

THE MUKLUK TELEGRAPH



The Voice of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

NOTES

Eat Salmon, Live Well

By Don Kashevaroff,
Chairman and President,
Alaska Native
Tribal Health Consortium

It's time to get out and enjoy the best of what Alaska has to offer this summer. Whether your favorite traditional food is muktuk, herring roe, seal meat, venison, moose, berries, or caribou, this is the time that we gather and store the healthiest food that we will eat all year round. For me, I like to eat salmon.



Don Kashevaroff

Our people for thousand of years have been perfecting the use of "subsistence" foods. The more

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Nation's top Indian Health Service official says agency is underfunded

By George Figdor, Public Information Officer, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium; Chris Mandregan, Director, Alaska Area Native Health Service; and Joaqlin Estus, Director, Public Communications, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium



Indian Health Service Director Dr. Michael Trujillo speaking at a groundbreaking ceremony for the soon-to-be constructed sub-regional health center in Unalakleet.

Norton Sound Health Corporation file photo



Trujillo enjoyed Alaska Native youth dance performances in Seldovia (pictured above) and in Unalakleet.

Photograph by Don Kashevaroff

Dr. Michael H. Trujillo, MPH, MS, Director, Indian Health Service, visited a number of tribally managed health programs across Alaska from May 28 to June 5, 2001. The trip included stops in the southeast Alaska communities of Ketchikan, Saxman, Metlakatla, Klawock, Hydaburg, Kasaan and Sitka. In Southcentral Alaska, Trujillo visited the Anchorage offices of several

agencies and enjoyed a fishing trip to the village of Seldovia. He went on to Nome and Unalakleet in Northwestern Alaska.

In Sitka, Trujillo told a gathering of tribal health employees that Indian health care has not been a high priority for Congress and that IHS will again be significantly under funded in next year's budget. The IHS director acknowledged that tribal health programs are funded at only a frac-

tion of the level needed to provide comprehensive care. Trujillo explained that to help overcome the budget cap, IHS has been developing collaborative relationships with other federal agencies, trying to earmark more of their funds for programs that target Native Americans.

In Anchorage, Trujillo commended IHS Area office staff for their out-

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Alaska fish are safe, mercury warning untrue

Based on State of Alaska
Epidemiology Bulletin Number 6,
issued June 15, 2001

A federal warning about mercury levels was wrong when it comes to Alaska fish, say several agencies that have succeeded in getting the warning reworded.

Alaska fish are so safe, in fact, that the Alaska Division of Public Health (DPA) strongly recommends that all Alaskans, including pregnant women, women who are breast feeding, women of childbearing age, and young children continue unrestricted consumption of fish from Alaskan waters.

The confusion began when, in January, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued national fish advisories

warning that high mercury levels in some fish may make them dangerous to eat.

DPH had reviewed data on the levels of mercury in Alaska fish and humans. Fortunately, DPH said in its bulletin, mercury levels are very low in the most frequently consumed fish from Alaska, such as salmon, cod, halibut, pollock, sole, and herring. Mercury levels in salmon are among the lowest in the United States.

DPH urged FDA to revise its warning to show that the levels of mercury in Alaska fish are far below the average levels upon which the FDA issued its advisory. That warning has since been revised, says DPH, to make it clear it doesn't apply here.

Dr. Joe Klejka, Medical Director for the Yukon-Kuskokwim Regional Health Corporation (YKHC), wrote an article on the topic for the *Yukon*

Messenger (YKHC newsletter).

"A considerable amount of research has already been done, for sea mammals, many species of fish, whales, etc." said Klejka. "It shows that ... what may hold true in certain other parts of the county, where there is a lot of industrial pollution, is not applicable to Alaska."

The DPH bulletin also states that extensive scientific research has documented the numerous health, social and cultural, and economic benefits of eating fish.

Eating fish provides inexpensive and readily available nutrients, vitamins, essential fatty acids, antioxidants, calories and protein that contribute to significant health benefits. Proven health benefits include protection from cardiovascular disease and diabetes, and improved maternal nutrition and neonatal and infant

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Vox

Voice of the people

Question: Where is your favorite place to visit in Alaska?



Helen H. Smith
Hooper Bay

I like Anchorage the best. I have three daughters and many grandchildren and great-grandchildren here.



Annie Kompkoff Tyonek

I love to go to Seward, just to get away and relax.



Paul and Agnes Tony Alakanuk

We love to come to Anchorage and see our six daughters, one son and 15 grandchildren. We try to make it three or four times a year. We also do clam digging at Clam Gulch and Ninilchik.

I love to go down to the Kenai Lake and go fishing and camping.



James Tony Alakanuk



The Race

By Alonzo H. Moser

Beginning in 1923, Alonzo H. Moser worked as a long-shoreman and fisherman in Seward and Kodiak, and traveled throughout the Aleutian Chain with the Army Transport during the latter years of World War II. He wrote many stories and compiled them as a gift for his niece, Lue Rae Erickson of the ANTHC Business Office in Anchorage. The Race is one of these stories. Now deceased, Moser retired in Clam Gulch, on the Kenai Peninsula, in 1964.

One year in the 1930s, a steamer named the *Starr* came to Alaska from Seattle with a new Norwegian captain. A jovial, exuberant man, he was well liked as a captain. The *Starr* carried cargo from Seward to villages on the Alaska Peninsula and Aleutians. Measuring 125 feet in length, and made of iron, it was listed at 500 tons.

That, said the Captain, was the silliest and most preposterous thing he had ever heard of in his life.

Two tiny skin boats racing a steamer for a distance of 45 miles!

One morning, in the [now abandoned] village of Sanak, four young Aleut men, ranging from 19 to 24, were on the dock where the *Starr* always tied up and challenged the Captain to a race from Sanak to Unga. [Unga is now a subsistence use site with no permanent year-round inhabitants.]

