



THE

Mukluk Telegraph

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

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Healthy birthday!

Celebrating 15 years of self-governance

BY JOSH NIVA

On June 1, 1998, Tribal health in Alaska changed dramatically when the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) signed a contract to assume responsibility for the operations of the majority of the Indian Health Service's Alaska Area office's programs. After decades of fighting for self-governance, Alaska Native people now controlled their health care.

Tribal health in Alaska has evolved since 1998, and ANTHC has been there with every change. As ANTHC and the Alaska Tribal Health System celebrate the 15th anniversary of self-governance, it provides an opportunity to reflect on the years of work, passion and dedication that created the foundation for ANTHC to become what it is today – the embodiment of self-determination for Alaska Native people.

Inside is a snapshot of Tribal health history in Alaska and the origins of ANTHC.

SEE **HEALTHY HISTORY**, PAGE 6-7 ►



PHOTO BY **TODD HENRY** / ANTHC

The children of Meda Dewitt Schleifman, a program associate with ANTHC's Wellness and Prevention team, celebrate ANTHC's happy anniversary. Tinaa, 2, prepares to blow out the candles with siblings Daaskawaa, left, and Caleb, right.

Governor Parnell signs Senate Bill 88

Bill authorizes \$35 million to help build 170-room ANMC patient housing facility

BY JOSH NIVA

On June 26, Alaska Governor Sean Parnell visited the Alaska Native Health Campus to sign and approve Senate Bill 88. The bill authorizes \$35 million in state revenue bonds to help build a 170-room housing facility adjoined to the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC). More than 150 Alaska Tribal Health System leaders and staff attended the signing along with Directors of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), many of the



PHOTO BY **BRIAN ADAMS**

Alaska Governor Sean Parnell and Valerie Davidson, ANTHC's Senior Director of Legal & Intergovernmental Affairs, address a gathering of Alaska Tribal Health System leaders at a ceremony celebrating the signing of Senate Bill 88.

Alaska Native health advocates and senatorial, federal and State of Alaska staff members who helped craft and pass the bill.

SEE **ANMC PATIENT HOUSING**, PAGE 5 ►

Telling their stories

Alaska's youth lend powerful voices to suicide prevention

BY ESTELLA CLAYMORE

Suicide remains a sensitive and urgent topic and an issue that continues to impact families and communities around Alaska. Suicide prevention work has brought awareness to the subject, and few efforts are more moving than the heartfelt and hopeful messages of Alaska's young people.

For three years, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) has partnered with the Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG), the Alaska Careline and GCI to support the AASG Suicide Prevention Media Contest. The competition encourages Alaska students to use new media and share how suicide has changed their lives.

In April, the partnership announced the top entries in this year's competition: Mitchell Forbes and the Bethel Regional High School Student Council took first and second place while Cara

Online

Watch all of the entries in the AASG Suicide Prevention Media Contest online at: youtube.com/anthctoday

Need to talk? Call the Alaska Careline at 1-800-273-8255

Chapman and the Chugiak High School Student Council placed third.

"We felt it was our part to help combat the issue. Additionally, our student council this year has worked diligently with our administration to improve the school climate for all students," said Forbes, Bethel Regional High School's student council president.

In the winning entry, Bethel classmates showed how negative words act as burdening weights, and how when someone is there to help or listen, the weight is shared. The second place video features dozens of Bethel students and staff moving around a gymnasium floor to spell out messages of hope and unity.

Bethel students recognized the importance of using their creativity and sharing their stories as part of combating suicide around Alaska and among their peers.

"With our videos, we aimed to show our student body the effect



1st The winning video in the AASG Suicide Prevention Media Contest, submitted by the Bethel Regional High School Student Council, shows how high school students can help each other deal with problems that make life difficult.

they can have on each other, whether it is positive or negative," said Forbes.

Chapman and her Chugiak classmates filmed their third place message near a wall of hope in their school, where fellow students wrote what they lived for on pieces of paper and added the messages to the wall.

All contest submissions can be viewed online at youtube.com/anthctoday. ANTHC has turned the top two entries into television public service announcements, which GCI is airing around Alaska. Last year's winning PSAs ran more than 200,000 times on statewide cable. GCI and ANTHC received the Outstanding Community Support Award for hosting the

statewide media campaign and for giving students an opportunity to share their important messages.

ANTHC's Barbara Franks, Suicide Prevention Program Associate, knows that contests like these empower youth to use their voices and make positive change.

"As I shared with the students, I want you to be able to ask your friend if they have thoughts of suicide, but to also be prepared for any answer they give and to know who can help with the next level of care," said Franks. "They are prepared, they are not afraid to ask, and they are determined to keep suicide prevention awareness as part of their annual goal."

