



THE

Mukluk Telegraph

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

JANUARY - MARCH 2013

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ANMC streamlines travel, hospital coordination for patients

One call, that's all since the implementation of ANMC's Care Coordination Center

BY ZAZ HOLLANDER

Until last year, a patient in rural Alaska preparing to travel to Anchorage for medical care at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) hospital received reams of paperwork and varied levels of stress.

Different letters came from different providers, but sometimes a patient still wasn't sure where they would stay once they got to the city. Maybe they didn't know who would escort them or how to meet up with that person. Often, there were travel and appointment questions.

Enter the ANMC Care Coordination Center, a team of 15 specialists who work with incoming patients and regional health providers to ensure streamlined travel and care that's easy and stress-free. All of those appointment letters – one from the Surgery clinic, one from the Cardiology clinic, one from the Ear Nose and Throat clinic, let's say – have now turned into one letter.

That one letter is in a standardized
SEE **STREAMLINED TRAVEL**, PAGE 6 ▶



PHOTO BY BRIAN ADAMS

A free and convenient shuttle service to the Alaska Native Medical Center and other important locations is just one of the many ways ANTHC is improving customer service and helping make travel as easy as possible for patients and families.

A healthy history

ANTHC's Colorectal Cancer Family Outreach Program helps increased-risk patients, family

If your family has a history of colon cancer, or even colon polyps, you may be at higher risk of getting the disease. Cancer remains the leading cause of death among Alaska Native people, with colorectal cancer (CRC) the second-leading cause of cancer related deaths and the leading cause of new cases of cancer among Alaska Native

people. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) and tribal partners around Alaska are working to change those trends with innovative and personal efforts.

One unique service reaches CRC patients as well as their family members who are at risk for the disease. Since 2007, ANTHC's CRC Family Outreach Program has offered a sustained focus on improving screening for first-degree relatives of CRC patients seen at ANMC. Trained CRC Screening Patient Navigators provide outreach to family members who are due for screening and help

SEE **FAMILY OUTREACH**, PAGE 7 ▶

ANTHC, ANMC receive awards for quality care, clean air, helping hands and more

In October, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) representatives attended the What's Right With Health Care Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, to accept the 2012 Excellence in Patient Care Award from the Studer Group. The award category was Medicine Information Composite of the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey/Value-Based Purchasing. This award is another great example of the Alaska Native Medical Center's (ANMC) commitment to improving quality care, productivity, positive outcomes and excellent customer service.

ANTHC honored for tobacco-free campus, treatment services

In recognition of ANTHC's longtime dedication to tobacco treatment and promotion of a tobacco-free campus, ANTHC recently received the 2012 Breathe Easy Champion Award from the American Lung Association (ALA) in Alaska. The Breathe Easy Champion Award is given to organizations that significantly advance ALA's mission of saving

lives by promoting lung health and preventing lung disease. In 2003, ANTHC established an onsite tobacco treatment program that serves beneficiaries and employees. ANTHC implemented its tobacco-free campus on November 15, 2006.

Lincoln Bean of ANTHC's Board of Directors and Dr. Gary Ferguson, ANTHC's Wellness and Prevention Director, accepted the Breathe Easy Champion Award at a November ceremony. Eight other ANTHC staff members were in attendance and individually recognized for their efforts in supporting the work of ANTHC to improve life for Alaskans.

ANMC's Maloney earns national dietician award

Longtime ANMC Medical Nutrition Therapy Manager Samantha Maloney recently received national recognition for her above-and-beyond work educating and developing future dietitians. Maloney was given the Outstanding Preceptor Award from The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics for, the award notes, her "outstanding contribution made



Maloney

to dietetics education as a teacher, mentor and leader of students." Maloney has worked at ANMC, and helped college interns prep for

their careers, since 1995. ANMC's Medical Nutrition Therapy team often hosts interns from around Alaska and the nation, who work with the group for as long as nine months.

ANMC receives award for supporting mature staff

Recently, the State of Alaska recognized ANMC for its role in supporting the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST). This program helps Alaska retain



PHOTO BY BRIAN ADAMS

Alaska Native Medical Center nurse Laurilee Martin checks in with patient Jack Penn Jr.

older workers and enables this valuable population to maintain independent lifestyles and make meaningful contributions to their communities. The State of Alaska thanked ANMC for being a MASST training facility and for having a mission and vision that is an "asset to our local communities."

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

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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.

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STAFF

Josh Niva — Editor, Corporate Communications

Fiona Brosnan — ANTHC Marketing Director

Lindsay Renkert — Marketing Manager

Estella Claymore — Communications Associate

Todd Henry — Multimedia Production Artist

Selma Oskolkoff-Simon — Marketing Coordinator

Darbi Daley — Hospital Marketing Specialist

CONTACT US

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Attention: Mukluk Telegraph

4000 Ambassador Drive

Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Phone: (907) 729-1899

E-mail: marketing@anthc.org

Web: anthc.org/abt/news



ANTHC expands its services, support for Alaska Native elders

From visiting nursing homes and offering cultural training for medical staff to hosting holiday gift drives and social visits, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's (ANTHC) Elder Care Program continues offering unique services and outreach all aimed at helping our Alaska Native elders.

To ensure Alaska Native elders are receiving the best care across the state, the Elder Care Program recently visited nursing homes in Kotzebue and Nome. The Kotzebue site has been open for more than a year and is home to 17 residents. Nome currently has 15 residents, a number that will increase to 18 in January when they move into a new facility. The program reports that residents at both facilities were happy, engaged and well cared for.