That, said the Captain, was the silliest and most preposterous thing he had ever heard of in his life. Two tiny skin boats racing a steamer for a distance of 45 miles! Whereupon the Aleuts offered to bet \$100 that they could win the race.

Now it became interesting. The



"Natives Sporting at Unalaska" is the caption on this photo taken by a military signal officer. The gear used by these sea otter hunters is traditional. The paliaks in *The Race* were two-hole Aleut baidarkas similar to those pictured. (National Archives)

Captain first gave the young men some fatherly advice about the dangers of the sea, then a sermon about squandering money and especially on some silly bet they had no chance of winning. But that only made the boys want to increase the size of the bet and the Captain, not being averse to making an easy \$100, agreed.

The crew and passengers also bet \$100. Two of the boys put up \$100 and the two others put up another bet of the same size and the purser of the *Starr* held the money with the payoff to be in Unga.

The young men put on kamlaikas, a sort of parka-like waterproof suit of seal stomach and intestine with a flared bottom with a drawstring which could be fitted over the hatch of the paliak (kayak) and drawn tight so as to keep water out and make the paliak waterproof.

The race was to start when the *Starr* took her mooring lines aboard. When the dock superintendent gave the signal, a 12-year-old lad fired a musket which almost kicked him flat and scared about 1,000 sea gulls half to death, and the race was on.

Now the bettors aboard the *Starr* had expected to see the Aleuts paddling for dear life, but they did nothing of the sort. The paliak is made from seal or sea lion skins stretched and sewn over a light wood frame and coated with a sort of lacquer made of dissolved sea shells, seal oil and gums. It floats like a feather and responds instantly to the touch of a paddle.

The sea had to set to the eastward on that tide and would continue to run this way for the next six hours so the Aleuts took their time, counting the swells as they rose and fell under them, waiting for the big one they

call the "ninth wave." This big swell is a fast traveler and goes crashing through the smaller waves ahead of it and travels for miles before it is spent.

As this large swell rose under their paliaks, the Aleuts caught the top of it and stayed on it, sometimes paddling forward to catch up, sometimes paddling backwards, if they were going too fast,

until they had gained the same momentum as the wave. Once this rhythm had been established, it took only an occasional touch of the paddle to maintain it and at this the Aleuts waved a merry bye-bye to the *Starr*. By the time the trip was only half over the paliaks had outdistanced the *Starr* so far that they were no longer in sight.

When the *Starr* tied up at Unga, the Aleuts were standing on the dock waiting to get paid and that was the first thing the purser did. Then the Captain went up to the Aleuts and shook hands with each one of the four and complimented them on their fine seamanship.

By the time the trip was only half over the paliaks had out-distanced the Starr so far that they were no longer in sight.

Those young men waited in Unga until the tide peaked and then caught the ninth swell, which had now reversed itself and was running west, and got home in time for supper.

There was no such word as hitchhiking in those days when the race took place, but the Aleut has been a master of that art in the sea-wise sense for centuries. A wooden boat, no matter how nimble, is too heavy and too cumbersome to maintain the necessary rhythm to sustain itself properly.

From "The Race" by Alonzo H. Moser, in *The Aleutians*, Vol. 7, No. 3 of *Alaska Geographic*. Reprinted by permission.



Editorial Staff

Joaquin Estus
Public Communications Director

Selma Oskolkoff-Simon
Administrative Assistant

Marianne Gilmore
Executive Administrative Assistant

THE MUKLUK TELEGRAPH



The Voice of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

The *Mukluk Telegraph* is the official newsletter of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. It is published bi-monthly and distributed to patients, employees and associates of ANTHC statewide.

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4141 Ambassador Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508,

Attention: *Mukluk Telegraph*

For more information, or to send us news or announcements, please contact us at:
Fax: 907-729-1901 Phone: 907-729-1900

Letters to the Editor

You are welcome to submit articles for publication, or to comment on articles published in the *Mukluk Telegraph*.

If you have questions about sending in articles or feedback, please don't hesitate to call Selma Oskolkoff-Simon at 907-729-1900 or send an e-mail to:

soskolkoff-simon@anmc.org



Congratulations to three environmental health officers

By Jeff Smith, Program Manager, Department of Environmental Health and Engineering, Environmental Health Program

Three Alaska environmental health workers are being recognized for their work on behalf of Alaska Natives and American Indians. A hearty congratulations and thank you to:



Andrea Horn, Environmental Health Officer, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC)

Andrea Horn, Environmental Health Officer with the Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (BBAHC), was selected to receive the John C. Eason Award.

To recognize the professional excellence of the officers within our category, the environmental health officer professional advisory committee annually recognizes those officers who best characterize the spirit of the environmental health officer cat-

egory. The John C. Eason Award is presented to the junior officer (Grade O-3 and below) who demonstrates outstanding career potential. The award is named after John C. Eason, Jr., who in October 1943, was commissioned as an Assistant Sanitarian, becoming the first African American to be commissioned as an Officer in the USPHS.

Horn was selected based on her outstanding performance for BBAHC. Horn will be recognized at the American Academy of Sanitarians Reception to be held during the National Environmental Health Association's Annual Education Conference in Atlanta on July 2.



Celeste Davis, Sr. Environmental Health Officer, Yukon-Kuskowim Health Corporation (YKHC)

Celeste Davis, Sr. Environmental Health Officer with the Yukon-Kuskowim Health Corporation (YKHC), was selected to be the recipient of the Annie

Dodge Wauneka Award. This award is presented by the American Indian/Alaska Native commission officer advisory committee. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated significant contributions in enhancing the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives at the local level. Dr. Annie Dodge Wauneka is from the Navajo Nation and has been a leader in community health for many years. Davis was selected for this award based on her sustained outstanding performance for YKHC over the past several years. The award and plaque were presented to Davis at a ceremony in Bethel in late June.