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, Communications Manager

Fiona Brosnan — ANTHC Marketing Director

Estella Claymore — Communications Associate

Lindsay Renkert — Marketing Manager

Todd Henry — Multimedia Production Artist

Selma Oskolkoff-Simon — Marketing Coordinator

Darbi Daley — ANMC Hospital Marketing Specialist

Sergei Shirayev — Marketing Media Specialist

CONTACT US

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Attention: Mukluk Telegraph

4000 Ambassador Drive, Anchorage, AK 99508

Phone: (907) 729-1899

E-mail: marketing@anthc.org

Web: anthc.org/abt/news

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President exempts Alaska Native and American Indian people from IRS penalty under ACA

BY ANTHC STAFF

In June, access to future health care for Alaska Native people received a momentous boost when the Obama administration broadened an exemption for Alaska Native and American Indian people from the Affordable Care Act (ACA). The ruling allows all Alaska Native and American Indian people who are eligible to receive services from an Indian Health Service (IHS) facility/Tribal health care provider to receive an exemption from the shared responsibility payment if they do not maintain minimum essential coverage under the ACA, which goes into law in 2014.

We thank the many ANTHC staff and Tribal and federal partners at the state and national levels that worked and advocated tirelessly for our people in recent months. They played a significant role in making this ruling a reality.

Prior to Wednesday's exemption ruling, only Alaska Native people who demonstrated proof of membership in federally recognized Tribes would have been exempt from the requirement

to maintain minimum essential coverage under the ACA. Those who did not have that minimum essential coverage and did not qualify for an exemption would have faced a financial penalty when filing their taxes. It is estimated that as many as 20 percent of Alaska Native people would not have qualified for an exemption under the previous criteria.

"The administration is taking steps to honor our historical commitment to the rights of American Indians and Alaska Natives and ensure that individuals protected under the Indian Health Care Improvement Act benefit from the special provisions in the Affordable Care Act," Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said in a press release. "Today, we continue to fulfill our responsibility to consult and work with Tribal communities."

"We appreciate our Tribal partners who advocated to ensure that all American Indians and Alaska Natives eligible for IHS can receive an exemption from the penalty for not having insurance coverage," said IHS Director Dr. Yvette

Roubideaux in a press release.

Alaska Native and American Indian people who meet the definition of "Indian" receive other benefits: a special monthly enrollment period, and in most circumstances, exemption from cost sharing (co-pays and deductibles). This rule does not appear to address the associated definition issue as it applies to these Indian-specific benefits, however.

Ultimately, while this ruling is extremely positive and will improve access to health care for our people, this is not a permanent legislative fix, and a future administration could reverse the policy. We will continue to examine this ruling and advocate for the access to health care for Alaska Native and American Indian people moving forward.

If you have any questions about this ruling or health care reform's impact on Tribal health around Alaska, please contact ANTHC's Legal and Intergovernmental Affairs group at healthreform@anthc.org or (907) 729-1928.

Around Alaska ANTHC receives two Green Champion Awards for rural energy work

ANTHC's Environmental Health & Engineering teams recently received two Green Champion Awards from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The awards honor HHS employees and Alaska Native and Native American Tribal members involved in outstanding sustainability projects. DEHE also earned a Green Champion Award for its energy work in 2012.

This year's Green Champion Awards celebrated ANTHC's Energy Initiative and a collaborative LED lighting project between ANTHC, the Indian Health Service and the Maniilaq Association on the campus of the Maniilaq Health Center.

The Energy Initiative is an informal group within ANTHC formed to reduce dependency on expensive imported fossil fuels while maintaining public health and quality of life in rural Alaska Native communities. The group has been responsible for lifetime energy savings across the state exceeding millions of dollars.

The second Green Champion Award spotlighted an energy

conservation project in Kotzebue, where teams replaced 41 old high-pressure sodium lighting fixtures with new energy efficient LED lighting technology around the Maniilaq Health Center campus. This work translates to an estimated annual savings of \$13,099 in electricity costs.

Kasaan celebrates water system upgrade

The new ANTHC-built water treatment plant, water storage tank and water transmission line in Kasaan, a community set on Prince of Wales Island 30 miles northwest of Ketchikan, were celebrated recently with a community open house.

The project, highlighted by the new 1,500-square-foot water treatment plant and 150,000-gallon water storage tank, is providing high quality drinking water to Kasaan residents.

The facilities were built away from the area's previous water treatment plant and storage reservoir, which were located by a stream canyon. The canyon is notorious for flash floods that can damage the nearby infrastructure.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) also spotlighted the Kasaan project in a press release that coincided with Earth Day on April 22. USDA's Alaska



PHOTO BY JERRY CNOSSEN / ANTHC
The new ANTHC-built, 1,500-square-foot water treatment plant in Kasaan opened this spring and is providing clean water to the area's residents.

State Director Jim Nordlund heralded the completion of the water project and the USDA Rural Development program's efforts to improve environmental and health conditions in rural communities across Alaska.