In collaboration with Banner Health in Fairbanks, the Elder Care Program offered two cross-cultural communication webinars for hospital and nursing home staff within the Alaska Tribal Health System and beyond. Athabaskan Don Thibedeau shared tips on working with Alaska Native elders and what some of their communication patterns might mean.

The Elder Care Program recently partnered with the Southcentral Foundation (SCF) for a successful Adopt an Elder holiday effort. Nearly 200 Alaska Native elders and Alaska Native people with disabilities living in Anchorage nursing and assisted living homes received a donated gift from an ANTHC or SCF employee this Christmas.

Fireweed Dancers from the SCF Pathway Home Program recently joined the Elder Care Program for a lunch with Alaska Native elders at Prestige Care Nursing Home in Anchorage. ANTHC staff donated fish head soup, muktuk, salmon and seal oil to share with 10 elders. Another traditional food elder luncheon took place at Providence Extended Care in Anchorage. Elders at both events said they enjoyed the food and the company.

ANTHC's Branch earns prestigious Community Health Leaders Award

This fall, ANTHC's Elder/Rural Health Program Coordinator Kay Branch received a prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Foundation 2012 Community Health Leaders Award. The annual award is given to 10 individuals who, according to the foundation, "have surmounted significant challenges to help improve health and health care in their communities."

The foundation honored Branch for her tireless commitment to ensuring that Alaska Native elders can receive culturally appropriate services and care. The Community Health Leaders Award elevates the work of leaders by raising awareness of their extraordinary contributions through national visibility, a \$125,000 award to create a project in their field, and networking opportunities.



PHOTO BY JOSH NIVA / ANTHC

ANTHC's Elder Care Program Volunteer Services Coordinator Mellisa Johnson, left, and Elder/Rural Health Program Coordinator Kay Branch stand in front of Christmas gifts donated by volunteers to be given to Alaska Native elders.

ANTHC Elder Care Program

Learn more about ANTHC's Elder Care Program and its upcoming events and volunteer opportunities by contacting Kay Branch at (907) 729-4498 or pkbranch@anthc.org or Mellisa Johnson at (907) 729-3602 or majohnson@anthc.org.

"Kay's leadership has been enormously effective in achieving the completion of the statewide elder needs assessment, the development of the comprehensive statewide long-term care plan for the Alaska Tribal Health System, and the formation of an Elder Advisory Committee to assure consumer input," said Janice Ford Griffin, national program director of Community Health Leaders.

Elder Care Program expands services with new position

Providing unique services and special attention to Alaska's elders has always been a part of ANTHC's work. Today, those services are strengthened as ANTHC's Elder Care Program recently expanded with the addition of Mellisa Johnson, who was hired as the program's new Volunteer Services Coordinator for Elder Outreach.

Johnson recruits and trains volunteers for

engagement opportunities with Alaska Native elders. Those efforts will focus on Alaska Native elders who are far from home and residing in nursing and assisted living homes in Anchorage. Johnson also develops volunteer procedures, promotes communications about the Elder Care Program, and continues building the Adopt an Elder and Elder Care Bag projects. She also assists with quarterly traditional food lunches, gathering and cooking traditional foods for Alaska Native elders living in long-term care facilities, all while helping Elder Care Program Coordinator Kay Branch with addressing the long-term care needs of Alaska Native elders around the state.

Johnson was a perfect fit for the new position and is passionate about serving elders. "If it were not for the elders, we would not have part of our culture and language," she said. "If we lose that, then we will become lost as a people."

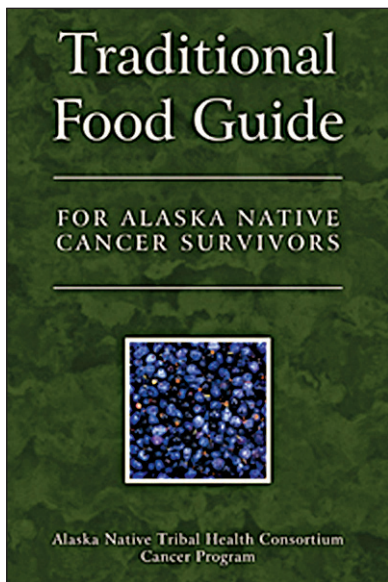
Johnson is no stranger to ANTHC's work. Originally from Nome, she has 10 years of experience at ANTHC, working as a Management Information Specialist for Health Information Services and Office Manager for ANMC's Cardiology Clinic.

Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native Cancer Survivors

BY JOSH NIVA

With cancer continuing to be the leading cause of death amongst Alaska Native people, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's (ANTHC) Cancer Program provides many diverse services in the fight against cancer and in supporting individuals and families that face cancer's impact. Some of the group's most impactful and enduring work has been inspired by its "Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native Cancer Survivors," which has been wildly successful since first being printed in 2008.

The "Traditional Food Guide" was developed as an authoritative, yet user-friendly book for Alaska Native cancer patients to share with their providers so they could create a diet that included traditional foods, which are healthy, safe to eat and familiar.



"When someone has cancer, they want comfort foods," explained Christine DeCourtney, ANTHC's Cancer Program Manager. "One Alaska Native patient said, 'The doctor told me to eat kale. I didn't even know what kale was. I wanted sea asparagus.'"