Shawn Sorenson, Environmental Health Director, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium

Shawn Sorenson, Environmental Health Director for the SouthEast Alaska Health Consortium, was selected as the Indian Health Service (IHS) Environmental Health Officer for year 2000. This award is pre-

sented annually and recognizes one outstanding Environmental Health Officer in a Tribal or IHS position. Mr. Sorenson was selected for the award based on his special accomplishments, innovativeness and professionalism. The award, plaque and a congratulatory letter from CAPT Tom Crow, Chief Professional Officer, were presented to Sorenson at a meeting of Tribal Environmental Health professionals in Sitka in early May.

Environmental health officers part of a world-wide team

There are approximately 350 environmental health officers in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps today. They provide critical environmental health services to American Indian and Alaska Native people from the North Slope of Alaska to the Florida Everglades.

They protect the health and safety of all Americans against biological, chemical, radiological, and physical hazards in the workplace and in the community. They strive to reduce the extreme economic and societal burden of unintentional injuries. And, they work to ensure the safety of the nation's food supply.

PHS environmental health officers also may assist foreign governments, and have recently been involved in activities as diverse as investigating blood lead poisoning in Egypt and consulting with the governments of Australia and New Zealand to reduce unintentional injuries among the aboriginal populations of those countries. There are 26 environmental health officers working for seven tribal health organizations in Alaska.

The job category of *sanitarian* was established in the Reserve Corps of the United States Public Health Service (PHS) in 1943. In October 1999 it was renamed the environmental health officer category. The new name recognizes the increasing breadth of environmental health disciplines that comprise the category and the expanding role that it will play in the provision of environmental health services to the nation in the next century.

(by Jeff Smith, with Tom Crow, Chief Professional Officer for the Environmental Health Category).



Aurora Borealis named Branch of the Year



(Left to right) Mike Lord, Executive Director, Commissioned Officers Association (COA); CDR Cindy Hamlin, Research Nurse at CDC; CDR Deb Doornboss, Surgery Case Manager; U.S. Surgeon General Satcher.

Photograph by CAPT Ed Spirer

By Cindy Hamlin, RN, Commander, USPHS, Arctic Investigations Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Board of Directors of the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service has selected the Aurora Borealis Branch, Anchorage, Alaska, as the COA Branch of the Year. The selection is especially significant because our Branch was selected from among four very strong nominations, and is a real tribute to the outstanding officers serving in Alaska. The award was presented during COA's 2001 Public Health Professional Conference on May 29, 2001, in Washington, D.C. Congratulations and thank you to the members of the Aurora Borealis Branch.



Alaska fish... safe

brain development. The subsistence lifestyle and diet are of great importance to the self-determination, cultural, spiritual, social, and overall health and well being of Alaska Natives.

The benefits of fish consumption are *known*, not theoretical. And they far outweigh the *theoretical* and controversial *potential* adverse health effects from the low levels of mercury in Alaska fish. Substitution of other less healthy, less nutritious food for Alaska fish would result in far greater harm to health.

An extensive collaborative program of research and monitoring of mercury in Alaska fish and in Alaskans who consume fish is needed and is being developed to increase the amount of data on mer-

The benefits of fish consumption are known, not theoretical.

cury levels and follow trends in the future.

The following agencies and organizations have endorsed DPH's position on consumption of Alaska fish:

- Alaska Dept. of Environmental Conservation
- Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services
- Alaska Native Health Board
- Alaska Native Science Commission

- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Assoc., Inc.
- Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, Univ. of Alaska, Anchorage
- North Slope Borough
- University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation

A copy of Division of Public Health, Department of Health and Social Services, State of Alaska Epidemiology Bulletin Number 6, June 15, 2001 can be found on the Internet at: www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/bulletins/

Or call (907) 269-8000.



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Take charge of your diabetes

If you have diabetes, you know it touches almost every part of your life. It's a serious, lifelong condition. But a report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can help you take charge of your health for today and the coming years.

Take Charge of your Diabetes is available on the Internet or by mail. The internet address is: cdc.gov/diabetes/pubs/tcyd/index.htm.

Or, call CDC's toll-free phone number: 1-877-CDC-DIAB.



STATEWIDE

News and notes

Two long-time Norton Sound health aides retire

After nearly 45 and 35 years on the job respectively, health aides Irene Aukongak of Golovin and Willa Ashenfelter of White Mountain are hanging up their stethoscopes and looking forward to relaxing summers at camp.

Norton Sound Health Corporation (NSHC) honored the retiring best friends in Nome March 2.

"I'm really said to see them retire," Dr. Karen O'Neill told the crowd of almost 150. She thanked the women for helping mold her as a physician.

Several people came to the microphone to praise them as role models and as knowledgeable and respectful caregivers that many patients preferred to a physician.

Six senior health aides from around the region attended the event. A moving moment came when they called out their old radio call numbers, recalling the days before telephones. Aides relied on often-faulty VHF radios to get diagnostic and treatment advice from doctors in Nome.

Both Aukongak and Ashenfelter have been recognized with the Alaska Federation of Natives' Della Keats Healing Hands Award. They also received Legislative citations honoring them, plaques, pins, jackets and flowers at the March gathering.

From *Kaniqsirugut News*, a newsletter of Norton Sound Health Corporation.



Sáxt' Hít measures bone loss

Sáxt' Hít (Mt. Edgecumbe hospital) in Sitka has acquired the best technology for diagnosing bone loss and risk for osteoporosis (fragile, easily broken bones) said hospital medical director Dr. Susan Carlson.

Carlson explained that with an aging Native population, osteoporosis is becoming more of a concern. With a new bone densiometer, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) is screening at-risk patients to prevent and treat the disease in its early stages.

SEARHC radiologist Dr. Emory Gonzales points out that post-menopausal women are in the highest risk category for osteoporosis but there are other risk factors, such as smoking, family history of the disease, low calcium intake, small bone structure, use of certain medications, and inactivity. Contrary to popular belief, men can also be at risk.

