On average, energy needs comprise 30 to 60 percent of a community’s water system operating costs. When the Rural Energy Initiative launched in 2010, ANTHC’s Tribal leadership imagined a future in which water system projects could continue to improve and provide continued benefit through our Environmental Health and Engineering work that has been part of ANTHC’s history since the very beginning.

Since its start, the Rural Energy Initiative’s work has reduced village energy costs by 33 percent and saves $2.85 million across Alaska each year. Providing the health benefits of clean water and sanitary sewer systems for remote communities in cold climates makes for unique challenges, including extremely high energy usage and high energy costs. The goal of ANTHC’s Rural Energy Initiative is that basic

See Page 2, Energy

 Tradition of helping communities: Rural Energy Initiative makes access to water sustainable for rural residents

2010-PRESENT

During 2018, ANTHC is celebrating its 20th year of operations. ANTHC has marked new achievements to improve Alaska Native health care through our Board-led Tribal self-governance and leadership. If you have stories to share about ANTHC or the history of the Alaska Tribal Health System, send an email to news@anthc.org.
Energy is continued from page 1

Sanitation be efficient, sustainable and affordable.

Rural Energy allows Environmental Health and Engineering projects to continue to provide regular access to water and sewage systems despite rising energy costs that threaten the cost sustainability of necessary public utility infrastructure.

Research shows that residents in communities with regular water service get fewer lower respiratory and skin infections and have lower infant mortality rates. Children who live with only limited access to water service are five times more likely to be hospitalized for lower respiratory infection and 12 times more likely to contract pneumonia, according to a 2007 study from ANTHC. Mortality rates have dropped by as much as 60 percent in rural communities where sanitation facilities were implemented.

Higher energy costs can mean less money available for regular maintenance of water lines and systems, which can lead to frozen pipes or failed pumps that shut off the water supply. Rural Energy projects make it more cost-effective to operate a community water plant.

The program works directly with rural communities to improve the sustainability and lower operating costs of rural sanitation systems and health care facilities across Alaska. Our work has been recognized with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services “Green Champion Award” four times from 2010-2014.

Environmental Health and Engineering programs such as the Rural Energy Initiative allow ANTHC to partner with communities in new ways that continue to help advance and sustain their public utility systems. Energy project innovations that lower costs will preserve access to water and lead to healthier Alaskans.

Boating safety tips from ANTHC

During the summer months, our Alaska Native people will spend more time on the water — whether it’s on boats or shores, fishing or for recreation. However, every year, water related accidents and fatalities affect our Native community.

FACTS ABOUT DROWNING

• Cold water immersion is the leading cause of drowning injuries and deaths. Even the strongest swimmers cannot fight the effects of Alaska’s cold rivers, lakes and oceans.

• On average, 17 Alaska Native people drown each year. About half of Alaska Native drowning victims are ages 30 and under.

• Alaska Native men are six times more likely to drown than Alaska Native women.

• 9 out of 10 drowning victims were not wearing a life jacket.

• 5 out of 6 drowning incidents followed a capsizing, flipping, ejection or fall overboard into Alaska’s cold water.

STAY SAFE: PREVENTING DROWNING AND COLD WATER IMMERSION

Whether you’re traveling, hunting, or just having fun on the water, you can help protect everyone on your boat by following safe boating practices. Boat owners or operators are responsible for the safety of themselves and those in their boat.

SAFETY TIPS WHENEVER YOU’RE ON THE WATER:

• Ensure the whole family has access to and uses flotation devices when near water.

• Keep young children away from water unless supervised by an adult.

• Always wear a life jacket when in an open boat or on an open deck, regardless of weather, boating experience or swimming ability.

• Attack the engine cut-off device when underway, especially when boating alone.

• When boating, carry an emergency signaling device to notify rescuers, such as a whistle or GPS.

• Equip boats with at least one means of reboarding (e.g. swim step, ladder, foot rope).

• If boating, file a plan so someone knows where you are and when you are expected back.

• Have your family members attend a water safety class such as those provided by AMSA or the Alaska Office of Boating Safety.

As the summer days grow longer, our Alaska Native people will spend more time on the water — whether it’s on boats, shores, fishing or recreation. Every year, water related accidents and fatalities affect our Native community.

On average, 17 Alaska Native people drown each year. About half of Alaska Native drowning victims are ages 30 and under. Alaska Native men are six times as likely to drown than our Native women.

Follow these safety tips whenever you are on the water!

For more information on water and boating safety, contact ANTHC Injury Prevention at (907) 729-3799.
Toksook Bay named best tasting water in the state by Alaska Rural Water Association

Toksook Bay won the 2017 Alaska Rural Water Association award for the best tasting water in the state. Nine communities throughout the state brought samples to the Alaska Rural Water Association’s annual conference in Anchorage. Judges at the conference used clarity, odor and taste to evaluate each sample.