The guide clearly hit the mark. The project's initial funding came



from the LiveStrong foundation and it was so well-received upon arriving that Alaska Native cancer patients shared it with family and friends, and word spread quickly. Soon, elders, diabetes educators, schools, museums, universities, tribal regions and communities were ordering copies, as were Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps) and bookstores across Alaska and Outside. Book sales helped ANTHC provide the guide for free to even more cancer patients. ANTHC's Cancer Program has since printed and distributed more than 11,000 guides and is preparing its fourth printing.

DeCourtney added that American Indian tribes now use it to develop their own guides for local foods, while Hispanic breast cancer patients look to the guide to better understand nutrition.

"We're very proud that it is high quality work from ANTHC that helps Alaska Native people and all of Alaska's people, and it's exciting that it has also become a model for other populations to look at

Traditional Food Guide

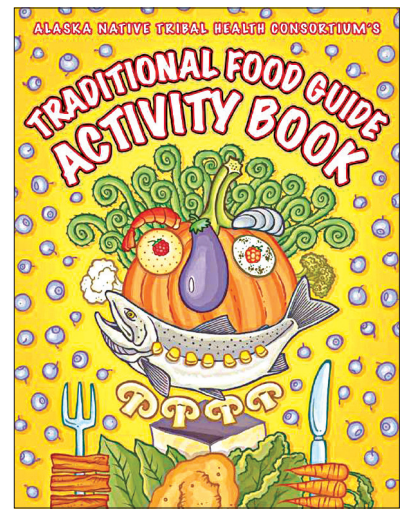
Learn more about the "Traditional Food Guide for Alaska Native Cancer Survivors" and the "Traditional Food Guide Activity Book" at anthc.org/chs/crs/foodguide.cfm

the importance of their own food," explained DeCourtney. "What we're proudest of is when a tribe buys multiple copies to distribute to its people. They realize the importance of good nutrition and that the people of their tribe need this great tool. That realization really is self-determination in action and it's happened many, many times."

The "Traditional Food Guide" even inspired a spinoff for younger readers: "The Traditional Foods Activity Book." Produced in 2012 for children 8 to 10 and funded by a grant from the Prevent Cancer Foundation, the activity book includes a comic book feature, information and games that highlight the importance of combining healthy store-bought foods with traditional foods for good nutrition. Originally, the program planned to distribute the book to five Alaska classrooms.

Since then, more than 13,000 books have been distributed to schools, food programs, diabetes programs, CHA/P clinics, pediatricians, ENT doctors, and other programs around Alaska and beyond. The third printing of 8,000 copies is coming soon.

"We knew it would be really important for teachers and kids to



learn about nutrition in a fun way," said DeCourtney. "And we knew the activity guide would be a hit when we saw the reaction of the student editors – they loved it."

The original "Traditional Food Guide" was created by DeCourtney and ANTHC coworkers Desiree Bergeron and Karen Morgan. DeCourtney said this was not a simple writing assignment: the team faced many challenges in turning the original concept into reality, including making nutritional education personal and interesting to a large readership; identifying different regional words for common foods; gathering stories from elders; working with experts in many fields; and more.

However, DeCourtney added, all of the hard work paid off. In fact, two more spinoffs of the "Traditional Food Guide" are in the works; the Cancer Program will release details in 2013.

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Building healthier Alaska communities with clean water, efficient energy, partnerships

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) was recently awarded \$21.8 million in funding by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) through the Rural Alaska Village Grant (RAVG) program to improve public health, water quality and sanitation services in 16 rural Alaska communities.

“These investments improve water and sanitary conditions by bringing basic services to homes and public buildings in these communities including safe drinking water and sanitary waste disposal,” said Dallas Tonsager, Agriculture Under Secretary for Rural Development.

Jim Nordlund, USDA-Rural Development Alaska State Director, added, “The projects will improve public health and sanitation conditions for residents of communities that currently must collect and haul rain for drinking water and rely on portable waste containers.”

The bulk of the work is construction that will take place in Kwethluk, Toksook Bay, Eek and Lower Kalskag, where water and sewer services will be in 123 homes by 2015.

ANTHC received an additional \$742,500 pre-planning RAVG grant to be used to help cover preliminary cost and analysis for engineering, environmental review, design and rights-of-ways tasks associated with bringing water and wastewater services to the rural communities of Crooked Creek, Atmatluak, Hoonah, Kipnuk, Nanwalek, Pilot Station and Huslia.

The State of Alaska also received a \$6.2 million RAVG grant for water and wastewater infrastructure systems for Quinhagak and Hooper Bay, and the State will do pre-planning work in the communities of Seldovia, McGrath and Tununak.

Devices help 12 communities save electricity and money

This summer, ANTHC’s Division of Environmental Health & Engineering (DEHE) partnered with the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative and 12 rural communities to improve energy efficiency through homeowner education.

DEHE staff and interns installed energy gauges in around 700 homes in those communities. The gauges are known as The Energy Detectives, or TEDs, which are countertop devices that are plugged into electrical outlets and receive radio signals from a transmitter mounted on a home’s electrical panel. The TEDs display exactly how much energy and money that home is using in real time. DEHE staff used a federal American Reinvestment and Recovery Act grant to purchase the TEDs.

“People liked being able to see what they were spending so that they could do



PHOTO BY ANTHC

ANTHC electrician Evelyn Howell installs an energy gauge to a home in Alakanuk.

something about it,” said Dan Reitz, DEHE’s Director of Operations and Development. “In one community, once the TED was installed in a home, the parents told their children to go around the house and turn off all the lights as they watched the display tell them how much money they were saving.”

