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## Ronald McDonald House at the Alaska Native Medical Center to Open in 2017



Anchorage, AK (January 11, 2016) – The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Western Washington & Alaska will expand their current partnership to include the first Ronald McDonald House® in Alaska on one floor of the new six-story ANTHC housing facility.

The new House will primarily serve women with high risk pregnancies and their babies, but will also be available to families of pediatric patients of the Alaska Native Medical Center. The new House will open in early 2017, with 34 rooms, each with their own bathroom, full-sized bed, and sleeper chair. Other amenities at the House include common areas, a dedicated kitchen, access to a workout space and cafeteria, and a library of books for new mothers to take home.

“When ANTHC approached us with the idea, we knew it would be an ideal extension of our existing programs,” says RMHC® Executive Director, Dianna Finnerty. “We look forward to providing a home-away-from-home for Alaskan families who come to the Alaska Native Medical Center for medical treatment for their newborns and children.” This new floor will allow residents to share their experiences in a culturally appropriate environment, develop a strong community of support, and be just steps away from the ANMC hospital. The housing facility will be joined to the hospital by a skybridge.

To further foster a sense of community, ANTHC will help RMHC with the programming at the facility. Programs will emphasize Alaska Native culture at the House, including plans for volunteer-run activities including beading, craft circles, and healthy cooking classes using traditional foods. “The Ronald McDonald House partnership will enhance the delivery and expansion of tribal health access for our smallest patients and their families,” said Andy Teuber, ANTHC Chairman and President.

The Alaskan Native Tribal Health Consortium and RMHC have been partners since 2008, when the Ronald McDonald House began a van program to help serve families from out of town navigate Anchorage during their child’s medical treatment. In 2014, more than 900 Alaskans used the service.

The housing project is the result of a successful partnership between ANTHC, Alaska Native Tribal leaders, the Alaska Legislature, the Indian Health Service, the Alaska Congressional Delegation, the Alaska Department of Revenue and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The law firm of Sonosky, Chambers, Sasche, Miller & Munson LLP has also generously provided the first cornerstone gift from the community for the project.

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