepatitis C drugs with fewer side effects, the ANTHC Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program adopted a new program to evaluate and treat more of our people with hepatitis C. The program added an additional nurse practitioner and RN to help in this effort.

"The new system is starting to show the fruits of our labor," said Lisa Townshend, Nurse Practitioner Supervisor for the ANTHC Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program. "Statewide, 47 patients have started treatment and 19 have completed treatment. So far, we have a 100 percent cure rate for those treated. So, hepatitis C goes away, patients feel better, and their risk of developing cirrhosis decreases 90 percent and the risk of developing liver cancer decreases by 70 percent."

Once a patient tests positive for hepatitis C, the lab notifies the Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program. Liver Clinic providers review all liver lab results that come in to ANMC on people identified with hepatitis. In addition, program nurses help to identify patients who have not had blood tests done and follow up with them. Patients who have not been to the Liver Clinic in more than a year are invited to clinic and reminder letters are mailed out every six

months. The letters remind patients that they should have blood tests done, to see how their liver is functioning and to screen for liver cancer.

"Through this process, we've been able to follow hepatitis C patients closely," said Townshend. "When the initiative was approved, we were quickly able to identify which patients had the worst liver disease and encourage them to seek treatment to prevent worsening of their liver disease. It's an exciting time to work in this program, seeing patients smiling and feeling better, and knowing that this treatment is going to add longevity to their lives."

For more information, contact the Liver Disease & Hepatitis Program at (907) 729-1573 or 1-800-655-4837.

## Continued expansion of AFHCAN Telehealth improves access for Tribal Health System

Telehealth technology allows health care professionals to work together in the Tribal Health System to provide quality care and increased access for our people across Alaska. Since ANTHC's AFHCAN Telehealth Solutions telemedicine program began serving patients in 2001, we have continued to expand and improve our statewide telehealth activities. Through telehealth, our people can remain in their home communities by giving them access to the highest quality health care professionals in regional or urban centers.

A benefit to telehealth is increased access for follow-up visits to providers and specialists not usually available in rural areas. ANMC now has 18 specialty clinics available for telehealth video conferencing and treatment following initial consultation with a provider, including Oncology,

Cardiology, Endocrinology, Pediatric Endocrinology, Pediatric Speech Language Pathology, Pulmonology, HIV/Early Intervention Services, General Internal Medicine/Infectious Disease, Neurology, Diabetes, Dermatology, Gastroenterology, Hepatitis, Nephrology and Rheumatology. Additionally, we are able to provide Emergency Department access for Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Eastern Aleutian Tribes and Chugachmiut, and special partnerships with Seattle Children's Hospital for Adolescent Medicine and the Mayo Clinic for breast cancer screening. More clinics will be coming online for video teleconferencing in the future.

AFHCAN has improved health care for Alaska Native people and rural Alaskans around the state and helps make patient care more efficient by reducing the wait time, travel time and expense of specialty care and follow-up visits.

## ANMC cafeteria works to decrease congestion and checkout time, introduces ice cream cart to pediatrics and Family Birthing Services

The ANMC Cafeteria is a busy place that serves about 750 guests during the lunch rush from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Over the years, the cafeteria has continued to serve a growing number of guests. At rush times, the space can get tight.

"We have been focused on offering convenient, high-quality food items for our customers to take on the go," said Cynthia Davis, General Manager of NANA Management Services (NMS) at ANMC, the contractor that operates the cafeteria.

New improvements include a grab-and-go section for hot food in the grill area and expanded refrigerated options, which has reduced congestion in the cafeteria now that people do not have to stand and wait for their food to be prepared.

NMS is also making changes to the cafeteria point of sale system, streamlining the options the cashiers have on their screen to display the day's offerings, and barcoding items so they can be scanned for a quicker checkout experience.

As a complimentary offering for our patients in Inpatient Pediatrics and Family Birthing Services, NMS recently rolled out an ice cream cart that visits the units every afternoon, handing out ice cream and sorbet to our young patients and new moms and their families.

"The kids were so excited to see the ice cream cart," said Davis. "It's the little things that can make a big difference in a patient's experience."

## ANMC Laboratory and Pathology Department Receives CAP and AABB Reaccreditation

Recently, the ANMC Laboratory and Pathology Department, including the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Lab Annex, received reaccreditation after passing a thorough inspection by a nine-member team of assessors from the College of American Pathologists (CAP) and the American Association of Blood Banks (AABB). These CAP and AABB accreditations are considered the gold standard for hospital laboratories across the country.

