Our Tradition of Health

ANTHC celebrates 20 years of Tribal self-governance and leadership

In 1997, Alaska Native people became owners of their statewide health care. Tribal self-governance and management of Tribal programs continues to be an important issue, but it reached a key milestone for Tribal health care in the fall of 1997. Congressional passage of Public Law 105-83 recognized the work of Tribal health organizations across Alaska to collaborate on statewide Tribal health services under the newly created Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. This innovative idea would set Alaska Native people on the path to becoming the healthiest people in the world.

The first ANTHC Board of Directors met in December 1997 and throughout the next 20 years, the ANTHC board marked new achievements in Tribal self-governance. This year, ANTHC celebrates its history and the improvements to Alaska Native health care that have been accomplished through Tribal leadership and ownership by our people. ANTHC Board and Tribal leadership make it possible to design programs and services that serve the Alaska Native health needs identified by our people. ANTHC’s Tribal

See Page 6, Our Tradition
ANTHC tackles climate impact challenges to water and sanitation construction

As of 2017, 42 communities and more than 3,000 Native households in rural Alaska still lack sanitation infrastructure and access to safe drinking water. Even though steady progress has been made since 1970 in providing modern piped infrastructure to rural communities, these underserved communities and households are still reliant on the honey bucket. For 31 Alaskan communities, new challenges to providing access to in-home water and sanitation systems are seen from climate change impacts. Many of the remaining underserved communities pose significant challenges to building and supporting sanitation systems in part because of their small size, lack of available fresh water, unique soil conditions and often their status as “environmentally threatened communities” at risk to the effects of climate change.

Environmentally threatened communities

A new United States General Accounting Office report identified 31 Alaskan communities impacted significantly by climate change and 12 of these requiring some form of relocation. These 31 communities are considered to be environmentally threatened.

Once identified as in need of relocation, federal agencies have minimalized their “at risk” investments at these locations. Agencies are cautious about making substantial investments in places that have been identified as planning to relocate. As a result, places like Newtok and Kivalina – both in stages of community relocation – housing, electric power production, water and sewer, boardwalks and roads, solid waste facilities and other basic community infrastructure are slow to be replaced. To compound matters, climate impacts, such as severe storms, water surges, loss of sea ice and melting permafrost, destroys millions of dollars in infrastructure, adds stress to the already stressed, and is affecting how ANTHC plans to respond. Slow-moving disasters are not considered impactful enough for federal response, so these communities are challenged with finding alternative solutions.

ANTHC innovative solutions for communities

Helping communities that are most threatened by a changing Arctic are a priority for ANTHC Environmental Health and Engineering staff. We understand that our solution-based responsive planning and engineering will help community leaders assess their current situation, plan for future generations, maintain existing infrastructure and create a matrix for financing projects. One response to finding solutions starts with ANTHC’s innovative Design Engineering group. Engineering critical infrastructure to be more adaptable is seen in our development of modular wastewater designs, the in-home Portable Alternative Sanitation System (PASS), Flexible Pipe Connection design and proposed Arctic Refrigeration of Foundations using existing thermostaps to prevent melting permafrost from destroying infrastructure. Many of these designs borrow values from our indigenous cultures that have sustained for thousands of years in the Arctic: mobility, adaptability, flexibility and efficiency. However, it is difficult to implement many of these solutions because of the lack of available funding for infrastructure innovations. Agencies that normally fund sanitation facilities are often reluctant to invest in new concepts and designs that are yet to be proven and therefore risky. Also, environmental changes are slow moving. Until the changing environmental conditions become severe enough to result in widespread destruction, the loss of infrastructure is not eligible for Federal disaster relief. Places like Shishmaref, Unalakleet, Kivalina, Shaktewitli, Newtok, Galivin and others will struggle to keep their community viable as the environment tests their infrastructure.

ANTHC is working with Tribal leaders to voice our concerns. We are seeking solutions and attempting to draw the attention of others to the challenges facing northern communities.

The continuous changing Arctic environment allows us to be proactive in how we plan to help communities sustain their subsistence lifestyle, plan relocations of their communities, redirect their focus on emergency response, improving human health with innovative design and cross-collaborating with other ANTHC programs.

It’s not too late to get your flu vaccine!

• The flu vaccine is safe. You can’t get the flu from a flu vaccine.
• Pneumonia and flu are a leading cause of death among Alaska Native and American Indian Elders.
• Please get a flu vaccine each year to protect you and your family.
• If you have not been vaccinated, please make an appointment today!