The key to prevention is simple, says Gonzales: plenty of weight bearing exercise and a proper diet that includes adequate levels of calcium.

From a SEARHC news release.



Mt. Edgecumbe hospital now Sáxt' Hít

SouthEast Consortium begins official use of Mt. Edgecumbe hospital's Tlingit name

The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) has begun using the Tlingit name for Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital as an official part of the facility's name. The hospital has had a Tlingit name since 1999, when Sitka clan leaders dedicated the building with the name Sáxt' Hít. The name means "house of medicine."

The name Sáxt' Hít will be used side by side with the existing Mt. Edgecumbe name, said SEARHC President Ken Brewer. SEARHC is also beginning to include the Tlingit names for several other buildings on its hospital campus that have been dedicated by the clan leaders.

SEARHC management acted on the building names in response to a request by the SEARHC Elders Council. The council, which advises the board and management on cultural tradition, has been facilitating the giving of names to SEARHC buildings.

The Tlingit and Haida names will enhance the patient healing process, said Elders Council Chair Ethel Lund. "It is our desire to assist our patients in feeling a sense of famil-

arity, trust, and comfort when they enter our facilities," she noted. "We are very grateful to the clan leaders for gifting us with these names. Their gift to us is deeply appreciated and recognized in a most respectful manner."

In addition to the hospital, the other SEARHC Sitka facilities that have been presented with Tlingit names by clan leaders are:

- Community Health Services: At Kanik Hít (House from Where Information is Given)
- Outpatient Mental Health (Clinic II): Haa Toowóo Náakw Hít (House for Healing your Innermost Being)
- Raven's Way (youth substance abuse treatment): Yéil Jeeyáx (The Way of the Raven)
- Women's Treatment Center: Déilee Hít (Safe Harbor House)
- Behavioral Health Sweat Lodge: Yeesdooseigu Xáay (New Breath Sweat Lodge)

At the hospital dedication ceremony two years ago, clan leaders explained that Sáxt' is the Tlingit word for the plant known in English as devil's club—a powerful medicinal plant that is so important in Tlingit culture that the name actually refers to all medicine. The SEARHC logo features an image of the devil's club plant.

Clan leaders who bestowed the names at the hospital dedication ceremony were: Alfred Perkins (Kiks.ádi clan), Herman Kitka, Sr. (Kaagwaantaan clan), Herman Davis,

Sr. (L'uknax.ádi clan), and John Nielson, Sr. (Chookaneidi clan). Following Tlingit tradition, the leaders dedicated each named building by making a red hand mark on its four inside corners. The women's treatment center and the sweat lodge were dedicated in a separate ceremony that took place last month and that included new Kiks.ádi clan leader Ray Wilson, who replaced the deceased Alfred Perkins.

SEARHC staff have been receiving instruction on the proper pronunciation and spelling of the Tlingit names, and reception staff are already answering the phones using both the Tlingit and English facility names. New signage being planned for the hospital will also include both names.

SEARHC, the tribal health care provider for Southeast Alaska, took over management of Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital from the Indian Health Service in 1986. The old part of the facility was originally a naval dispensary during World War II. It was expanded into a public health hospital that opened in 1950 during the tuberculosis epidemic in Alaska. At that time it was given the name Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital after the volcanic peak on nearby Kruzof Island. (The peak was originally named in 1778 by Captain James Cook.)

From a SEARHC news release.



Four earn housekeeping certification

ANMC Staff Report

Four staff members of the Alaska Native Medical Center's Housekeeping Department have completed the International Executive Housekeepers Association Certification. It takes about a year to complete the course for this certification, which is a requirement for most housekeeping management positions throughout the country. We congratulate these staff members willing to invest in continuing education for themselves and ANMC.

Vern Luckhurst is from Dillingham and has worked at ANMC since 1990. Lockhurst is assigned to the Quyana House. Lockhurst is also the Vice President

of the Employee Association.

Charles Newman is from Yakutat and has worked at ANMC since 1991. Newman has been a work leader since 1993.

Shirley Huntington is from Alaska and has worked at ANMC

since 1994. Huntington is assigned to Labor and Delivery.

James Hughes is from Anchorage and has worked at ANMC since 1994. Hughes is assigned to the Operating Rooms.



Housekeeping staff members receive congratulations and certificates upon completion of internationally recognized course. (Left to right) Executive Housekeeper Connie Carella, Vern Luckhurst, Shirley Huntington, Charles Newman, James Hughes, David Keith, ANMC Chief Operating Officer.

Photo by Charmaine V. Ramos

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Purpose

To provide the highest quality health care services for all Alaska Natives





Aces at ACES keep healthcare equipment, systems up and running

ANMC Staff Report

From the village clinic to the regional tribal health facility to Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), modern healthcare delivery depends on healthcare technology. Alaska Clinical Engineering Services (ACES) works to keep that technology safe and functional.

In keeping with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) vision to provide the highest quality healthcare services for all Alaska Natives, ACES works to provide easy access, rapid response and quality maintenance and technology management services around the clock for Alaska Native health facilities and their healthcare providers.

"Folks can call us any time for prompt assistance. Our toll-free

number in Alaska is : 877-CLIN-ENG (ANMC ext. 2570)," said Chief Clinical Engineer Denver Lodge, manager of ACES. "Our experienced staff are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, ready to help you solve healthcare technology problems. Device or system-wide technical issues can cause frustrating distractions or delays. We can solve those kind of problems so health providers can stay focused on patients."

that need to go to other shops, ACES can manage "first-call" or "shared-service" contracts with other biomedical device vendors to achieve the most cost-effective fix. ACES has a proven track record of ten years in Alaska healthcare technology management and field service. So more than 20 Native health corporations have chosen ACES as their provider of choice. As such, ACES handles routine and emergency services in support of \$40 million in biomedical capital and specialty networked systems, operated in 70 Alaska health facilities, including ANMC.