SEE AROUND ANMC, PAGE 7 >



## ANMC Shuttle Let us do the driving!

A fleet of ANMC Shuttles are available to help patients and families get to and from ANMC and a handful of other important Anchorage destinations, including the Ted Stevens International Airport. We are also adding two larger, wheelchair accessible buses for our customer owners.

Let us drive! Find our ANMC Shuttle schedule and information about traveling to ANMC at [www.anmc.org/travel](http://www.anmc.org/travel). For more information, call us toll free at (855) 482-4382 or in Anchorage at 563-ANMC (2662).



# Vitamin D important for growing healthy bones and healthy bodies

Infants, children and pregnant women benefit the most from natural vitamin D found in fish and vitamin D supplements to keep bones strong.

Vitamins are the building blocks of a healthy body. The foods we eat are an important source of vitamins and nutrients that help infants and children grow and keep adults healthy. Each vitamin has its purpose, and a recent study of Alaska Native children showed that many infants and young children have low levels of vitamin D that can lead to serious health problems such as rickets, a nutritional disorder that can lead to weakened

bones and skeletal deformities. Pregnant mothers with low vitamin D levels can give birth to newborns with inadequate vitamin D.

## About vitamin D:

■ Vitamin D helps your body absorb calcium and is found in many foods such as milk, eggs and fish.

■ Traditional Alaska fish and shellfish, and other marine life such as seal and whale, are excellent sources of vitamin D.

## About vitamin D deficiency:

■ Children are at the highest risk of the effects of vitamin D deficiency because they are still growing.

■ Not getting enough vitamin D and calcium weakens your bones and may cause long-term damage.

## How to get more vitamin D

- Keep traditions alive: Eat fish that you catch with your family.
- Take vitamin D supplements as recommended by your doctor.
- Eat other foods high in vitamin D: Fish and shellfish, fortified milk.
- Play outside: Your body can naturally produce vitamin D with short times in natural sunlight.

■ Low levels of vitamin D can increase:

- Risk of bone disease
- Risk of bone breaks
- Risk of rickets

## How children get enough vitamin D:

Infants and children who are breastfed or taking less than one quart (24 oz) of formula or fortified milk, should take vitamin D supplements, at least 400 IU, once a day. Children should eat a diet rich in vitamin D. Pregnant mothers pass along vitamin D and other nutrients to their babies and should eat a diet rich in vitamin D and take prenatal vitamins.

For more information on vitamin D deficiency and rickets in Alaska Native children, read the State of Alaska Epidemiology Bulletin at: [epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b2014\\_06.pdf](http://epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/docs/b2014_06.pdf).

### AROUND ANMC, FROM PAGE 6


These inspections occur every two years, with CAP determining the overall accreditation status of the laboratory and AABB reaccrediting the transfusion service. In years' past, these organizations have conducted separate site surveys of the ANMC Lab; however, this year, the inspection was conducted jointly by both organizations.

"It was the best inspection we have ever had, with the fewest deficiencies," said Dr. James Tiesinga, ANMC Laboratory Director. "None of the four deficiencies found had any impact on patient care. They were all minor, with one being corrected on the spot."

The survey was unannounced and ANMC had only one hour of warning that both organizations would be arriving for a survey. The survey lasted a full day and required support from many different departments across the Consortium.

"We have an outstanding dedicated team of laboratory professionals who are committed to adhering to the highest standards of care. Other departments at ANMC including nursing, facilities, biomedical engineering, housekeeping, and human resources also contributed toward this success," said Dr. Tiesinga. "We are certainly grateful for their support and the support of our strong organizational leadership. In addition, these survey results demonstrate the quality of ANMC Laboratory staff and services to our Tribal partners across the state who utilize ANMC as their primary reference laboratory."


**MAGNET® AT ANMC: EXCELLENCE IN CARE AND LEADERSHIP**



Magnet-recognized for a third time.

ANMC recently received its third Magnet redesignation for nursing excellence.

Congratulations to our nurses for their hard work and dedication.





# Around Alaska: Community Health

## Colorectal cancer screenings increase, leading to healthier Alaska Native people

Newly released data from the State of Alaska show that Alaska Native people lead the state in colorectal cancer screening (62.8 percent compared with 59.5 percent of Alaskans overall). Screening rates for our people have doubled in the last 10 years.