Injury Prevention Program and Behavioral Health’s Substance Abuse Prevention Initiative. If you are concerned that someone you know may be misusing prescription opioids or alcohol, help is available. Get immediate help from a local poison expert by calling the Poison Help Hotline at 1-800-222-1222. Visit the Alaska Poison Control System website at http://www. alaska.gov/phd/Phd/Alarm/Lists/Pages/PsychEd.aspx. You can order disposal or deactivation bags and buckets to get rid of your unused or expired medicine, through https://www.iknowmine.org/provider- materials/safe-medicine. Contact ANTHC’s Substance Abuse and Prevention at (907) 729-3547 or email behavior/alaskaanthc.org.
Demystifying the colonoscopy

We are tackling colorectal cancer (CRC) through research. Alaska Native people have the highest reported rates of CRC in the world. ANTHC is working to find answers. Below are descriptions of CRC studies at ANTHC and their findings and/or what the findings mean.

Measuring the impact of lowering the age of first colorectal cancer screening to 40 in Alaska Native people

Alaska Native people have higher rates of CRC at younger ages than the general U.S. population. Screening colonoscopy is currently the gold standard for finding and removing precancerous colon polyps. Since 2013, ANTHC has recommended screening colonoscopy beginning at age 40. This is ten years earlier than what is recommended for the general U.S. population. This study looks at patient medical records to see if screening at an earlier age has resulted in better outcomes for Alaska Native people.

Improving colorectal cancer screening among Alaska Native people using the stool DNA test

Screening for CRC can prevent cancer or find it early when it is more easily treated. Stool DNA testing (Cologuard) is a new CRC screening test. This study compared two types of CRC screening tests: FIT (fecal immunochemical test) and fecal occult blood test (FOBT). The study found that FIT was better at finding CRC and precancerous colon polyps than FOBT. When study results were shared with Alaska Native Medical Center, leadership, it was decided to include FIT in the list of screening tests recommended for Alaska Native people.

What is ANTHC doing about colorectal cancer among Alaska Native People?

Is it fiber that reduces the risk of colon cancer?

As we learned in the pilot study, Alaska Native people had higher levels of harmful bacteria and substances in the gut than Afrikanos who eat a lot of fiber and have very low rates of colon cancer. This study will see if we find healthier bacteria and healthier colons if our sample of Alaska Native people eats more fiber.

Fecal immunochemical testing for cancer screening among Alaska Native people

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Improving colorectal cancer screening among Alaska Native people using the stool DNA test: An initial appraisal

MyHealth is a health management tool provided by Cerner® and a way for you to access some of your health records online. With MyHealth, you can:

- View clinical record summary (allergies, immunizations, health issues, discharge summary, surgeries and procedures)
- Access limited lab results (excluding genetic information and sign up?)
- Connect your provider through secure messaging
- View, request and cancel appointments
- Access your MyHealth portal on your smartphone or other mobile devices. Search your app store. ParentEatsLife.

For more information, visit amch.org/myhealth.

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For more information, visit amch.org/myhealth.
Throughout our history, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and its Board leadership have worked to make a difference in the health of Alaska Native people. These are some of the key milestones in pursuit of our vision.

### ANTHC’s early years: 1997-1999

**October 1997**
Congressional Legislation authorizing creation of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium approved

**December 1997**
Organizational Board meeting held, ANTHC articles and bylaws approved

**January 1998**
Regional members appointed to first ANTHC Board of Directors

**February 1998**
ANTHC President/CEO selected, administrative offices opened

**March 1998**
Indian Health Service Tribal Management grant awarded

**June 1998**
Initial P.L. 93-638 Title I Contract approved for ANTHC management of Community Health Services, Professional Recruiting, Business Office Services and Maintenance and Improvement Funds

**September 1998**
Proposal submitted for Alaska Native Medical Center management

**October 1998**
P.L. Title II Self-Governance Compact Approved for ANTHC management of Environmental Health and Engineering and additional IHS area office services

**December 1998**
First ANTHC annual meeting

### ANTHC highlights: 1997-2016

#### 1997
ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation assume joint management of ANMC
ANTHC incorporates as a nonprofit organization

#### 1999
Indian Health Service opens new Alaska Native Medical Center

#### 2000
Contract with IHS transfers statewide services to ANTHC, including Environmental Health and Engineering

#### 2001
ANTHC begins training village-based Dental Health Aide Therapists
The Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative is created to improve water quality and lower energy costs

#### 2002
ANTHC completes study that shows in-home water service reduces respiratory diseases and skin infections in children
ANTHC launches Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation

#### 2003
ANTHC begins training for 60 new Behavioral Health Aides

#### 2006
ANTHC institutes tobacco-free campus policy

#### 2007
Community Health Services expands to include training program for 60 new Behavioral Health Aides

#### 2010
Vaccination program virtually eliminates hepatitis A infections around Alaska

#### 2014
ANTHC hospital opens Alaska’s first hybrid operating room

#### 2015
ANMC receives highest level of Pediatric Facility Recognition designation for superior pediatric care
Kisalina water and sewer pilot project launches, an innovative solution for in-home service in the age of climate change

#### 2016
Specially medical clinics expand to 40,000 square feet of new clinic space in the Healthy Communities Building

**See more on ANTHC’s 20th year**
For more information from ANTHC’s 20th year, see our 2017 annual report at www.anthc.org/2017annualreport and the 2017 annual video at www.anthc.org/2017yearinreview.

### Achieving our vision: Tribal health leadership

The work to positively impact Alaska Native health is the work of generations. The ANTHC Board of Directors helped set the path for our past and current successes, and will continue to set strategy to address our future challenges in pursuit of the vision that Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world.
**ANMC patients served Tundra Meatloaf after generous hunter donation**

The fall season often means the return of moose stew, moose burgers and moose meat. Thanks to a generous donation by a local hunter, ANMC patients will get to enjoy these comforting foods that help in the healing process.

If you are interested in donating, or have questions about traditional foods being served for our patients at ANMC, please email NativeFoods4Life@anthc.org.

**Joe Schuster, from Sportman’s Air Service, Alaska Professional Hunting Association Board Member, donated four moose quarters to ANMC’s Traditional Foods Program on Tuesday, Oct. 25. Executive Chef Amy Foote (left), ANMC VP of Professional and Support Services Vivian Echavarria (middle right) and General Manager of hospital food services at ANMC Cynthia Davis (right), were thrilled with the offering, which provided hearty, home-cooked meals that are a comfort food for our patients at ANMC.**

**Tundra Meatloaf is sliced and individually wrapped, providing comforting meal for our patients staying at ANMC.**

**Look for the ANMC specialty clinics moving locations**

And visit our new Walk-in Clinic

As of Jan. 2, 2018, the Pulmonology Clinic and Sleep Center, and Pulmonary Function Lab will be located close to the ANMC campus in the Alaska Pacific Medical Building, 5900 University Lake Drive.

In January 2018, ANMC is opening a new Walk-in Clinic for patients of all ages who are visiting from outside of the Anchorage area, who have an illness or injury that needs immediate care but are not experiencing a medical emergency. The Walk-in Clinic will be located on the third floor of the Healthy Communities Building, 5900 Ambassador Drive.

If you are not sure where to go for your appointment, please call ANMC 855-482-4382 and our operators will assist you in finding your appointment location.

**ANMC’s Walk-in Clinic is for patients of all ages from outside the Anchorage area who have an illness or injury that needs immediate care but are not experiencing a medical emergency. Here are some reasons to visit the Walk-in Clinic at ANMC:**

- Medication refills and vaccinations
- Fever and dehydration
- School and DOT physicals
- Sinus and ear infections
- Sore throats and colds
- Cuts and minor skin infections
- Muscle strains and sprains
- Urinary tract infections
- STI testing

The Walk-in Clinic will be located on the third floor of the Healthy Communities Building, 5900 Ambassador Drive.

**Walk-in Clinic at ANMC Opening January 2018**

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The Walk-in Clinic will be located on the third floor of the Healthy Communities Building, 5900 Ambassador Drive.

**Hours:**
- Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
- Sunday 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.

**Toll-free ANMC: (855) 482-4382**
#TellMyHeartStory: Suicide awareness and prevention efforts from ANTHC

Suicide remains a sensitive and urgent topic around Alaska, which is why ANTHC continues to develop new ways to provide training and resources dedicated to shifting this painful trend. Part of that work includes communicating positive messages to those having thoughts of suicide, struggling with depression or in need of a listening ear.

To help spread the message of suicide prevention and awareness, ANTHC’s Behavioral Health and Marketing and Communications departments collaborated on the Tell Your Heart Story campaign to reach our at-risk audience in a powerful way. The goal of the campaign is to send a message of hope and encourage people to reach out to others sooner versus later.

For September’s Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, ANTHC’s Suicide Prevention Program hosted the Tell Your Heart Story Youth Photo Contest. American Indian and Alaska Native youth up to age 25 were invited to share photos, images and artwork that helped tell their heart stories. Photos were submitted via email and captured on social media using the hashtag #TellMyHeartStory.