ARUC provides money-saving energy efficiency in Deering

ANTHC's Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative (ARUC) provided an assessment of Deering's water and vacuum sewer plants, while also noting overlapping problems in the community's washeteria and power plant. The team found a series of opportunities and developed a plan with local ARUC operators

Online

Learn more about ARUC's work at: anthc.org/cs/dehe/sustops/alaska-rural-utility-collaborative.cfm
And on Facebook at: [facebook.com/ANTHCaruc](https://www.facebook.com/ANTHCaruc)

to accomplish a list of repairs. Following the upgrades, ARUC reports that the community saved \$3,600 in fuel costs in December. ARUC said the long-term impact of the work could help residents see reduced utility bills in the months ahead.

Currently, 26 Alaska communities are enrolled in ARUC.

Healthy, tasty and traditional additions at ANMC

BY ESTELLA CLAYMORE

Grilled chicken parmesan with whole wheat pasta and roasted vegetables. Oven-roasted citrus herb salmon with couscous and lemon garlic green beans. Navy bean soup with ham essence. These dishes are not only mouthwatering, they are healthy, too. And they are part of a new lineup of Mindful dishes at the ANMC Food Court, which includes hundreds of recipes that balance higher nutrition with lower calories and carbohydrates.

“A lot of these meals might not look healthy, but they are healthy,” said Sabrina Holman, Production Manager for ANMC Food Court. “We had a lighthouse clam chowder that used two percent milk instead of heavy cream and a Baja avocado bacon wrap that you wouldn’t think was healthy but it was a very Mindful meal.”

The Mindful program rolled out at ANMC’s Food Court in April and was created by Sodexo, a food service company dedicated to providing fresh, nutritious meals while working within the cultural and nutritional needs of their customers. With the variety and flexibility the program provides, ANMC’s Food Court was able to make healthy changes that cater to the Alaska Native and American Indian people.

“We are working to implement even more Alaska Native traditional foods,” said Holman. “For example, fish soup, fish cakes, stroganoff with reindeer meat, various stews and other traditional foods that our customers will enjoy.”

Listening to customers and making the menu healthier is a constant at the ANMC Food Court.



PHOTOS BY ESTELLA CLAYMORE / ANTHC

Chicken parmesan with roasted vegetables and citrus rice make up this healthy meal from the ANMC Food Court’s Mindful menu.



Jeannette Lawson, General Manager, left, and Sabrina Holman, Food Court Production Manager.

Online

View weekly menu items and learn more about the ANMC Food Court at anmc.org/auxiliary/food-service

Hamburgers are now served on whole wheat buns, broth in the soups are made with low sodium, and vegetarian sides were added to the Hometown station where food items remind customers of home.

Staff in the ANMC Food Court kitchen makes almost all of its dishes from scratch every day. This means that the majority of their soups, salads, entrées, sides and even baked goods are made in-house, usually using fresh,



Mediterranean fish with country vegetables and citrus rice make up this tasty dinner from ANMC Food Court’s Mindful menu.

local ingredients.

“One of the nice things about this new program is that nutritional facts and allergy information are posted on the menu next to a picture of the meal,” said Jeannette Lawson, General Manager of ANMC Food Court. “This way, the customer can make an informed decision as to what to eat.”

The launch of the new menu has been so popular that the kitchen has had to ramp up production to

keep up with demand. Customers can even sample new dishes with tasting cups and spoons at every station.

“As these new items are accepted by our guests, we will start to implement more and more of them,” said Lawson. “Our customers love the meat and potato items; we can still do that but using lower fat products. That is what we are trying to provide to our customers – what they want but in a healthier profile.”

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.

Let us drive! Find our ANMC Shuttle schedule and information about traveling to ANMC at www.anmc.org/travel.

For more information, call us toll free at (855) 482-4382 or in Anchorage at 563-ANMC (2662).



ANMC PATIENT HOUSING, FROM PAGE 1

The new housing facility will significantly improve access to the highest quality health care for Alaska Native and American Indian people living in Alaska. The housing will also be a culturally appropriate home away from home for patients and families traveling to Anchorage for services at ANMC.

“This legislation helps families stay closer together during times of illness, reduces health costs, and raises the bar for health services,” said Governor Parnell.

More than half of ANMC’s patients travel from outside Anchorage to access health services. Additional housing at ANMC will improve that access, expand the services available for patients and families, and enhance the continuity of care for patients. This is particularly critical for expectant mothers with high-risk pregnancies; cancer patients requiring infusion and radiation therapy; patients needing outpatient specialty medical care; children and Elders; and others.

Governor Parnell’s signature on Senate Bill 88 was the culmination of combined efforts by the Alaska State Department of Health and

Social Services Commissioner Bill Streur, Alaska Tribal Health System leaders, ANTHC staff, and many others. The partners identified opportunities to improve care for Alaska Native and American Indian people, provide better access to Tribal health facilities, and save millions of dollars annually in Medicaid costs for the State of Alaska.