When screening is done early, it can prevent colorectal cancer or catch it when it is highly treatable. The good news is that as a result of the increases in colorectal cancer screening, colorectal cancer has moved from being the leading cause of new cases of cancer among Alaska Native people to the second leading cause of new cases of cancer. Furthermore, data from the Alaska Native Tumor Registry show that there were significant annual declines of 2.6 percent in colorectal cancer incidence among Alaska Native men and women from 1999-2011, in contrast to the significant increases of 1.6 percent annually from 1970-1999.

The bad news is that cancer is still the leading cause of death among our people. Alaska Native people experience nearly two times the rate of new cases of colorectal cancer and deaths due to this disease as in U.S. whites. Incidence is higher at every age group, and as high in 40-49 year old Alaska Native people as in U.S. whites 50-59 year old age group. This is why all Alaska Native people age 40 and older are encouraged to talk to their provider about getting screened for colorectal cancer.

The ANTHC Colorectal Cancer Control Program works with Tribal health partners to increase colorectal cancer screening through direct screening services, provider and community education, and systems and policy changes. In addition to colorectal cancer screening for Alaska Native people over 40, recommendations for colon health include not using tobacco, maintaining a healthy weight, being physically active, eating fewer processed foods and more

traditional foods like berries and greens, and consuming alcohol in moderation or not at all.

For more information about colorectal cancer screening, call the ANMC Colorectal Cancer Screening Patient Navigators at (907) 729-4444. For more prevention resources, including brochures, videos and more, visit the ANTHC Colorectal Cancer Prevention and Control website at [anthctoday.org/epicenter/colon](http://anthctoday.org/epicenter/colon) or one of our many partner Tribal health organization Colorectal Cancer Prevention programs across Alaska.

## Community Health Aides/Practitioners Manual completes transition to digital versions

Alaska Community Health Aides and Practitioners (CHA/P) serve a wide variety of people in more than 170 rural villages with varying health needs. Accessing current health practice information and treatment protocols to provide care used to mean using the printed Community Health Aides/Practitioners Manual (CHAM), a set of manuals that weighed 13.8 pounds and had to be frequently updated.

CHA/P statewide services worked with ANTHC Health Information and Technology and partner Tribal health organizations to create the eCHAM, or the Electronic Community Health Aide Manual. It provides a way for health aides and their networks to access current health care practice information at their fingertips using a computer or iPad.

The eCHAM gives statewide access to current and relevant health care information and includes greater multimedia options such as video and photos for providers and patients. The eCHAM is available online as a website or available offline as an iPad application, eBook and printable PDF when Internet access is unavailable.

For more information, visit the eCHAM website at [echam.org](http://echam.org).

## ANTHC's Injury Prevention Program and Alaska Native Epidemiology Center publish new Alaska Native Injury Atlas

Injuries, both unintentional and intentional, are one of the leading causes of death for Alaska Native people. ANTHC's Injury Prevention Program relies on accurate data that can guide injury prevention advocacy, policymaking, strategic

and program planning, and program evaluation. The latest edition of the Alaska Native Injury Atlas: An Update serves as a useful resource for those interested in Alaska Native injury-related issues and enables them to put data into action by identifying the most frequent causes of injury for our people.

The Alaska Native Injury Atlas: An Update provides an overview of injury and the leading causes of injury deaths and injury hospitalizations statewide and within each of the state's twelve regions. It presents stories about successes in Tribal injury prevention, and describes some challenges to injury prevention efforts in Alaska.

From 2002-2011, 1,718 Alaska Native and American Indian people died from injuries and there were 16,141 hospitalizations for injury. The three leading causes of injury death among our people were suicide, poisoning and drowning; the three leading causes of injury hospitalizations were falls, suicide attempts and assaults.

For more information, read the full report and other Alaska Native injury data on the ANTHC Injury Prevention website at [anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/injurydata.cfm](http://anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/injurydata.cfm).

## Alaska Native Epidemiology Center awarded five-year grant "Wellness Strategies for Health"

ANTHC's Alaska Native Epidemiology Center has been awarded funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for a five-year project titled "Wellness Strategies for Health". The award, granted through the Affordable Care Act, is part of an initiative to help reduce chronic diseases, promote healthier lifestyles, and reduce health disparities in Alaska Native and American Indian people.

Compared to the general U.S. population, Alaska Native people have higher rates of tobacco use, obesity, physical inactivity and lower consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, which are all risk factors

for the development of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. The goal of the grant is to make sustainable reductions in the rates of disease and death due to heart disease, diabetes, and stroke among Alaska Native people.