ANTHC received 23 entries and after a three-week voting period and 2,225 votes, the top three winners were: Alexis Russell, Annette Island; Kayleigh, Kiana; and Avienda Cook, Metlakatla.

To see all of the photos from the Tell Your Heart Story Youth Photo Contest, check out our photo album on facebook at http://bit.ly/TYHS-Photo-Album.

In addition to the photo contest, to help promote September’s Suicide Prevention Awareness Month and beyond, ANTHC developed the Tell Your Heart Story campaign to reach our at-risk audience in a powerful way. The goal of the campaign is to send a message of hope and encourage people to reach out to others sooner versus later.

1. Alexis Russell, Annette Island
   - This is a picture I took of a bench on my island. I really like photography & to take portraits & landscape pictures, it helps my forget everything that’s been happening as I focus on pictures, this is how I express myself creatively. “We live in a wonderful world that if full of beauty, charm & adventure. There is no end to the adventures that we can have if only we seek them with our open eyes.” – Jawaharial Nehru.

2. Kayleigh, Kiana
   - My heart story is about my family. This summer my mom had a baby boy and now I have two brothers. It was very exciting.

3. Avienda Cook, Metlakatla
   - I love taking nature photos especially of the ocean because I’m surrounded by it. This canoe is part of where I come from. My ancestors came here on them and whenever I’m on one I feel like I’m in the right place.

Alaska Careline

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, please call the Alaska Careline at 1-877-466-HELP (4357) or text HELLO to the crisis text line at 741741. We’re here for you 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and your calls and texts are free and completely confidential.

Healthy Foods, Healthy Recipes: One-Pot Caribou Soup

Caribou is an excellent source of protein and iron and it is low in saturated fat and sodium. Caribou live in the tundra, muskeg and forests. Herds of 100,000 animals can travel up to 900 miles during the summer from calving areas to wintering grounds. Considered an important food of the Alaska Native people, almost all the parts of the caribou are eaten. The liver, tongue, brain, blood and kidneys are delicacies that add valuable nutrients to their diet.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 gallon storage bag caribou meat
- 3-4 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 cup macaroni/noodles
- 1 cup rice
- Potatoes, cubed
- Celery, chopped
- Onions, chopped
- 3-4 tablespoons cooking oil
- 1 tablespoon parsley
- Garlic salt to taste
- Onion salt to taste
- Garlic salt to taste

PREPARATION

1. Cut the caribou meat into bite-size pieces. You can use ribs, backbones or any pieces of meat with bones.
2. Saute meat in pot with cooking oil. Tip: Sprinkle a little bit of meat parsley flakes. Pepper and curry are optional.
3. Add salt, garlic salt, onion salt, and parsley flakes. Pepper and curry are optional.
4. Add onion, celery, and carrots to pot with meat and continue to saute in oil.
5. Cook until meat is brown.
6. Add 1/2 quarts water to cover meat and continue to saute in oil.
7. Cook until meat is brown.
8. Serve with rice and noodles.
Healthy Portraits captures traditional northern dugout canoes in two southeast communities

In the final grant year of Healthy Portraits, the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center, located within the ANTHC’s Community Health Services, visited two southeast Alaska communities to share health success stories of the traditional northern dugout canoe.

Tlingit and Haida ancestors made a very reliable canoe for Alaska waters. The people of Hoonah and Haines are using indigenous watercraft as a way to boost mental health and build stronger communities. Under the guidance of Tlingit master carver Wayne Price of Haines, these communities have built seafaring canoes using the traditional methods of their ancestors.

These canoes will be used for generations to come, bringing the traditional healthy lifestyles of the past into the present.

The northern dugout canoe not only provided transportation throughout southeast Alaska, but also unified communities.

Crafting and using a dugout canoe involves many people working in harmony, both socially and spiritually. Elders and youth sing together the old songs as they paddle across the waters to the beat of the drum. Each dugout canoe took four and a half months to build and was fashioned from a single Sitka Spruce tree.

Photographs are returned back to the communities to celebrate successes and to inspire future generations. The Healthy Portrait photographs hang in community buildings paying homage to this ancient and highly respected art form.

The Healthy Portraits project highlights health success stories through photography. It celebrates communities making positive changes towards health and wellness. This project focuses on documenting and sharing culturally relevant community-based stories that make a difference to health.

View more photos and learn more about the project at HealthyPortraits.org.