The TEDs could save Alaska homeowners up to \$70 monthly and \$800 annually.

Startup in Kwethluk and a biomass project in the Interior

DEHE teams were in Kwethluk recently to perform a startup on the community’s new surface water treatment facility. The facility will serve the area’s new piped water and sewer system and will allow homes to be systematically connected and brought online as infrastructure is completed.

The DEHE Energy group and Project Management team met with representatives of the Interior Regional Housing Authority (IRHA) recently. They discussed the initiation of three community biomass projects. ANTHC will design and construct three cordwood boiler systems to support the water plants and other tribal buildings. These projects are funded through Alaska Energy Authority’s Renewable Energy Fund. ANTHC staff will be cooperatively working with Tanana Chiefs Conference and the IRHA. Design and construction work will amount to approximately \$400,000 per community.

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OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES AND THE
ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

STREAMLINED TRAVEL, FROM PAGE 1 ▶

format and also includes important information like when a patient needs to stop eating or drinking, or when they need to fast before a blood draw, said Roxanne Benson, the Care Coordination Center's supervisor.

"We put it in a folder," Benson said. "Inside, it also has our airport shuttle schedule and some basic information on the hospital. All hospital numbers are on the folder, as well."

Also included: information on a patient's escort and where they will be staying during their hospital visit.

Along with sending the folder, ANMC also

Learn more

ANMC Hospital Care Coordination Center
Toll-free: (855) 482-4382
Online: anmc.org/travel

sends an appointment letter via AFHCAN, the telehealth platform operated by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. And the hospital also still faxes a letter to rural community clinics "to make sure we're reaching three points of contact," Benson said.

ANMC's Care Coordination Center agents have also continued the practice of calling patients the week before their appointments.

They've fine-tuned the "logistic calls" process, calling in early afternoon through 8 p.m., times that seemed to help reach the most people.

It's working. The numbers show that patients report a dramatic drop in pre-visit problems.

Last October, 303 customer-owners were contacted, according to Michelle Pattison, the Care Coordination Center's manager. Of that number, 83 people (27 percent) needed help with something – maybe their escort wasn't secured or they didn't know where they were staying or what time their appointments were.

This October, those logistic calls reached 659 people, Pattison said. Only eight needed help.

"We've gotten very good feedback," she said.

The ANMC hospital had only two or three people doing logistics calls before the Care Coordination Center program started. Now there are 15 specialists offering 24/7 service.

Pattison joined the program in March. It started as a pilot project in April and "went live" on November 1. The program combined operators, logistics callers and file room staff to make use of internal employees and allow them to learn other duties.

The program has streamlined the different ways ANMC specialty clinics handle referrals. Team leaders also traveled to rural communities to see firsthand how the process worked in the field, Pattison said. Each clinic handled referrals differently. She credits everybody involved for the program's success.

Benson added that she envisions the program getting even busier as more medical departments make use of the center.

"Our goal for the future is one call – that's all," Benson said.



PHOTO BY BRIAN ADAMS

The improvements continue at the Alaska Native Medical Center's Quiyana House, which offers a remodeled reception area, a new gathering area and expanded WiFi and cable television service.

ANMC Shuttle, video bring relief to traveling patients

Traveling around rural Alaska is rarely easy in the best of scenarios. Add in a health complication, and suddenly travel becomes even more stressful and unpredictable.

That's why ANTHC staff continues working to make travel to and from Anchorage for health care at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) as relaxed as possible for patients and families from across Alaska. In addition to the 2012 rollout of the ANMC Care Coordination Center to help manage many of the travel and health care logistics for patients, ANMC also offers free airport shuttle service and provides a free "Traveling to ANMC" DVD and online video.

The ANMC Shuttle service consists of two convenient routes run by two vans operated by Alaska Native drivers. The first van route has an hourly route between ANMC and the Ted Stevens International

Learn more

About ANMC's airport shuttle service, the "Traveling to ANMC" video and other services provided to those traveling:

Toll-free: (855) 482-4382
Online: anmc.org/travel

Airport. The second van has a route between ANMC, Alaska Regional Hospital and Quality Inn & Suites. The buses are wrapped with ANMC logos so travelers can identify them easily and there is a direct phone line to the shuttle service at the airport kiosk near the baggage claim.

ANTHC is also updating its "Traveling to ANMC" video, which is sent to patients and health care partners around Alaska as a DVD to help those needing guidance on traveling to Anchorage and ANMC. The video is also posted online for easy viewing.



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PHOTO BY BRENDAN SMITH

ANTHC's Colorectal Cancer Family Outreach Program includes, from left, Patient Navigator Jake Martus, Patient Navigator Tina Ketah, Endoscopist Claudia Christensen, ANP, and Endoscopist Paul Davis, MD.

FAMILY OUTREACH, FROM PAGE 1 ▶

guide them through the screening process. The outreach program is the only one of its kind in the U.S. and it is making a positive difference.

This work is critical to CRC prevention for Alaska Native families already affected by CRC. The National Polyp Study and other studies found that first-degree relatives (parents, siblings, children) of patients with a history of CRC are twice as likely to develop polyps or experience CRC themselves.