The housing facility will be built on the Alaska Native Health Campus in midtown Anchorage. The facility will be attached to ANMC by a sky bridge. The facility will feature communal gathering and cooking areas, access to traditional foods and Alaska Native artwork. There will also be computer areas for patients to stay in touch with family members. In addition, an emphasis will be placed on providing an array of resources for expectant mothers.

ANTHC thanks the supporters of the Senate bill’s passage, particularly Alaska Governor Sean Parnell; Alaska State Department of Health and Social Services Commissioner Bill Streur; Deputy Commissioner for Treasury Angela Rodell; Senator and Senate Finance Committee Co-Chair Pete Kelly, R-Fairbanks;



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE OFFICE OF ALASKA GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL
Alaska Governor Sean Parnell signs Senate Bill 88 on June 27. Governor Parnell was joined by Alaska Tribal Health System leaders, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Directors and many of the Alaska Native health advocates and senatorial, federal and State of Alaska staff members who helped craft and pass the bill.

Senator and Senate Finance Committee Co-Chair Kevin Meyer, R-Anchorage; Indian Health Service Director Dr. Yvette Roubideaux; Indian Health Service Alaska Area Director Christopher Mandregan, Jr.; and Indian Health Service Office of Environmental Health and Engineering Director Gary Hartz.

Special thanks to ANTHC’s partners in the Alaska Tribal Health System for their testimony and support, including: the Alaska Native Health Board; Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association; Arctic

Slope Native Association; Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation; Chugachmiut; Copper River Native Association; Kodiak Area Native Association; Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium; Metlakatla Indian Community; Norton Sound Health Corporation; Southcentral Foundation; SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium; Tanana Chiefs Conference; and Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation.

Around ANMC ANMC Laboratory and Pathology Department receives reaccreditation

Recently, the ANMC Laboratory and Pathology Department, including the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Lab Annex, received reaccreditation after passing an inspection by a seven-member team from The College of American Pathologists (CAP). The unannounced inspection, which occurs every two years, determines the overall accreditation status of the laboratory.

The results of the 2013 CAP inspection were the best in ANMC’s history – there were no deficiencies found in crucial areas of testing, including anatomic pathology, cytopathology, team leadership, immunology and urinalysis.

Celebrating ANMC’s hardworking nurses

ANTHC thanked its talented nursing staff for their hard work and exemplary care during National Nurses’ Week, May 6-12. More

than 540 nurses are on ANTHC’s staff and make up a quarter of its workforce. The nursing team has made ANMC Alaska’s only Magnet-recognized facility since 2003. Magnet designation embodies quality care, nursing excellence, innovations in practice, and more.

ANMC’s nurses are leaders at the bedside, around the state, and in

the classroom, where many strive to continually strengthen their skills.

ANMC Imaging expands services

ANMC’s Department of Imaging provides services to patients and providers in Anchorage and around the state. Recently, ANMC began offering two new imaging services:

CT cardiac angiography and calcium scoring, two noninvasive imaging tests used to help diagnose heart disease.

CT cardiac angiography is an imaging test that looks at the arteries that supply the heart muscle with blood. Calcium scoring is a test used to check for calcium deposits in the coronary arteries.

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HEALTHY HISTORY, FROM PAGE 1 -

1999
~100,000 Alaska Native people.

2013
More than 143,000 Alaska Native people.

“For the first four months, there was a lot of discussion, debate and problem-solving. We also had to do all the fundamental underpinnings all while negotiating our first agreement with IHS Alaska Area Office. We also worked with the Board on our mission, vision and values, and our first-year strategy. ... I would describe the days there as pretty high intensity with lots of anticipation and even some anxiety about how some things would turn out. ... It has certainly been satisfying to see ANTHC mature into what it is today.”

—Paul Sherry, ANTHC’s original President/CEO, in 2013 interview with The Mukluk Telegraph



“There is no mix of words or thoughts that could adequately describe the transition period of 1996-1999. The sum total of all that transpired was like moving a mountain from one side of the nation to another.”

—Wilson Justin, Health Director, Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium, quoted in the 1999 ANTHC Annual Report

1999
ANTHC’s vision:
A unified Native health system, working with our people, achieving the highest health status in the world.

2013
ANTHC’s vision:
Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world.



PHOTOS FROM ANTHC ARCHIVES

In this photo from 1998, members of ANTHC’s original Board of Directors meet with representatives from the Indian Health Service’s (IHS) Alaska Area offices and other Alaska Tribal health leaders. The group gathered for ANTHC to sign a contract to assume responsibility for the operations of the IHS Alaska Area services.

October 1, 1998
ANTHC employs 180 staff.

May 1, 2013
ANTHC employs 2,180 staff.

“Tribal management makes a world of difference because who knows us better than we know ourselves? We know and respect our wants and needs.”

—Millie (Stevens) Schoonover, Board Member, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, quoted in the 1999 ANTHC Annual Report

“Alaska Natives and American Indians have always ‘owned’ our own health, in the sense that we make decisions every day about health-related choices. Now we are empowered to make much more encompassing choices and can tailor our own health care system to our specific needs.”