Through an application process managed by the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center, five regional Tribal health organizations have been selected as partner sites for grant-funded programming in Year 1. The partner organizations are Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, Ketchikan Indian Community, Maniilaq Association, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, and Tanana Chiefs Conference.

ANTHC will provide technical assistance, training and resources for these partner sites to achieve the goals of the wellness strategies for health. Year 1 activities will include convening a multi-sectoral working group of Tribal health partners, conducting a community health assessment and developing a community or regional action plan for sustaining success in subsequent years. Potential focus areas that may be addressed by our regional Tribal health partners include smoking cessation, blood pressure control, glucose control, physical activity, nutrition, breastfeeding and health literacy.

"This is a very exciting opportunity to address the prevention and control of chronic disease for Alaska Native people throughout our state," said Dr. Ellen Provost, Director of the ANTHC Alaska Native Epidemiology Center. "We look forward to working with our Tribal health partners and the communities they serve to make lasting improvements for better health and wellness."

This cooperative agreement aims to make sustainable improvements in rates of the morbidity and mortality caused by heart disease, diabetes, and stroke among Alaska Native people through policy, systems, and environmental strategies.

*Stay informed!  
Stay healthy!  
Stay engaged!  
Connect with  
ANTHC online!*

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# ANTHC's EpiCenter provides teen safety cards, resource guides, and workshops on domestic and sexual violence

## Teen safety cards

ANTHC's Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (EpiCenter) promotes health by providing health data and educational resources for topics including teen-related domestic and sexual violence. The EpiCenter, in partnership with the State of Alaska, recently launched the "Getting Together" safety card to help teens recognize domestic and sexual violence and understand issues like consent and what a healthy relationship looks and feels like.

The "Getting Together" card, a wallet-sized, fold out card with bright colors, images, and emojis, reflects the feedback and guidance of 113 youth from villages and towns across Alaska. The card's panels encourage youth to ask themselves questions about their relationships and to learn about issues like their rights, consent for intimacy, commercial sexual exploitation, and how to help a friend in need. The card also includes multiple teen-friendly online, text, and hotline resources and encourages teens to think of an adult they trust with whom they can discuss these topics. The primary message to teens is that they are not alone in dealing with these difficult issues.

Due, no doubt, to the guidance from Alaskan youth, the "Getting Together" card has been well-received. EpiCenter Community Outreach Specialist Jaclynne Oyoumick shared, "I love hearing that people from all different places and agencies are sharing this card widely, from law enforcement officers to health care providers to loving parents. An educator told me that her students ask for the card to show to their friends. A Village Public Safety Officer thanked me for making these materials and said that they will 'make life better for sure.'"

Using a safety card, such as the "Getting

*"The primary message to teens is that they are not alone in dealing with these difficult issues."*

Together" card or the companion "We Are Worthy" card for girls and women, in health care settings is an evidence-based approach to help people in abusive relationships seek safety and support. "Using a safety card in health care allows patients to get information about healthy and unhealthy relationships, hear the message that they are not alone, and walk away with resources for safety, whether they feel comfortable talking with their provider about abuse or not," explained EpiCenter Program Manager Laura Avellaneda-Cruz.

Both cards are free and easy to order on the EpiCenter's Healthy Families webpage: [antctoday.org/epicenter/healthyfamilies](http://antctoday.org/epicenter/healthyfamilies).

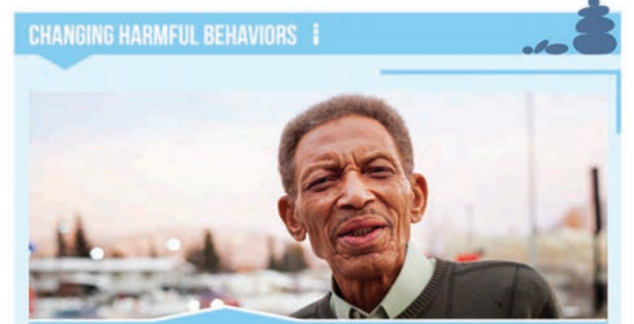
In addition to making the cards available, EpiCenter staff are creating online tools to help communities think about ways in which they can use the "Getting Together" card. These tools will be based on feedback from two interactive, community-based workshops, one at the 2014 Elders and Youth Conference and one at the Statewide DV/SV Prevention Summit. Examples of tools include videotaped role-plays, scripts and pointers for youth and adults to do their own role plays, comics illustrating principles for safe and supportive conversations, and PowerPoint slides with notes and links. Keep your eye on the EpiCenter's Healthy Families webpage for these tools as they become available.