National guidelines recommend that people with a family history of colorectal cancer undergo cancer screening beginning at age 40 or 10 years before the youngest diagnosed first-degree family member, whichever is earlier. People with a first-degree relative diagnosed with CRC or a history

Learn more

About colon screenings and colorectal health, by contacting:
ANMC Screening Clinic:

(907) 729-5730

ANMC Patient Navigators:

(907) 729-4444

ANTHC CRC Control Program:

anthctoday.org/epicenter/colon.html

National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable:
familyplz.org

of colon cancer should also talk to their providers about when they should begin screening.

“ANMC’s CRC Screening Patient Navigators offer a vital service to CRC patients and their loved ones,” said Diana Redwood, CRC Control Program Manager. “Many first-degree family members know that they need to be screened earlier than the general population, but don’t know what steps to take. That is where the Patient Navigators come in. They provide that personal touch and assist families in

reducing their risk of the disease.”

ANTHC’s CRC Family Outreach Program works by asking CRC patients seen at ANMC for permission to contact their first-degree relatives to encourage them to come in for screening. Trained Patient Navigators then provide outreach to family members who are due for screening using telephone and mailed reminders. The Patient Navigators help family members overcome barriers to screening, as well as schedule them into the ANMC screening colonoscopy clinic and guide them through the cancer screening process.

The CRC Family Outreach Program also partners with regional Alaska Tribal Health Organizations to provide statewide outreach to Alaska Native first-degree relatives who are due for screening.

The CRC Family Outreach

Why ANTHC works on colorectal cancer education and screening

■ Cancer is the leading cause of death among Alaska Native people. Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the second-leading cause of cancer death. CRC mortality and new cases of cancer are nearly two times higher among Alaska Native people as U.S. whites.

■ If found early, CRC has a 90 percent 5-year survival rate. Half of CRC deaths could potentially be prevented if everyone age 50 and older received screenings.

■ The Alaska Tribal Health System average screening rate for 2011 was 58.5 percent, a 102 percent increase from 2000. The CDC 2014 national goal is 80 percent.

How ANTHC makes an impact on colorectal cancer

■ SCREENINGS AND TRAINING:

Offers CRC screenings at the joint ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation clinic; trains providers in endoscopy; offers itinerant physician and mid-level practitioner CRC screenings at rural health facilities; provides technical and financial assistance to tribal health organizations to increase CRC screening.

■ EDUCATION AND AWARENESS:

Creates and disseminates health education materials like brochures, videos, CD-ROMs, social media, and radio and TV PSAs to patients, providers and communities; tours Alaska with Nolan the Colon; offers outreach to patients and families at increased risk of CRC; implements patient navigation training and programs.

■ RESEARCH, DATA, PARTNERSHIPS:

Testing methods to improve CRC screening among Alaska Native people; participates in CDC-sponsored statewide endoscopy capacity survey; participates in statewide Colorectal Cancer Partnership to increase screening rates.

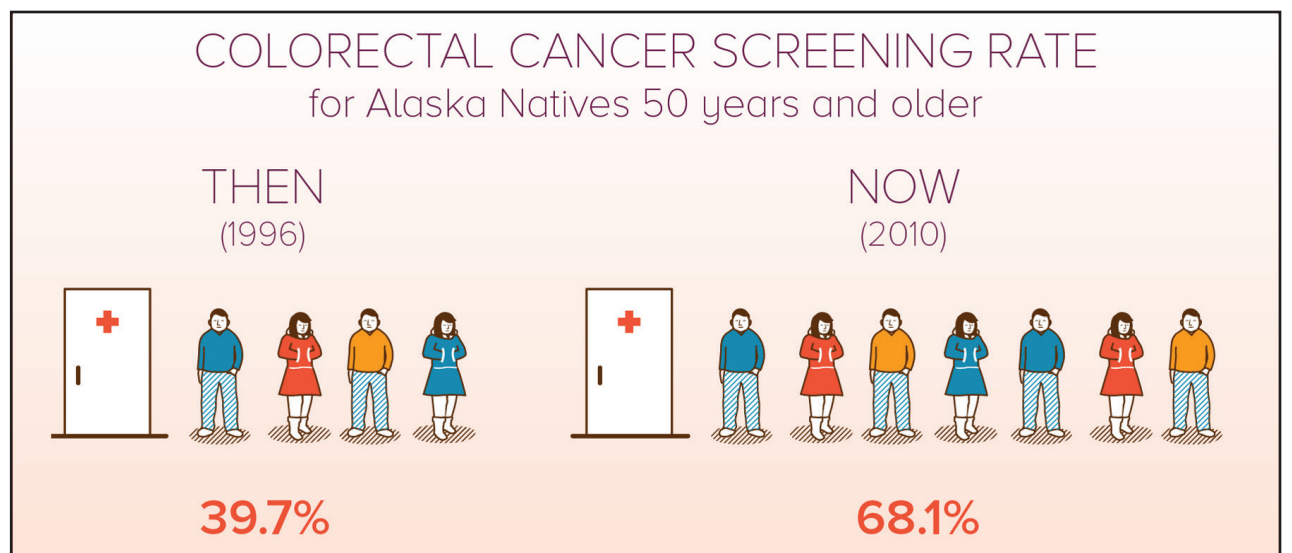
Program encourages all Alaska Native people to talk to family members about family health history, and share their family health history with providers so that they can make health care recommendations that are right for each individual.

Alaska Native colorectal cancer screening rates see marked improvement

ANTHC’s Community Health Services staff recently received encouraging news on the colorectal cancer front. Alaska Native screening rates have improved by nearly 20 percent over the last year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The 2011 BRFSS data for 50-year-old-and-older Alaska Native adults who have ever had a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy reached 68.1 percent.