—Larry Ivanoff, ANTHC’s original Chairman of the Board of Directors, wrote in the 1999 ANTHC Annual Report

1999
ANMC hospital admits more than 6,000 patients.

2012
ANMC hospital admits more than 8,000 patients.

A SNAPSHOT OF TRIBAL HEALTH AND SELF-GOVERNANCE IN ALASKA

<p>1969: With the federal government managing almost every clinic and health program serving Alaska Native people, the Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB) is created to offer advisory Native perspective at the policy and planning level.</p>	<p>Early 1990s: Planning for Alaska Native management of statewide IHS programs began under the auspices of the ANHB.</p>	<p>May 1997: The new 150-bed Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) opens off of Tudor Road in Anchorage.</p>	<p>December 1997: ANTHC is officially established as a statewide nonprofit health services organization owned by Alaska Native Tribal governments and the regional Alaska Native health services organizations they serve.</p>
<p>1953: Under U.S. Indian Health Service (IHS) management, the Alaska Native Medical Center opens on Third Avenue in downtown Anchorage.</p>	<p>1975: Congressional passage of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act allows Tribal management of programs previously managed on their behalf by the federal Interior, Health, Education and Welfare departments.</p>	<p>1995-1997: Intensive planning and a vision of self-governance for health care begin, involving Tribes and Tribal health organizations from around Alaska.</p>	<p>September 1997: Congress approves legislation that outlines criteria for the structure of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and establishes its authority to contract for administrative and health services provided by the IHS’s Alaska Area office and ANMC.</p>

<p>February 1, 1998: ANTHC’s first employees, President/CEO Paul Sherry and Assistant Marianne Gilmore, begin working.</p>	<p>September 30, 1998: ANTHC files a formal proposal for management of the majority of ANMC operations with IHS.</p>	<p>January 1, 1999: ANTHC completes negotiations with the IHS to transfer responsibility for management of the ANMC. A celebration includes the raising of the ANTHC flag and exchanging of facility keys. ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation form a Joint Operating Board to oversee and govern ANMC and its 1,200 staff.</p>	
<p>January 1998: ANTHC appoints its first Board of Directors, a group of 15 members representing regions from across Alaska. Five of those original Directors still serve on ANTHC’s Board of Directors: Lincoln A. Bean, Sr., Evelyn Beeter, Katherine Gottlieb, H. Sally Smith and Mike Zacharof.</p>	<p>June 1, 1998: A new era of health care management in Alaska begins with the signing of the first contract between ANTHC and the IHS’s Alaska Area offices. ANTHC’s assumption of IHS functions occurred with an initial transfer of around 20 employees.</p>	<p>October 1, 1998: ANTHC has a self-governance agreement in effect assigning responsibilities for the following services of the IHS Alaska Area offices: Administrative Services; Community Health Services; Personal and Professional Recruiting; Business Office Services; Regional Service Supply Center; and Environmental Health and Engineering.</p>	<p>1999: ANTHC becomes the largest tribal self-governance organization in the U.S., a distinction it still holds today.</p>

CHA/Ps from across Alaska train, collaborate and celebrate at weeklong forum

BY ESTELLA CLAYMORE

More than 60 Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps) representing 15 Alaska Tribal Health Organizations met in April for the annual CHA/P Forum, hosted by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) staff in Anchorage. The forum offered 26 hours of continuing education on a variety of topics; training on how to use the new ANTHC-produced Electronic Community Health Aide Manual (eCHAM); awards and honors presentations; and provided a rare chance for CHA/Ps to share their successes and challenges with one another.

One forum highlight was the Executive Proclamation from Alaska Governor Sean Parnell that designated April 15-19 as Community Health Aide, Community Health Practitioner, Dental Health Aide and Behavioral Health Aide Week. The proclamation was presented during the forum's Shining Star awards luncheon.

During the luncheon, the CHA/P Rising Star award was presented to Nikkita Holguin from the Tanana Chiefs Conference for displaying competency and skill while visiting clinics around her region. Kyla Westcott from SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium was awarded the Shining Star award for her quick thinking and resourcefulness in crisis situations. Jessica McGinty of Tanana



CHA/P Shining Stars pose with their awards and flowers at the recent CHA/P Forum in Anchorage. From left, Nikkita Holguin of Tanana Chiefs Conference, Kyla Westcott of SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, and Jessica McGinty of Tanana Chiefs Conference.

PHOTO BY JERRY LUKEN

Online
Learn more about the work of Alaska's CHA/Ps and ANTHC's role in training and supporting them at akchap.org

Chiefs Conference earned the Outstanding Accomplishments award for her compassion to patients as demonstrated through many long days in the clinic as a sole provider and during

many emergency responses in 2012. And as always, the awards luncheon was an opportunity to remember CHA/Ps who passed away last year.