Through ANTHC, ACES is authorized to "sell" service agreements — memorandums of agreement — to Native and federal health facilities. ACES can provide facility-wide comprehensive service for all patient care devices, or maintain only selected biomedical devices or systems. Annual rates are based on a percentage of the dollar value of the estimated technology inventory to be supported (7.5 percent for 24-7 coverage, and 7 percent for 8-5 coverage). Expenses unique to each Alaska clinic or hospital location for travel, parts and shipping are billed separately.

ACES support services include

ACES provides

- **Biomedical device maintenance**
- **Diagnostic imaging support and radiological physics**
- **Biomedical network systems administration**
- **Equipment user and technical training courses**
- **Healthcare technology management**
- **Project management and consulting**

As one program of ANMC's Healthcare Knowledge and Technology Department, ACES offers multi-brand technical support services for almost all varieties of biomedical, healthcare and telehealth technologies. These include calibration, troubleshooting and maintenance of specialty devices and systems such as: anesthesia, audiology, dental, laboratory, X-ray, mammography, PACS or miniPACS networks, teleradiology and telemedicine.

For the few specialty technologies



Denver Lodge observes Biomedical Equipment Technicians Eric Bronder, John Kolehmainen, and Cliff Heckathorn, testing AFHCAN Telehealth workstations prior to deployment.

technical training, in-service education, and consulting whenever requested or required.

"We train technology users as well as equipment maintainers, either on-site, or at our technical training facility in Anchorage," Lodge said. "We also provide clinical engineering consulting services for new construction, JCAHO accreditation issues, or for health physics such as mammography accreditation. Our professional staff include clinical engineers, biomedical equipment technicians, systems administrators, telehealth network engineers and a radiological physicist."

The Alaska Federal Healthcare Partnership Teleradiology Project and the Alaska Federal Access Network Telemedicine Project chose ACES to deploy and support their systems throughout Alaska.

"Since this January, ACES staff have collaborated with our other tribal and federal healthcare partners to deploy telemedicine technology into 60 locations," Lodge said. "We expect to have reached our goal of deploying at least one telehealth workstation into 235 healthcare facilities in Alaska by April of 2002."

"We want to provide clinicians with quality technical support, and to continue to satisfy our customers."



STATEWIDE

News and notes

Dr. Anne Lanier heads up new office of health research



Dr. Anne Lanier

Dr. Anne Lanier joined the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium April 30 as the director of the new Office of Alaska Native Health Research. In addition to her medical degree, Lanier has a masters in public health and is board certified in Preventive Medicine. She has had more than thirty years experience in Alaska Native health. She has worked as a clinician, epidemiologist, and researcher. Her first assignment was as a general medical officer on the Eye Service and in the Outpatient Department at the old Alaska Native Medical Center. Other assignments have included Director, Arctic Investigations Program, Area Epidemiologist, and Director, Alaska Native Epidemiology Center.

In her new position, Lanier plans to:

- ◆ coordinate and facilitate research among Alaska Natives;
- ◆ increase tribal input in direction and conduct of research;
- ◆ increase the number of Alaska Native researchers; and
- ◆ enhance collaboration with universities with experience in conduct of research among American Indians/Alaska Natives.

Lanier will also be principal investigator for several research projects for which notification of funding is anticipated soon. Lanier can be reached at the Community Health Services offices at 4201 Tudor Centre Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508 or by phoning (907) 729-3663.



IHS Director visits Alaska

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standing work in furtherance of tribal self-governance in Alaska. Chris Mandregan, MPH, Director, Alaska Area Native Health Service, accompanied Trujillo on the site visits.

On June 5 Trujillo and Mandregan traveled to Nome where Norton Sound Health Corporation (NSHC) staff gave them a tour of the NHSC Hospital and the future site of their planned replacement hospital. This was followed by a flight to Unalakleet where they toured the existing clinic and attended a groundbreaking ceremony for the soon-to-be constructed NSHC sub-regional health center.

These site visits illustrated the diverse and challenging nature of health care delivery in Alaska.

Trujillo's visit also served as an opportunity for Alaska Native tribes and tribal organizations to showcase both their successes and continued unmet needs. Trujillo has the often difficult task of balancing the needs of Native Americans across the country, weighing the high costs of health care in Alaska, say, against high population figures in other parts of the country.

During his visit to Alaska, tribal leaders, medical, public health and administrative staff seemed appreciative of the fact that Trujillo listened to their presentations with interest, concern and a desire to learn to better support their programs.



Eat salmon, live well

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The more store-bought items we buy ... the more susceptible we are to major diseases like diabetes and cancer.

western scientists study these foods the more they realize that traditional foods are the most nutritious foods for Alaska Natives. But we have known that these foods are the best to eat all along for they taste the best.

People are also finding that the more store-bought items we buy, and the less subsistence foods we eat, the more susceptible we are to major diseases like diabetes and cancer.

So I encourage you this summer

to get out, get some exercise, hunt, fish, gather plants and berries and have a great tasting year to look forward to. Stock up on your favorite traditional food.

My food of choice is salmon. Even though scientists say that salmon regulates cholesterol, provides essential vitamins, and provides protection against cardiovascular disease and diabetes, I like salmon because it tastes great. Either smoked or dried, baked or boiled, there is nothing much better than salmon. Plus it is a healthy activity catching them. One could say my motto is "eat salmon and live well."



Maintain teeth better than four-wheelers

By Barb O'Donnell,
Registered Dental Hygienist,
Tanana Chiefs Conference Dental
Clinic

Once lost, oral health not easily recovered

The change of seasons often spurs us into paying close attention to some small but important actions...routine maintenance chores on vehicle engines. Whether you choose to do it at the end of the season, or at the beginning, time and energy will be saved if it's done before the vehicles are put into service.