Diana Redwood, Senior Program Manager with ANTHC’s Epidemiology Center, said there is a direct tie between the increased Alaska Native colorectal cancer screening rate and the efforts of ANTHC and its partners around Alaska.

In recent years, Redwood said there is



increased interest and contributions in screening improvements among Alaska’s Tribal Health organizations. She also points to 2009 as a turning point – that’s when the CDC began funding colorectal cancer programs in the Alaska Tribal Health System, which increased

screening, education and outreach.

ANTHC also partners directly with six regional tribal health organizations, which further extends the focus on colorectal cancer screening and prevention statewide.

HANF previews the 2013 Raven's Ball, announces 2013 Luminary Award recipients

ANTHC's Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation (HANF) team will host the sixth annual Raven's Ball on Saturday, March 23, 2013, at the Hotel Captain Cook in Anchorage. The Foundation reports that tickets and tables for the ball are still available but are going fast, as always.

The Raven's Ball is one of Alaska's premier black tie parties and dynamic fundraising events, and this year's ball will continue its tradition of philanthropy that benefits the Foundation's three key initiatives that improve the health of Alaska Native people around our state: improving medical care; strengthening wellness and prevention efforts; and promoting healthy village environments.

An annual Raven's Ball highlight is the presentation of the Luminary Awards, which recognize individuals for their dedication and outstanding contribution to the Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS) and community. The HANF Oversight Committee recently announced the recipients of the 2013 Raven's Ball Luminary Awards.

Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation

Learn more about the 2013 Raven's Ball tickets and sponsorship opportunities by contacting HANF at (907) 729-5652 or inspiringgoodhealth.org

The President's Award will be presented to Dr. David Mather, owner of Mather & Associates. Dr. Mather's work has contributed significantly to the performance of the ATHS. He has provided financial analysis and counsel to the Alaska Tribal Health Compact's Caucus and many of its participants from its earliest days. His ability to translate complex funding issues has been critical to the early, continuing and increasing success of the ATHS.

The Legacy and Leadership Award will be presented to Paul Hansen, Deputy Health Administrator for Maniilaq Health Services. Hansen has developed relationships with tribal partners, gained the respect of many, and led the Maniilaq Association toward being a full service health care provider.

The Distinguished Provider Award will be presented to John Salmon, a Physician Assistant at Norton Sound Health Corporation. Salmon's expertise and experience has made him the go to person in the Norton Sound region for orthopedic injuries, fracture care and difficult dermatology issues. He has also become the area expert on tuberculosis treatment and surveillance.

The Community Spirit Award will be presented to Beverly Hoffman, Volunteer Coordinator at Mikelnguut Elitnaurviat School in Bethel. Hoffman has a true passion to improve well-being and safety in her region and community. She has made volunteering and community service a way of life, demonstrating a sense of caring and responsibility for others.

Congratulations to this year's group of inspiring Luminary Award winners. We look forward to celebrating with you at the 2013 Raven's Ball.

ATCEM gathers hundreds to build stronger Alaska Native communities

Each year, tribal leaders from around Alaska gather at the Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management (ATCEM) to inspire each other to build stronger Alaska Native communities through environmental health efforts. More than 325 participants representing 100 Alaska communities took part in this year's four-day conference in Anchorage.

This year's theme "Educating, Equipping, and Empowering Healthy Alaskan Communities," featured more than 60 breakout sessions led by staff from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Tribal environmental programs, state and federal agencies. Trainings and topics included environmental health technical skills, water and sanitation, ambient air quality, village success stories, collaborative panel discussions, and more.

Among the conference's speakers were U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski, First Alaskans Institute's President and CEO Liz Medicine Crow, and ANTHC's Director of Wellness and Prevention Dr. Gary Ferguson. Each of the keynote speakers touched on the good work that Alaska Native villages do and how traditional values tie into the environmental health of a community.

The ATCEM conference serves



PHOTOS BY BRENDAN SMITH / ANTHC

Rose Kalistook of Bethel responds to receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award for her environmental protection advocacy for Alaska tribes during the recent Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management event in Anchorage.

Learn more

About ATCEM at:

atcemak.com

as a good example of both Tribal self-governance and Tribal capacity building. After many years of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency supporting and sharing responsibility for the conference, tribal capacity was increased sufficiently so that the tribes can now manage and fund the conference.



Anahma Shannon, left, is presented with the Individual Award for cleaning up and organizing a community backhaul program in Nome by Allison Akootchook Warden and James Temte at the recent Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management awards luncheon.

Six ANMC nurses earn March of Dimes Nurse of the Year Awards

Each year, the March of Dimes Alaska Chapter gives Nurse of the Year Awards to honor Alaska's exemplary registered nurses whose leadership and contributions make a positive impact in their community and in the profession of nursing.

This year, six Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) nurses employed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and Southcentral Foundation (SCF) earned Nurse of the Year honors in their respective fields: Kristin Caldwell, Janet Froeschle, Andra Rasmussen, Jayme Schroeder, Leslie Stephens and Angie Washington.

The March of Dimes recognized Alaska nurses in 24 categories this year. More than 120 nurses from around Alaska were nominated for awards, which were presented at a recent awards ceremony in Anchorage.

Caldwell won the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit Nurse Award for her work in ANMC's Inpatient Pediatrics area. An ANTHC clinical staff nurse, Caldwell is passionate about her patients and coworkers, and is driven to be even better through continuing education.