This year's forum also marked the first time the event was hosted at ANTHC rather than at an Anchorage hotel. ANTHC was proud to host the CHA/Ps in their buildings owned and managed by all the Tribes and Tribal Health Organizations in Alaska.

ANTHC's new electronic manual assists Alaska's CHA/Ps

BY ESTELLA CLAYMORE

For many years, Community Health Aide and Practitioners (CHA/P) around Alaska have relied on the Community Health Aide Manual (CHAM) as a valued resource for succeeding in their challenging work. The CHAM, however, weighs 13.8 pounds and is difficult to update for hardworking CHA/Ps.

ANTHC's Health Information and Technology team has modernized the manual with the eCHAM, an electronic version of the CHAM. It can be accessed via the website and by using tools like desktop computers, iPads or other tablet and mobile devices for greater mobility. The eCHAM is currently in a testing phase; it is expected to be released to CHA/Ps in July.

ANTHC's Rebecca Pazdernik-Moore, PA-C, and eCHAM Project Manager Beth Fleischer designed the eCHAM system, website and



Online
For more information about the eCHAM project, contact ANTHC's Beth Fleischer at bfleischer@anthc.org

application. They also provide user training for CHA/Ps.

In addition to being bulky, information in the CHAM often became outdated. Devices holding the eCHAM are connected to a central document management system for quick and easy updating and it can be used even in remote areas without power or an Internet connection. The iPads that will hold the eCHAM will also act as a communications tool, connecting

CHA/Ps with providers.

"The iPads will have the new AFCHAN Vidyo application, which will let our CHAs talk to their providers instantly, show them what the problem with the patient is, and get instructions on how to continue," explained Fleischer. "CHAs will also have access to multimedia content like videos of procedures they have not done in a while and to medical libraries."

The test version of the eCHAM was released to an excited group of end-users at the CHA/P Forum in April. CHA/Ps chosen to test the application were given iPads to take to their clinic. In the months ahead,

CHA/Ps will test the eCHAM and provide feedback that will fuel its final implementation. CHA/Ps around Alaska will also receive eCHAM training via a distance learning course.

ANTHC's project team is contacting Tribal Health Organizations with CHA/Ps to discuss implementation models for their sites. The eCHAM project has funding to provide a second computer monitor or an iPad for each CHA/P in Alaska.

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

CHA/P Alaska Native men's cancer course gains national attention

BY ESTELLA CLAYMORE

What started out as a distance learning course for Alaska's Community Health Aides and Practitioners (CHA/P) about Alaska Native and American Indian men's health and issues like cancer has quickly become a popular source of men's health knowledge for audiences around the country.

"Staying Strong, Staying Healthy: Alaska Native Men Speak Out About Cancer" is a two-hour online course which tells the resilient stories of men whose lives have been affected by prostate, colorectal and testicular cancer. It also teaches ways to prevent cancer and decrease cancer risk among men, as well as ways for them to find and treat cancer early.

After hearing feedback from Alaska's CHA/Ps struggling to reach men, ANTHC's CHA/P Cancer Educator Melany Cueva brought together a variety of content experts, organized their input, and brought the course to life. Course content was provided by staff from ANTHC, the Alaska Native Medical Center, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Mayo Clinic and the Community Health Advocates on Men's Cancer

Online
To access the course or learn more, visit akchap.org
Or contact ANTHC's Melany Cueva at (907) 729-2441 or mcueva@anthc.org.

and Health Issues.

"I'm really excited about this course because there is a huge need for information about men's health that extends beyond Alaska," said Cueva. "This course helps to fill that gap by providing helpful information about men's health that people can access when it works best for their schedule. Distance learning is available when the person needs it."

Kyle von Bose, ANTHC's Technical Writer for CHA/P Statewide Services, turned the program into an online, interactive distance learning course that can be accessed via the CHA/P website (akchap.org) by anyone interested.

"What I really enjoyed about the course was that it was very informative and easily understood," said Charlemagne McMullen, a CHA/P with Chugachmiut. "It included digital stories, which makes educating people more personal, so that men's health is

Watch Movies from: Staying Strong, Staying Healthy

Alaska Native Men Speak Out About Cancer

Hear the resilient stories of men whose lives have been affected by prostate, colorectal, and testicular cancer. Men talk about their experiences: ways to prevent cancer, ways to decrease cancer risk, and ways to find and treat cancer early. At the end of this course, movies of a clinical testicular exam and a self testicular exam are included.

Alaska Native men share their stories of cancer and cancer prevention in videos available in the new CHA/P distance learning course, Staying Strong, Staying Healthy -- Alaska Native Men Speak Out About Cancer.

not only seen through a health care provider's eyes. The course does a good job explaining the risks for cancer and above all it emphasizes the importance of being healthy and the value of traditional food and links to Alaskan culture."