This involves inspecting the spark plugs, topping off or changing the oil and gas, tightening bolts, inspect the belts and check for and replacing worn and broken parts. Once the machine is in good working condition and racking

up the miles, you can rest your mind a little about the possible outcome of the trip.

So it goes with your mouth. A yearly checkup will give you an idea of the condition of the parts (teeth, gums and tissue). A plan can then be made about how to repair and replace parts (fillings, crowns, etc), if necessary. To get the best results, the cleaning always comes first. Just as with an engine, it is best to clean (germs, tartar and stains off your teeth) the parts before starting. Then the actual repair and replacement (fillings, extractions, crowns, and dentures) can get underway.

The final part of the plan is your maintenance interval. How often you need to have your teeth cleaned is determined by your gum condition. This varies from once or twice a year to up to three or four times a year, depending on your needs.

Smart owners know that if you don't abuse your vehicle, it will last longer. Just as you wouldn't put bum gas in the tank, consider how your diet may be affecting your body's performance. Eating foods with a high-sugar content and smoking or chewing tobacco abuses your body parts and makes them wear out faster. Snowmachine parts can easily be ordered from the factory; new teeth, gums, tongue and lungs are not so easily replaced.

Reprinted courtesy of *The Council*, a newsletter of the Tanana Chiefs Conference.



Consortium Vision

**A unified Native Health System,
working with our people,
achieving the
highest health status
in the world.**

Breastfeeding: The gold standard for infant nutrition

Southcentral Foundation Staff
Report

World renowned breastfeeding advocate and Canadian pediatrician, Dr. Jack Newman, visited Alaska in April. The Alaska Breastfeeding Coalition sponsored his trip for the 9th Annual Breastfeeding Symposium, where he gave a two-day presentation on breastfeeding issues. He visited Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) for Pediatrics grand rounds and presented talks to staff on: *Starting Breastfeeding Out Right* and *Jaundice*.

This was an ideal time to review the aspects of supporting our breastfeeding mothers because it coincided with a new Surgeon General's report Department of Health and Human Services Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding. The report recommends increasing the prevalence and duration of breastfeeding through the end of babies' first year.

In supporting mothers to achieve these goals, ANMC informs prenatal clients of the benefits of breastfeeding through breastfeeding information classes. Parents can obtain resources and help from the outpatient clinics, labor and delivery, and the lactation consultants of Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Home Based Services. Parents can also request a home visit from Home Based Services when breastfeeding help is needed.

Sixty-four staff attended Newman's presentation, as well as baby Benjamin, son of Drs. Mona Cuthbert of the Family Medicine Clinic and Michael Schwaller, of inpatient Pediatrics. Newman toured Anchorage Native Primary Care Center and ANMC Labor and Delivery Department with Rose Knox, Nurse Educator of Women's Health Clinic.

Newman said he enjoyed presenting to colleagues, nurses and staff and was overwhelmed with the scenic views of Mount Susitna and other mountain ranges, the sightings of Dall's sheep and moose from his trip to Elmendorf, Alyeska and Portage Glacier. As a gift, Newman received a beautiful authentic hand-made Native Breastfeeding Doll designed by Ursula Irvin. Dr.



Dr. Jack Newman speaks to Alaska Native Medical Center staff about ways to teach and support new mothers about breastfeeding.

Photo by Mike Dinneen

Stephanie Eklund, Clinical Manager of Women's Health Services, presented the doll depicting mother and baby at breast.

For more information, call:
Home Based Services – Lactation Consultants: 729-2477
Women's Health Clinic 729-3100
Inpatient Labor and Delivery Department 729-3201
Family Medicine Clinic 729-3300
Pediatric Clinic 729-1000

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation jointly own and manage the Alaska Native Medical Center under the terms of Public Law 105-83. These parent organizations have established a Joint Operating Board to ensure unified operation of health services provided by the Medical Center.



Tobacco conference exposes nicotine health risks

More than 50 people from across the Yukon-Kuskokwim region came together for the first Tobacco Conference held in Bethel in late April.

The goal was to increase understanding about the risks of tobacco use and the threat it poses to the health of the people of the Y_K region. Youth, elders village members and inspirational speakers attended, including Roderick Demientieff who suffers from emphysema due to smoking; Peter Lupie, an elder who has quit using Iq'mik (a mix of punk ash and tobacco leaves); and Sam Smith, a YKHC wellness counselor.

As many people know, the use of tobacco is linked to cancer, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Nicotine from Iq'mik, a mix of ash and tobacco leaves that is popular in some parts of the state, has an especially high amount of nicotine,

making it even more addictive than store-bought Copenhagen. It was also reported that tobacco use during pregnancy can affect the health of the baby and should be avoided at all costs.

Elder enjoys better health after quitting

On the first day of the conference, Elder Peter Lupie from Tuntutuliak shared his life story, including telling about his addiction to smokeless tobacco.

Lupie recently stopped using smokeless tobacco with the help of his Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) care provider.

"It is important to have better health now instead of using tobacco for the rest of your life," said Lupie. "I feel so much better now that I have quit, and you can quit too."

Breastfeeding in the Information Age

World Breastfeeding

Week is

August 1-7, 2001

The World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) theme, *Breastfeeding in the Information Age*, underscores the importance of transforming and conveying the facts of breastfeeding via all the available forms of communication such as the internet, radio, TV, video, newspapers, cartoons, story telling, puppets, music, drama, role-play, flip charts and billboards.

Each year new research reaffirms the importance of exclusive breastfeeding for six months and continued breastfeeding while providing adequate complementary foods up to two years of life and beyond.

Breast milk provides optimal nourishment for infants and reduces the risks of certain diseases, including diarrhea, and respiratory tract (including pneumonia), ear, and urinary tract infections.

The act of breastfeeding is an essential component of good child care, contributing to healthy growth and psychosocial development.

Breastfeeding also reduces women's risk of breast and ovarian cancer, iron deficiency anemia, and hip fracture.