## Regional resource guides of domestic and sexual violence Services

Additional resources available for free on the EpiCenter Healthy Families page are visual, user-friendly guides to domestic and sexual violence services for each region of Alaska.

"Special care was taken to share tribal programs and services, and to address issues such as language access and transportation from villages," said Laura Avellaneda-Cruz. "Some information may change with time, but this is the most comprehensive and engaging guide to domestic and sexual violence and prevention services in Alaska, and we hope that it will be of great use to the general public and to service providers throughout the state."

Family members, health care providers, Tribal leaders and others often interact with people who have been abused or have committed abuse, and with children and youth who have been exposed to abuse. They may want to help, but may not know what resources are available in their communities or regions to



Thomas, Director of The Recovery Connection, helps those who have abused others to explore the feelings, beliefs and actions that contribute to their abusive behavior, to be accountable to change, and to practice the skills necessary to lead healthy, non-violent lives.

### HELP FOR PEOPLE WHO HAVE HARMED OTHERS

**Batterer Intervention Programs:** Batterer intervention programs explicitly address the beliefs and learned behaviors that contribute to violence, and how to change them. There are two state-approved batterer intervention programs in Anchorage. Those who have been court-ordered, sent by OCS, or sent by halfway houses, as well as those who attend voluntarily can participate.

The Recovery Connection is a 36-week program that uses a modified Duluth Model and encourages... The Men and Women's Center is a 36-week program that uses a modified Duluth Model and encourages...

### SHELTER (CONT.)

For victims of abuse and their children needing immediate safety, the following options are available:

**King Salmon:** Safe and Fear-Free Environment (SAFE) also runs the 4-bed Bay West Shelter in King Salmon for victims in nearby communities and those who are in transit.

**Other villages in the region:** Safe and Fear-Free Environment (SAFE) supports village-based volunteers to offer temporary safe homes, referrals, and transportation to Dillingham at no cost to the victim or their family.

### ADVOCACY, SUPPORT, AND INFORMATION

Trained, compassionate advocates are available at both SAFE and the Nitaput CAC in Dillingham, and SAFE supports part-time advocates in King Salmon and other surrounding villages. Advocates provide the following services (which are not just for people in the shelter):

- **24-hour hotline** where they provide a listening ear, support, and information to victims of violence, their family members and loved ones, or others who have questions about abuse
- **Safety planning**
- **Legal advocacy** (court accompaniment, protective orders, connecting victim to a lawyer at no cost, etc.), including an on-site attorney at SAFE
- **Medical advocacy** (supporting victim to get healthcare and supporting victim through the SART process)
- SAFE advocates can provide **Plan B** (Emergency Contraception) to women throughout the region
- **One-on-one support** and information, group support and education (see section 4 of prevention)
- Help to find housing, food, clothing, job training and other **basic needs**
- Assistance filing for money through **Victims of Violent Crimes Compensation**
- **Transportation** to medical, legal and social services
- Help to find other needed **resources**, such as counseling or children's programs



The caring advocates of SAFE in Dillingham are available to listen, provide support, give information, help people through the legal system and other systems, and connect people to resources via the 24-hour toll-free hotline or at the shelter.

- Some Yup'ik-speaking staff (SAFE) and use of language lines for languages other than English
- Staff trained in and sensitive to working with LGBTQ clients (SAFE)

### PROMOTING WELLNESS

#### CHANGING COMMUNITY NORMS:

In Barrow, AWIC presents at community events and distributes information about the Violent Crimes Compensation Board application process and local resources. They welcome participation and volunteers for the events they put on, which include:

- Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month (February)
- Sexual Assault Awareness Month (April)
- Domestic Violence Awareness Month (October)
- Human Rights Day
- Community marches
- Other prevention activities

AWIC also uses local radio to host discussions on issues such as bullying, healthy relationships, the impact of domestic violence on children, and what people can do to intervene and prevent violence.



Advocates of AWIC offer family rights with free meals, childcare and transportation, and art-based support and education groups.

#### EMPOWERMENT, SUPPORT, AND EDUCATION GROUPS:

There are a number of different groups available to community members to help promote wellness, healthy relationships, and healthy families. These are offered through:

Participating Organizations	Available Groups
AWIC North Slope Borough Health and Social Services Referral by Native Village of Barrow Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parenting classes</li> <li>• Emotional wellness group</li> <li>• Arts-based women's support</li> <li>• Women's Domestic Violence Education Program (DVEP) (see next section)</li> <li>• Men's Batterer Intervention Program (see next section)</li> </ul>

For groups held at AWIC, free meals, transportation, and childcare are available.