Since launching in April, Cueva has seen the course shared with Tribes, community health workers, health educators and doctors in more than 12 states. In fact, there was a great deal of interest about the course before it was even

completed. "I was contacted by Mayo Clinic -- they have an Alaska Native men's health website and were very interested in having this course added to it," said Cueva. "Since the course was still in the development process, Mayo brought in reviews and critiques and gave it to their cancer advisory council to provide additional feedback. The council consists of community members and cancer survivors."

Around ANTHC Job Fair, career opportunities at ANTHC

Increasing and strengthening our Alaska Native workforce is critical for ANTHC to be the employer of choice for talented professionals and the service provider of choice for our people around Alaska.

More than 100 job seekers attended ANTHC's Job Fair on April 24 at ANMC. ANTHC also sends out a weekly job openings email to individuals and organizations around Alaska. The list is also shared on the ANTHC Facebook page and Twitter feed. If you would like to be added to receive the ANTHC weekly job list, visit bit.ly/11XQ3LZ.

ANTHC constantly works to increase and strengthen our Alaska Native and American Indian workforce. To learn more about Alaska Native hire at ANTHC, please contact Alyssa Lamoureux, ANTHC Workforce Outreach Coordinator, at (907) 729-3051 or ajlamoureux@anthc.org. Learn more about current ANTHC career opportunities by visiting anthc.org/careers.

X-ray training course improves access to care

ANTHC recently offered its annual Health

Care Provider Diagnostic X-ray Imaging course on the Alaska Native Health Campus to about 30 participants from around the state. Individuals who are working in Alaska Native health care facilities and are responsible for taking X-rays were eligible for the course. The course teaches attendees how to administer a quality, safe, and accurate X-ray. There are 32 sub-regional clinics around the state with X-ray equipment and it is crucial for medical staff administering X-rays to have proper training. Ron Deis, ANMC Imaging Services Manager, was the principal instructor for the course.

"There is a huge need for training for rural providers," said Deis, "especially education on how to minimize the amount of radiation to themselves and the patient and how to produce a quality radiograph that can be easily read by a radiologist."

Standard nurse practitioner and physician assistant training does not include X-ray instruction. Better X-rays can increase access to care and keep patients as close to home as possible.

"This training is critical for rural Alaska providers and helps them provide better health care," said Deis. "Having clinical staff properly trained in X-ray imaging drastically improves access to care for our rural customer-owners."

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Thank you!

ANTHC's Smallenberg reflects on national award, statewide immunization and collaboration

BY JOSH NIVA

During her nursing career, Tania Smallenberg has witnessed firsthand the impact of immunization in rural communities.

"Immunizations have had such a positive effect on health, and that intrigues me," said Smallenberg. "When you look at graphs tracking the rates of a disease, there is often a dramatic drop in the number of cases soon after vaccine is introduced. Many disease prevention programs depend upon changing human behavior, where impact occurs over time. Immunization has such an incredible capacity to create healthy communities."

Smallenberg, the Immunization Nurse Coordinator for ANTHC's Immunization Program, was recently named Alaska's 2013 CDC Childhood Immunization Champion. Staff at the State of Alaska Immunization Program selected Smallenberg for the honor. She is recognized for her work building and refining the structure of ANTHC's Immunization Coordinators Program and for her collaboration with Alaska Public Health Nursing, rural and urban immunization providers, and health care policy makers. The award also noted that Smallenberg's "appreciation of and attention to Alaska's diverse cultural identities has improved access to vaccination across the entire state."



PHOTO BY JOSH NIVA / ANTHC

ANTHC Immunization Nurse Coordinator Tania Smallenberg, left, and Director of ANTHC's Immunization Program Ros Singleton work as part of a statewide network that provide and promote immunization around Alaska. Smallenberg was recently named the Alaska's 2013 CDC Childhood Immunization Champion.

"It feels really nice to be recognized by those you work closely with," said Smallenberg, who worked as a nurse in rural communities in Northwestern Canada before joining ANTHC. "Receiving this award has given me an opportunity to reflect back on the wonderful people I work with and to appreciate how much we've accomplished together."

Alaska's recent health history is full of immunization success stories, and immunization rates among Alaska Native children remain high in most regions. Smallenberg points to constant

collaboration and communication as critical to Alaska's immunization triumphs.

Smallenberg has worked alongside Dr. Rosalyn Singleton, the Director of ANTHC's Immunization Program, for more than six years. "Ros is a strong vaccine advocate and has been an incredible mentor," said Smallenberg. The duo works with a wide network of colleagues within ANTHC and ANMC, as well as with state and federal agencies and nurses, CHA/P and staff from Alaska's Tribal Health Organizations.

Vaccinating children in rural

Online

Learn more about the immunization work of ANTHC and our Tribal partners at anthc.org/chs/crs/immunization

areas is a challenge. Tribal Health Immunization Coordinators throughout the state play a vital role in ensuring Alaska's children get immunized and they are fundamental to the success of ANTHC's Immunization Program. Advocacy, promotion and partnerships have kept immunization rates in Alaska Native children high, but old and new challenges remain.