Impact of new technologies' interference with infant feeding occurs more and more often with the advent of new information and communication technologies and the exploitation by unethical business practices.

Reprinted courtesy of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action. For more information, see their website at:
<http://www.waba.org.br/>



Longtime hospital volunteer receives Alaska's First Lady award

by Audrey Armstrong, Alaska Native Medical Center Auxilliary Coordinator, and Joaqlin Estus, Director, Public Communications, ANTHC

Alaska First Lady Susan Knowles has selected Jeanne Dougherty to receive one of 22 First Lady's Volunteer Awards this year.

"Every year numerous Alaskans donate their time and energy to noble causes," said First Lady Susan Knowles in a prepared statement.

"They carry out their mission without fanfare or expectation of recognition. This is our chance to publicly thank them for all of their hard work."

Nomination forms are independently reviewed and scored by three judges from around the state.

"The judges take their job very seriously and give each nominee their undivided attention," said Kay Linton, who has voluntarily chaired the event since 1980. Winners receive a plaque and a special lapel pin.

Dougherty is one of 22 individuals



Long-time Alaska Native Medical Center volunteer Jeanne Dougherty, at a recent volunteer recognition event, has also been honored with Susan Knowles' "First Lady's Volunteer Award."

being honored by the First Lady this year for their contributions.

Dougherty has volunteered at the Alaska Native Medical Center for nearly 26 years as manager of one of

the best Alaska Native craft shops in Alaska.

Her family moved here in 1956; she joined the Alaska Native Medical Center Auxiliary in 1976. She said she has been involved in volunteerism during all her years in Alaska.

For many years she worked with the Alaska Treatment Center basket sale, and that interest led her to the ANMC craft shop. Over the years, Dougherty has provided a wide variety of services to the patients, staff, and Alaska Native and non-Native communities through her volunteer services.

In addition to her role at the craft shop, Dougherty founded the ANMC Auxiliary scholarship program, now in its 18th year. This program has awarded scholarships to more than 170 Alaska Native students who are attending a four-year accredited school.

Dougherty was also the creator of the Annual Native Peoples' Christmas tree, which is erected at the hospital every Christmas season.

Dougherty also helped start the Annual Native Peoples' bazaar, now

in its 17th year, bringing much-needed cash for local and rural artists and their families during the holiday season.

Her energy and creativity does not stop there. She is also one of the organizers for the Heritage Collection (collection and acquisition of Native art) on permanent display in the hospital for all to enjoy. Since moving into the new ANMC, we have had more requests for tours of our facility and its beautiful art. This art has provided much pride and spiritual connection for our clients, their families and staff.

Jeanne and her husband, Harvey, have three children: Steve, Kelly and Andrea, and five grandchildren. Jeanne said all her family members have volunteered at one time or another.

On behalf of the patients, families, staff, visitors and friends of ANMC, we would like to extend our appreciation and warm congratulations to Jeanne for her award; a result of all her years of sharing her love and support. It is an award well deserved!



Software tracks which shots your child needs

Michael Remillard, DDS
CAPT, U.S. Public Health Service

Have you ever wondered how they know what immunizations your child is due for when you bring your child to the doctor? If your family receives health care at an Indian Health Service facility, chances are the staff use the RPMS Immunization software to keep track of your child's immunizations and to verify which ones are due next.

On May 23, 2001 the Indian Health Service (IHS) released a new version of the RPMS Immunization Package to all IHS health care facilities. The new version 7.1 of

Immunization is the result of a one-year project undertaken by the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) Computer Department. The software incorporates several enhancements requested by IHS sites from around the country, and it includes the latest vaccine regimens according to guidelines published by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

One of the most helpful features of the Immunization software is its forecasting ability. This software allows the computer to examine each individual patient's immunization history and to recommend which immunizations the patient is

due for next, in accordance with CDC/ACIP guidelines. Each year CDC/ACIP guidelines change as new vaccines and vaccine combinations are released. This poses problems for busy physicians who must keep abreast of the latest guidelines. The RPMS Immunization software provides the physician with instant, up-to-date, patient specific recommendations. The new Version 7.1 includes forecasting updates for polio, influenza, measles, and pneumococcal conjugate vaccines, and the discontinuation of oral polio vaccine and rotavirus.

Dr. Rosalyn Singleton, ANMC pediatrician, led the project in design and testing, along with Irma

DeSmet, RN, of the ANTHC Immunization Program. Michael Remillard, DDS, was the programmer on the project. Several IHS sites also helped with extensive testing and feedback. The software is in use at most Indian Health hospitals and clinics, both Tribal and Direct Care, in Alaska and the lower 48. It is also in use by the State of Alaska Public Health Nursing Program. Dr. Singleton is participating in an additional project to link RPMS Immunization to state registries in other parts of the country via an HL7 interface.



Visitors can turn to ANMC staff to locate patients

ANMC Staff Report

When you arrive at Alaska Native Medical Center In Anchorage, please feel free to ask any of the staff for help in getting around. The hospital staff members listed here also would be glad to assist you in locating your

family member or friend:

Check in with the front information desk at the main entrance

Ask a Patient Advocate or Interpreter or

Ask a member of the Admitting Department.

In the past, you may have used

white public information boards in each unit listing patients' names and room numbers. To ensure our patient's privacy and confidentiality, ANMC has removed patient names from those boards. ANMC's policy is to ensure our patient's privacy and confidentiality. This change will

help us accomplish that policy. Thank you for your understanding as we make changes ensuring the privacy of our patients.