### Examples of Regional Resource Guides

offer support. Individuals or organizations may wish to connect with trainings or resources, or become involved with prevention opportunities, and not know what is available. Using brief informational summaries along with photographs, the newly released regional guides to domestic and sexual violence-related services address these needs.

You can download and print the regional resource guides from the EpiCenter website at [www.anthctoday.org/epicenter/healthyfamilies](http://www.anthctoday.org/epicenter/healthyfamilies). Printed copies can be ordered by contacting the Community Outreach Specialist, Jaclynne Oyoumick at [jkoyoumick@anthc.org](mailto:jkoyoumick@anthc.org) or 729-2971.

If you have questions or requests for information or trainings, please contact Laura Avellaneda-Cruz: [ldavellanedacruz@anthc.org](mailto:ldavellanedacruz@anthc.org) or 729-2489.

**exploitation** Huh? What's that? It's a big deal in Alaska.

**It's when someone...**

- Makes you do sexual things or pose for sexual pictures in order to get things like food, shelter, rides, drugs, or \$
- Controls where you can go and who you can talk to

Often they start by being really nice or by trying to be someone close to you, like a BF or older brother/sister. It happens in cities and in the village. If you hear about this or it's happening to you, **there is help to get out and get safe**. You can call the FBI in Alaska: 907-265-8100 or the national CyberTipline: 1-800-843-5678.

**how to help someone**

If you know someone who's in an unhealthy relationship, or someone who has been sexually bothered in a way they didn't want or taken advantage of while they were drunk or blacked out, you can help:

- Listen and let them know you care
- Believe them
- Let them know it's not their fault
- Respect their privacy
- Offer to connect them to help

**how to get help**

To ask questions, get help, or just have someone listen, these resources are there 24/7, and they care. They are free and completely anonymous.

Text "LOVE IS" to 22522      Someone I trust:

[loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)  
[iknowmine.org](http://iknowmine.org)  
[thatsnotcool.com](http://thatsnotcool.com)

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474  
 Alaska Careline (crisis, suicide prevention): 1-877-266-4357

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# Environmental Health and Engineering around Alaska

## Fueling health in rural Alaska

ANTHC is a unique health organization that has the capabilities to focus on not just health symptoms, but to dig deeper into root causes of health disparities. The health of Alaska Native people, and all Alaskans, depends on the health of their homes and communities. ANTHC's Environmental Health and Engineering staff is partnering with more than 80 rural communities and Tribes over the next several years to improve energy efficiencies that contribute to the health, security and sustainability of residents. Activities such as installing biomass fuel heaters or heat recovery systems and weatherization improvements for utilities means that communities use less heating oil.

### Recent projects include: Kobuk biomass heating system

Through the combined efforts of ANTHC's Rural Energy Initiative team, Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative, NANA Regional Corporation, the City of Kobuk and the Kobuk Traditional Council, a final inspection was completed in February on a biomass project for the water treatment plant in Kobuk. The newly installed Garn wood heating system meets the heating needs for the entire water treatment plant with minimal to no need for the use of oil heat. It is anticipated that the project in Kobuk will save the community \$25,000 annually in heating costs.

Biomass projects, such as the one in Kobuk, consist of wood-fired boiler systems that displace fuel oil for heating public facilities. These projects promote community sustainability by reducing dependence on fuel oil for heating while also keeping money spent on harvested wood in the local economy. These projects also create jobs for local woodcutters in communities where employment is often hard to find.

"I want to thank all who contributed to this project from conception through completion for a job well done," said Energy Projects Manager Carl Remley. "This biomass system should



Kyle Monti, Utility Operations Specialist, loads the new Kobuk wood heating system.

serve the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative, the City of Kobuk, and most importantly the people of Kobuk for many years."

### Gambell energy efficiency upgrades

Environmental Health and Engineering Tribal Utility Support

staff were recently in Gambell implementing energy efficiency upgrades. The team installed LED lighting and heating control upgrades and provided training for operators on the community water and sewer utility.

Gambell is expected to save \$12,000 per year on water and sewer utilities for the next five to six years.