"One challenge regarding our immunization rates are parents who hesitate to vaccinate," explained Smallenberg. "As with other disease prevention programs working to change human behavior, our challenge is to help hesitant parents fully appreciate the value of vaccination to their child's health."

"Our work really comes down to ensuring that we have high childhood immunization coverage rates in the Alaska Native population," she added. "I want to see us achieve no rates, or maintain very low rates, of all vaccine preventable diseases. Our goal is to have over 90 percent of children vaccinated in our communities – anything less than that goal is leaving too many children at risk for preventable diseases."

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Patti
Physician, Emergency Department
Penobscot Indian, from Maine

Raven's Ball celebrates Alaska Tribal health, raises funds for unmet needs

The 2013 Raven's Ball, the signature fundraising event of ANTHC's Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation (HANF), took place in March, honoring several supporters of Tribal health services and raised funds for unmet needs. The black-tie affair brought in a new record of \$394,500 in sponsorships and cash contributions, increasing the previous level set at last year's Raven's Ball by \$70,000. Tickets to the Raven's Ball sold out early and a full house of 450 guests attended.

"It is exciting to see the Raven's Ball grow each year and to know that we all are playing a larger, more powerful role in improving the health of Alaska Native people around our state," said Carrie Brown, HANF Director. "As always, the Raven's Ball continues to be a special evening of culture, community and giving. I want to personally thank all of our passionate donors, sponsors and volunteers for making the event such an amazing success."

Brown gave special thanks to Neeser Construction and Anchorage Valley Radiation Therapy Centers of Alaska as top sponsors all six years of the Raven's Ball.

One unique part of every Raven's Ball is the paddle raise, an auction held during the event that directs funds to a special cause. This year, \$37,000 was raised to support mothers and children at the Alaska Native Medical Center. The funds will be used to purchase a diagnostic ultrasound machine to help high-risk moms and to establish the first Alaska Native and American Indian Child Life Program in the country.



PHOTOS BY HEALTHY ALASKA NATIVES FOUNDATION

The Raven's Ball is an occasion to honor Alaska Tribal Health System leaders with Luminary Awards. This year's dedicated and outstanding award winners were Dr. David Mather (President's Award); Paul Hansen (Legacy and Leadership Award); John Salmon (Distinguished Provider Award); and Beverly Hoffman (Community Spirit Award).

Each spring, the Raven's Ball raises awareness and funding to further the vision of ANTHC: that Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world. Through targeted initiatives and in the spirit of working together, HANF helps provide the resources and tools necessary to achieve individual and community health objectives.



Online

Learn more about the Raven's Ball and other HANF work by visiting inspiringgoodhealth.org
Phone: (907) 729-5652
Email: info@inspiringgoodhealth.org

Only the best for Alaska's youngest

Alaska has nation's lowest infant and neonatal mortality rates

The Tribal Health System and larger state of Alaska has come a long way in health care for our babies. The results of tireless work to improve infant and neonatal mortality through program development and facilities were evident in a recent article from the journal *Pediatrics*. In a recent issue, the journal cited the annual compilation of vital statistics about babies. Alaska is now ranked the best in the United States in both neonatal mortality (1.92 deaths in babies less than 28 days old per 1,000 births) and infant mortality (3.75 deaths in babies less than 1 year old per 1,000 births). This data is from 2010, which is the most recent year for which the authors had complete data from all states. This data is also available at the Kids Count website (datacenter.kidscount.org).

"This data is for all babies born in Alaska and is quite an achievement given the logistical issues to providing care in our state," said Dr. Matt Hirschfeld, Director of the Alaska Native Medical Center's (ANMC) Maternal and Child Health Services.

We appreciate the outstanding support of our Tribal leaders, customer-owners, and staff in becoming a leader across the United States in care for our children.

ANMC continues expanding Maternal Child Health services and space

ANMC strives to provide customer-owners with the very best care and experience. As part of this commitment, the multi-phase, large-scale construction project continues in ANMC's Maternal Child Health (MCH) Services facilities, which include the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Inpatient Pediatrics and the Mother/Baby Unit.

ANMC recently expanded its construction efforts to MCH's OB Triage, postpartum and support areas. The work includes updating the interiors of the existing postpartum rooms and the nutrition room, in addition to remodeling the nurses' station, staff and patient lounges, staff locker room, bathrooms, and an equipment storage room. Currently, there are six OB Triage bays, each separated by a curtain. After construction, there will be six stand-alone OB Triage rooms, which will increase privacy and comfort for our expectant mothers and their families.

Also beginning soon is a renovation of the Inpatient Pediatric wing. Patient rooms updates will allow for enhanced care and a more kid-friendly environment that will contribute to the improved healing of young customer-owners and their families.



ANMC RN Amanda Adney visits with a new arrival.



Larry and Lareina Oskolkoff enjoy time with their newborn, Matthew, at ANMC.