Froeschle was given the Advanced Practice Nurse Award. A certified nurse midwife and longtime SCF employee, she travels often around rural Alaska and has served the Alaska Native people for more than 20 years.

Rasmussen won the Community Nurse Award for her work as a home visiting nurse with SCF's Nutaqsiivik program. She is known to patients and coworkers for her excellent clinical skills, judgment and consultation as a patient advocate.



Kristin Caldwell



Janet Froeschle



Andra Rasmussen



Jayme Schroeder



Leslie Stephens



Angie Washington

Schroeder was recognized with the Rising Star Award. He is just beginning his career as an ANTHC nurse in ANMC's Inpatient Pediatrics unit, but he is already known as a nurse who takes pride in being a caregiver to patients, coworkers and friends.

Stephens earned the Outpatient Case Manager Award. She is a community case management care coordinator at SCF's Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, where she gives a personal touch to more than 1,300 patients with complex medical needs.

Washington was given the Charge Nurse of the Year Award. As an ANTHC nurse who works in Inpatient Pediatrics, she offers friendly service to patients and staff, while always working to become a better nurse, leader and inspiration to others.

Online

The Mukluk Telegraph is available online:
anthc.org/abt/news

THE FIRST 15 YEARS, THE NEXT 15 YEARS

As ANTHC marks the first 15 years of working to make Alaska Native people the healthiest people in the world, we're celebrating our progress as well as preparing for the next 15 years.

Learn about the past, present, and future of tribal health in Alaska by viewing ANTHC's 2012 annual meeting video and annual report at www.anthc.org.

ANMC's Neurosurgery services expanded, strengthened

BY JOSH NIVA

The Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) hospital has offered Neurosurgery services for many years, but those services were never comprehensive and the department occasionally struggled to provide consistent staffing. Often, patients requiring neurosurgery services had to travel out of Alaska, usually in response to an urgent need, and this caused a challenge in continuum of care for those patients. Those days are ending as Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) leadership is committed to increasing quality and expanding services in the Neurosurgery department.

ANMC now provides an array of Neurosurgery services led by a team of two experienced neurosurgeons – Dr. Roland Torres and Dr. Robert Lieberman, both from Stanford University in California. Dr. Torres is a nationally recognized Neurotrauma and NeuroCritical Care expert. The staff includes three physician assistants, two certified medical assistants, a case manager and assistant, and a department supervisor, longtime ANMC employee Jim Jurrens.

“We have come a very long way in a short time to improve ANMC's Neurosurgical services so that we can provide the best quality and access for Alaska Native patients in need,” said Gary Shaw, ANMC Hospital Administrator. “This team will provide the best Neurosurgery care in Alaska while further strengthening ANMC's role as Alaska's only Level II Trauma Center.”

The majority of ANMC's Neurosurgery work addresses trauma, critical care and chronic pain. The services will extend to cerebral and neurovascular services, work with radiation



PHOTO BY BRIAN ADAMS

Dr. Roland Torres, left, and Dr. Robert Lieberman are leading the expansion of Neurosurgery services at the Alaska Native Medical Center.

Learn more

About ANMC's Neurosurgery services by calling the department:

(907) 729-2525

oncologists and pediatric intensivists. The team has already worked down a backlog of 200 appointments. The group has seen a variety of patients and the degree of complexity of Neurosurgical cases increased dramatically since the arrival of Dr. Torres and Dr. Lieberman in September.

The group's work will not be limited to ANMC. The department is developing a travel plan

to bring staff to Tribal Health Organizations' regional hubs for Neurosurgery services as well as a comprehensive Teleradiology program. This will improve quality and access to care around the Alaska Tribal Health System, as well as maximize the system's resources.

Dr. Torres added that his group is also building a partnership with the Alaska Brain Injury Network, Alaska's most important voice for head injuries. Together, they will be able to lead regulation and policy that will provide a better continuum of care for Alaska Native people with head injuries.

ANMC patient rooms receive expanded cable TV service, Quyana House guests get Wi-Fi

The Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) staff work constantly to provide the best care, quality and experience for patients. Part of that effort comes in improving all services, as well as providing the little things that go a long way in helping patients feel as comfortable as possible as they face health challenges, receive care and often spend time away from friends and family.

In November, ANTHC's Information Technology and ANMC Customer Experience teams brought live an effort that will instantly provide entertainment for patients during their stays at ANMC. GCI cable television is now available in all ANMC patient rooms, around 150, as well as in ANMC's Physical Therapy area. This cable package offers more than 30 channels with a wide range of

viewing options for patients. This marks a significant expansion over the previous television service available in these rooms. One year ago, there was also a substantial television replacement around ANMC patient rooms as 150 flat-screen TVs were installed to replace older models.

Similar television service has been offered at ANMC's Quyana House for a while now, but Quyana House guests also received a customer experience upgrade in recent weeks. Wi-Fi service is now available for Quyana House guests.

“We are thrilled to offer an expanded cable television package to all guests and patients at ANMC, as well as Wi-Fi services to our Quyana House guests,” said Leatha Mercurieff, ANMC Vice President of Customer Relations. “We truly understand the difficulties our

visitors face when they come to ANMC, so we are always focused on providing services that help them

relax and make their visits as easy and enjoyable as possible.”