The energy efficiency upgrades in Gambell are part of a statewide project undertaken by Environmental Health and Engineering staff to improve the efficiency and sustainability of sanitation systems across Alaska. Funding for this effort has been provided by U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development,

SEE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, PAGE 11 ▶

**"The health of my people starts with me"**

**-Will**, HIT Desktop Support Engineer  
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
Tlingit, from Ta'an Kwäch'än

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◀ ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, FROM PAGE 10

the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Denali Commission. Forty-five communities scattered across the Bristol Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim, Norton Sound, Tanana Chiefs Conference, and Northwest Arctic regions will receive operator training and energy efficiency improvements such as new lighting, controls upgrades, weatherization improvements, and boiler tuning. An additional 39 communities will receive energy audits to identify potential improvements to be pursued in the future. Environmental Health and Engineering staff are also involved in the design and construction of more than 40 renewable energy systems to reduce energy costs in water and sewer utilities across rural Alaska.

### Venetie's new health clinic

The community of Venetie opened the new Myra Roberts Health Clinic on Jan. 21. Construction was performed using local carpenters and laborers supported by a team of ANTHC's Environmental Health and Engineering construction superintendents, managers and engineers.

"We are so excited, we couldn't wait to move in," said Margo Simple, a longtime community health practitioner in Venetie.

The new 2,269 square-foot clinic replaces a much smaller log-constructed building which has served as the clinic for more than 20 years. The new clinic is equipped with fully piped water and sewer services and features two exam rooms, a dental operatory, a behavioral health office, a lab/pharmacy room, and sleeping quarters to house traveling physicians, dentists and other specialists. The new facility also boasts full access to Telemedicine services and electronic health records.

Work on the clinic will continue this year, and includes the design and construction of an energy-efficient heat recovery system, which is projected to save the community money.

"The heat recovery system is expected to provide more than 90 percent of the heat needed

for the new clinic," said Craig Wood, ANTHC Health Facility Project Manager. "That will save the community a lot of money in operating costs."

The village council partnered with the Denali Commission, the Department of Health and Social Services, the State of Alaska, Indian Health Service, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to complete the facility.

### ANTHC crews finish construction on state-of-the-art water treatment plant in Golovin

After two years of construction efforts, Golovin residents are now able to enjoy cleaner drinking water since ANTHC's Environmental Health and Engineering construction crews and engineers completed work on a new water treatment plant and water storage tank, both of which went into service last fall.

"After the facilities went into service, many people in the community commented on how the water tasted better and was much clearer than water produced by the old water treatment plant," said Deputy Director of Project Management Michael MarcAurele. "The old water storage tank was struggling with corrosion issues and the old water treatment plant had difficulty processing water fast enough to meet the community's needs. With the completion of the new facilities, we were able to shut down the two older facilities."

The water storage tank in particular is a big achievement for ANTHC, as it is the largest tank built in the Consortium's history at 1.8 million gallon capacity, which increased overall water storage capacity for the community by nearly 50 percent. Combined with the new storage tank, the new state-of-the-art water treatment plant features a fill and draw treatment method, allowing water to be treated in large quantities and stored throughout the winter. Previously, water levels in Golovin would run dangerously low by the end of winter, which led to rationing throughout the community. With the new facilities, ANTHC staff estimates that Golovin should have enough water to last through the winter.

### Savings result from Shungnak heat recovery project

In 2013, the City of Shungnak partnered with ANTHC and Alaska Village Electric Co-Op (AVEC) to install a recovered-heat system in the Shungnak water plant, which uses excess heat from the AVEC electric plant to heat the water plant instead of burning heating fuel, with substantial cost savings. The heat in the electric plant is created as a byproduct of diesel-powered electricity generators. Since the installation of the new heat recovery system, ANTHC's Environmental Health and Engineering is happy to report tremendous results in energy savings for the community of Shungnak.

Previously, Shungnak would burn one 55-gallon barrel of fuel per day to heat the water plant during winter. During years of low water in the Kobuk River that required fuel to be flown into the community instead of barged, fuel costs could be up to \$10.30 per gallon, or more than \$500 per day, to heat the water system. This cost was financially unsustainable for residents.

Since the recovered heat system was completed in June 2013, the water plant has burned less than

a barrel of fuel in total. That is a reduction in water plant heating fuel use of over 99 percent, saving the community over \$100,000 per year.

"The recovered heat project in Shungnak has not only shown a huge savings in fuel used, but also in labor being used to keep the water treatment plant heated," reports Chris Cox, Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative Regional Manager in Kotzebue. "Previously, operators would use lots of labor moving fuel from the tank farm every week during the winter. Having the heat recovery system in place has all but eliminated that labor, resulting in more savings and happy operators. No operators wanted to move that fuel when the weather was 30 below zero."