Upcoming Health-Related Events

July 9-11 Norton Sound Health Corp. Board Meeting (Mtg.), Nome
July 11-12 Sanitation Facilities Advisory Comm. Mtg, Rm. 312, Inuit (Area/ANTHC) Bldg, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm
July 18 Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) Joint Operating Board (JOB) Mtg., 9 am, Inuit Bldg,

Rm. 311
July 24 Statewide Medicaid Task Force Mtg, Inuit Bldg, Rm. 312, 10 a.m. (Info: Frank Sutton, SEARHC (907-966-8310 Email frank.sutton@searhc.org)
July 25 Health Insurance Portability and Accountabilty Act (HIPAA) Task Force, 1 – 5 pm, Southcentral Conf. Rm.
July 26 Medical Services Networking Committee, 10 am – 4

pm, SCF Conf. Rm.
July 27 Alaska Federal Health Care Access Network Steering Board, 8:30 am, 4501 Diplomacy Drive
Aug 6-7 Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB) Bi-Annual Mega Mtg., Aleutian-Pribilof Island Association (A/PIA) Board Room
Aug 8-9 ANTHC Board Mtg, 9 a.m., Room 311, Inuit Bldg.
Aug 9-10 ANHB Board Mtg (tenta-

tive), A/PIA Board Room
Aug 13 Village Services Mgmt Team (Info 729-4954)
Aug 14 SCF Regular Board of Directors Mtg, SCF Main Conf. Rm., 9 am
Aug 24 AFHCAN Steering Board, 8:30 am, Rm. 311, Inuit Bldg.
Aug 29 ANMC Joint Operating Board Mtg, 9 am, ANMC Conf. Rm. # 1





A big "Thank You" to our employees



Pamyua brings smooth harmonies and powerful Yupik, Inupiaq, and African-American sound to Employee Recognition Celebration. (Left to right) Karina Moeller, Stephen Blanchett, Phillip Blanchett, Ossie Kairaiuak.

Photograph by Beth Fleischer

by Carmen Williams-Bydalek,
Employee Education Assistant

In Anchorage, Alaska Native Health Campus employers held an Employee Recognition Celebration on June 22, 2001. The event was blessed with pristine blue skies and warm sunny weather.

Pamyua, the celebrated contemporary Alaska Native performing group, and a guest drummer delighted audiences at both the noon and evening sessions. The evening shift enthusiastically took part in a traditional invitational dance.

More than a hundred door prizes were awarded, including everything from jackets, vests and coupons for espresso to calculators and *Pamyua* cds.

Displays with photographs and newsclips recognized outstanding employees who have received awards in the past year.

Administrators of the sponsoring organizations made speeches thanking employees for their dedication and many contributions.

Presenters included:

Christopher Mandregan, Director of the Alaska Area Native Health Services (AANHS);

Don Kashevaroff, Chairman and President, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC);

Paul Sherry, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), ANTHC;

Vonni Carole, acting ANTHC CEO (at the evening session);

Dee Hutchison, Hospital Administrator, Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC);

from
**Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Alaska Native Health Board
Alaska Area Native Health Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**



Some of the hundreds of employees who seemed to enjoy the meal of barbecued hamburgers, hot dogs, macaroni and potato salads, watermelon and juice.

Photograph by Beth Fleischer

Jay Butler, Director, Arctic Investigations Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

Donn Bennice, Chief Operations Officer, Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB).

The celebration was a great success thanks to the efforts of the planning committee and the many employees who pitched in to help.

A warm thank you goes to planning committee members:

Leatha Mercurieff, Employee Recognition Coordinator, ANTHC;

Charmaine Ramos, ANMC Public Relations and Marketing Manager;

Fred Olin, Carpenter, ANMC Maintenance;

Connie Carella, ANMC Housekeeping, ANMC;

Trudy Anderson, ANHB Administrative Support;

Connie Greene, Secretary, AANHS;

Terri Brandon, CDC Administrative Office Support; and

Rebecca Woodall, Office Automation Assistant, Department of Environmental Health and Engineering.



Precious gifts don't have to cost money

by Steve Dakai,
Maniilaq Residential Coordinator

Some times we are at a loss as to what to give someone as a gift for a special occasion. Why wait for a special occasion? Here are eight gift ideas that do not cost a cent, that you can give every day!

The Gift of Listening

But you must REALLY listen. No interrupting, no day dreaming, no planning your response. Just listening.

The Gift of Affection

Be generous with appropriate hugs, kisses, pats on the back and handholds. Let these small actions demonstrate the love you have for family and friends.

The Gift of Laughter

Clip cartoons. Share articles and funny stories. Your gift will say "I love to laugh with you."

The Gift of a Written Note

It can be a simple "Thanks for the Help" note or a full sonnet. A brief, handwritten note may be remem-

bered for a lifetime and may even change a life.

The Gift of a Compliment

A simple and sincere, "You look great in red," "You did a super job," or "That was a wonderful meal" can make someone's day.

The Gift of a Favor

Every day, go out of your way to do something kind.

The Gift of Solitude

There are times when we want nothing better than to be left alone.

Be sensitive to those times and give the gift of solitude to others.

The Gift of a Cheerful Disposition

The easiest way to feel good is to extend a kind word to someone. It is not hard to say "Hello" or "Thank you" using a smile and cheerful heart. In the process of the day, you find the cheeriness rubbing off on to others.

From the *Northwest Arctic Nuna, the Maniilaq Association newsletter.*



New York students seek Alaska teen comments on soda pop website

As a class project, a group of high school chemistry students in New York have created a website about the chemical makeup of soda pop and its effects on health. Their teacher, Greg Grund, says the students would love to hear from students here in Alaska. Of course,

they're on summer break right now, but it may be worth sending them an e-mail anyway. To find out more, go to:

<http://www.elmiracityschools.com/southside/chemhealth>



SouthEast Alaska community outreach

SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) staff is planning its upcoming schedule of Southeast Alaska tribal and community visits. The goal is to attend a community gathering in conjunction with a Tribal Council meeting in each of the 18 communities of SEARHC at least every other year.

There, staff can hear first-hand from the people what the pressing health care issues are locally. Currently, meetings are being coordinated with Yakutat and Kake with plans to visit Petersburg and Wrangell soon.

From the *SEARHC website.*