WELCOME NEW PROVIDERS

Daniel W Suver MD
General Surgery

Inna Kogan MD
Internal Medicine-Infectious Disease

Jennifer Nance PA-C
Family Medicine-CHAP

Madhuri Kadiyala MD
Oncology

Kabita Nanda MD
Inpatient Pediatrics

Anne H Morris MD
Sleep Medicine

Jeffrey M Stubblefield PA
Neurological Surgery

George S. Rhyneer MD
Cardiology

Whitney Lyn Kalin MD
Inpatient Pediatrics

Betsy Jean Bronson MD
Telemedicine

Michael P Anthony PA-C
Neurological Surgery



ANMC Maternal Child Health Services: Caring for Alaska's women and children

The Maternal Child Health Services Program at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) is rapidly expanding to provide upgraded facilities, additional services and better access to care for Alaska Native families.

That's great news, if you know what Maternal Child Health Services means – most of us don't. So, let's start there: Maternal Child Health Services, also referred to as MCH, is a commonly used term in the medical field for health care provided to women and children.

With so much positive change happening around ANMC's MCH program, now is the perfect opportunity to provide an update to the Alaska Native people we serve and our partners around Alaska about the new processes, services, facilities and amenities.

ANMC's MCH program currently includes more than 20 clinics and sub-programs located throughout the ANMC hospital and Anchorage Native Primary Care Center. This group works together to provide a coordinated, comprehensive system of care equipped to handle the complete spectrum of women's and children's health issues, from routine checkups to the most serious conditions.

MCH teams are creating a Center of Excellence for the highest quality care, as well as a place of security and comfort for women, children and their families. This year, as part of this commitment, we began a \$12.5 million, multiyear renovation project to upgrade the Maternity Center, Inpatient Pediatrics and the Neonatal and Pediatric Intensive Care Units (NICU and PICU). Four new private maternity rooms are already open, which allow extra privacy and more space for family members. The remodeled NICU will open this spring, and the new PICU/Inpatient Pediatrics area is scheduled for completion in 2014.

MCH has also expanded the care teams in areas such as high-risk obstetrics (high-risk pregnancy care), pediatric subspecialties (care of the lungs, glands, joints, brain



PHOTO BY BRIAN ADAMS

Alaska Native Medical Center's Ultrasonographer Loretta Thompson, left, and Dr. Jennifer Gotkin perform a 3-D ultrasound on Sadie Anderson in one of ANMC's Maternal Child Health Services program clinics.

Maternal Child Health Services at the Alaska Native Medical Center include:

- Gynecologic Services
- Gynecologic Oncology
- Midwifery
- Obstetrics
- Childbirth Education Classes
- Perinatology/High-Risk Obstetrics/Maternal Fetal Medicine for high-risk pregnancies
- Labor and Delivery
- Neonatal Intensive Care
- Breastfeeding Support
- Nutaqsiivik/Nurse Family Partnership
- Inpatient Pediatrics
- Pediatric Trauma
- Pediatric Intensive Care
- Surgical Services for children, including General Surgery, Orthopedics, Ear, Nose and Throat, and Neurosurgery
- Pediatric Dental
- Pediatric Subspecialty Care, including Pulmonology, Endocrinology, Rheumatology, Neurology, Nephrology
- Pediatric Outpatient Clinic
- Pediatric Dietitian and Nutrition Care
- Pediatric Audiology
- Pediatric Optometry and Ophthalmology
- Pediatric Behavioral Health/Psychiatry

and kidneys), speech therapy and others. New team members give additional expertise to an already impressive group of providers and staff, as well as help improve access to a wide range of high-quality, specialized services.

MCH has also boosted its employee and customer-owner outreach efforts to develop useful and consistent health resources. Revised service brochures, health information materials and webpages are now in development. Additionally, outreach efforts such as discussion groups, one-on-one interviews and regular department presentations allow MCH staff to receive ongoing employee and customer input as improvements continue.

Connect with your culture and excel at your career at ANTHC, where there are hundreds of diverse jobs that all help provide the best health care to 140,000 Alaska Natives around our state.

Contact ANTHC's Recruiting team today.
www.anthc.org • healthcare@anthc.org
1-800-528-6680

Preventing suicide by telling your Heart Story

While suicide remains a sensitive but urgent topic around Alaska, partners from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and the Alaska Tribal Health System continue providing new ways to train, inspire and comfort individuals and communities that have been impacted.

ANTHC's Behavioral Health program and Marketing and Communications department recently collaborated on a suicide prevention project to reach a large, high-risk audience in a powerful way: the Tell Your Heart Story campaign. The prime piece of the campaign is an illustrated poster that offers a message of hope and encourages people to tell their stories and communicate with

others before things get too tough. The poster was created to engage Alaska Native people across the state, particularly youth and young men in high-risk age groups.

The Tell Your Heart Story poster is filled with illustrations of memories that are joyful, sorrowful and part of Alaska Native life. The key message and images implore people to speak up when they are hurting and share personal stories with friends, family members or even the Alaska Careline Crisis Intervention hotline.

Order free copies of the Tell Your Heart Story poster by contacting ANTHC's Marketing and Communications department at tellyourheartstory@anthc.org or (907) 729-1972.



National Native American Heritage Month



PHOTOS BY TODD HENRY

The Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) joined the nation in celebrating November's National Native American Heritage Month with events at the hospital, including ANMC's first Native Heritage Celebration. Celebration highlights included staff and visitors participating in a Native Dress Revue, video screenings, pilot bread with salmon spread, and door prizes.

Three participants in the Native Dress Revue included, pictured above from left to right, Rinnah Andrew, Rodney Hebert and Nathalia Echavarria.