Similar energy efficiency and remote monitoring strategies have demonstrated large savings in other rural communities as well. With crude oil currently trading below \$50 per barrel and the State of Alaska's revenue heavily dependent upon oil taxes, it is important to contribute to the viability of rural communities through energy cost savings. Dollars saved in fuel costs are dollars available for other services to rural residents.



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 ALASKA NATIVE MEDICAL CENTER 



TRADITIONAL FOOD, FROM PAGE 1

recommended that they not be eaten.

The first edition of the Traditional Food Guide was far more successful than anticipated. Three printings were sold out and 14,000 copies distributed. Even though the book said “cancer” on the cover, many people bought and used the book. Alaska Native Elders were proud to see their foods, stories, quotes and recipes in the book along with other foods from different parts of Alaska that they were familiar with. Since its release, the book has been used by schools, universities, and Community Health Aide Program clinics. Some community Tribal councils bought the book for every family. Other health programs around the state, like diabetes management programs, bought the book to share. It was recognized as the only book of its kind and placed in Alaska’s National Park book stores after a lengthy approval process.

With new uses for the guide, the second edition builds on its initial success and provides more information based on feedback and how people are currently using the guide and recipes. While the foods and nutrition information remain the same, there is new material including healthy lifestyle information that is printed in the “Traditional Food Guide Activity Book,” which is distributed annually to schools and other programs for children 8-10 years throughout Alaska.

The second edition of the Traditional Food Guide is written as an important tool for healthy living across generations from the youngest child to the oldest Elder. It is also a guide to help people with chronic diseases like diabetes or heart disease learn more about nutrition and eat better foods.

For more information or to order the Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native People, contact Karen Morgan at (907) 729-4491 or email cancer@anthc.org



Recipes samples from the Traditional Food Guide

Beach Asparagus with Parmesan

- From "Common Edible Seaweeds in the Gulf of Alaska" by Dolly Garza

Ingredients

- 2 cups beach asparagus, fresh or canned
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon lemon juice
- ½ cup parmesan, shredded

Instructions

If the asparagus is fresh, blanch for one minute in unsalted boiling water. If asparagus is canned, heat it in small pan for 5 minutes. Drain and place in a serving bowl. Make a dressing with olive oil and lemon juice, and spoon over the warm beach asparagus. Sprinkle with parmesan and ground black pepper. Serve warm.

Herring Egg Salad

- From Eleanor Batchelder, Anchorage (originally from Juneau)

Ingredients

- 1-2 cups herring eggs
- Lettuce or baby greens, washed and dried
- ¼ cup carrots, grated
- 1 ½ green onions, finely sliced
- ¼ cup radishes, thinly sliced
- 1-2 tomatoes, diced

Instructions

Mix lettuce or baby greens, carrots, green onions, radishes, and tomatoes together well. Add one to two cups of cooked, cooled herring eggs. Make sure the herring eggs are nice sized portions, rather than clumps of eggs. You can add light canola mayonnaise or a salad dressing of your choice.

Keep appointments for your health and the health of those around you

Missed appointments increase costs and delays for the Alaska Tribal Health System. We all make our medical appointments for health care with the best intentions to be there on time. But sometimes things come up, and we skip our appointment or show up late. No harm done, right?

Unfortunately, missed appointments or late arrivals have a broader reach than just one appointment and your own health care needs. Missed and late appointments also harm our health system, fellow community members and increases the cost of health care for the Alaska Native community.

How can you help?

- 1) Be sure your provider or clinic staff writes down your follow-up appointment times for you before you leave.
- 2) Help your family members or friends get to their appointments on time.
- 3) If an emergency does arise that keeps you, your friend or family member from making an appointment on time, please call as soon as possible to reschedule. Often we can reassign that time to someone else.

Each year, staff working at Alaska Native Medical Center, schedule more than 400,000 appointments for Alaska Native and American Indian people. As the need for health care services continues to increase without matching increases

in funding, it becomes more important for each person to keep his or her appointments.

Why? Because each time someone misses an appointment, it takes the opportunity away from another member of the Native Community

to obtain health care services. A missed appointment also harms your health care system by taking valuable staff time and hospital space for people who do not show up while others are waiting.

For some specialty clinics, as many as one in five appointments have late arrivals or are missed altogether. As a result, the Alaska Native community loses more than \$4 million in wasted health care staff time and facilities at ANMC alone.

With your help, we can achieve our vision that Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world.