The community of roughly 100 people on the Yurok-Kinakwolin Delta’s Nelson Island represented Alaska at the Great American Water Taste Test in February 2018 at the National Rural Water Association’s Rural Water Rally in Washington D.C. “It will be pretty cool to do well,” said Richard Curtis, the Toksook Bay water plant operator. But either way, as Curtis emphasized, “Somebody is doing something right.”

Curtis noted the team effort between local personnel and ANTHC. “The award comes on the heels of ANTHC’s completion of a new water treatment plant in the community, which was funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development. Toksook Bay is an ANTHC Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative (ARUC) member community and the two have partnered throughout the years to provide sanitation for residents in this part of the YK Delta.

The city council’s communication and partnership in ensuring their day-to-day operations are supported leads to the highest quality water and system success. Having access to clean water will promote community-wide health benefits for generations to come.

Stay informed! Stay healthy! Stay engaged! Connect with ANTHC online!
Health Training & Education

Partnership with Ilisaġvik College gives Behavioral Health Aides more opportunity to support Alaska Native communities

Behavioral and mental wellness are important, yet often understudied, parts of individual and community health in rural Alaska. In order to better serve our Alaska Native people throughout the state, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium has partnered with Ilisaġvik College to develop an academic program to grow a community-based behavioral health workforce.

The training curriculum was designed by ANTHC Behavioral Health Aide Program and is specifically tailored for Behavioral Health Aides (BHAs) who are serving our people in rural communities. The two-year program gives BHAs who are employed by a Tribal health organization an avenue to advance their careers and become supervisors. BHAs enrolled in the training program will earn an associate degree from Ilisaġvik College and achieve their BHA-A and BHA-1 level certifications through the Alaska Tribal Health System’s Community Health Aide Program Certification Board (CHAPCB).

“This is one of a few avenues for training our Behavioral Health Aides, but it’s the first to be tailored specifically to BHAs as they are prepared to address the unique challenges of their position,” Xiomara “Xio” Owens, ANTHC Director of Behavioral Health Aide Training, said. “The curriculum is designed and taught in the context of working and living in rural and remote Alaskan communities.”

In their first year, students learn fundamental information about behavioral health and the types of situations they might encounter in the field. This includes an introduction to behavioral health topics, such as healthy relationships, substance use and suicidality. During the first year, BHAs are also learning about ethics, consent, confidentiality and compliance.

The second year, currently under review by Ilisaġvik College, will dive more into clinical skills, such as interviewing techniques and recognizing co-occurring disorders.

“They’ll also learn about navigating dual relationships and identifying community-based resources to support those they serve,” Owens said.

The program launched in August 2017 with eight BHAs from across the Alaska Tribal Health System in the first cohort.

“We were mindful in our recruiting for this program,” Owens said. “We wanted people who had a vested interest in, and commitment to, the health of their communities. We also wanted to enroll BHAs who demonstrated the potential to move beyond an associate degree so they can eventually get their master’s degree and become employed as clinicians for their regional health organization.”

All BHAs need a master’s level clinician as a supervisor. However, supervising clinicians are not often from the community or region they serve, so there is a perpetual concern about turnover.

Furthermore, BHAs looking to advance into these positions aren’t able to unless they have an academic degree.

“It’s important for people from the community to have an opportunity to grow into the supervisor positions,” Owens said.

“Whether you are going to be there for the long haul. They are committed because it’s their community and they should be able to advance their careers within the communities they are a part of.”

An additional benefit to the partnership through Ilisaġvik is the use of distance learning technology, such as tele- and videoconferencing, which allows BHAs to connect live with their instructors and fellow students across the state without leaving their communities.

“Fellows are participating in classes from their home community on a weekly basis. Then they come together for a week-long intensive in Anchorage each semester,” Owens said. “We were thoughtful in the design of the program and now that we have implemented the model and have our first cohort enrolled in and attending classes, we’re coming to find out it’s an awesome partnership with Ilisaġvik. Our students and instructors feel well supported by staff at ANTHC and Ilisaġvik, and even more importantly, that the training is meaningful and relevant to their roles as BHAs.”

For more information about Behavioral Health Aides, visit anthc.org/behavioral-health-aide-program.

As an Alaska Native organization, ANTHC is committed to the health of our Alaska Native children and youth. As a part of this commitment, ANTHC is pleased to bring you this immunization reminder.

Many of the products that we use to clean, sanitize, disinfect and freshen our homes contain ingredients that can trigger, and be linked, to asthma development and air pollution.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Behavioral Health Aide Program helps our people to recognize asthma triggers in their homes and communities so that instances of asthma attacks, and even the development of the condition, decline.

When doing your fall-cleaning, take steps to eliminate contaminants that negatively affect lung health and use green cleaning products that use naturally occurring and non-toxic ingredients. Use the Green Cleaning Recipes card next to this article to keep your home fresh and free from potentially harmful air pollutants.

Back to the basics

While not always as effective as commercially available products, the basics can be useful cleaners. Take care to never mix ammonia and bleach, as this will produce a toxic gas.

• Vinegar is an eco-friendly liquid consisting of acetic acid and water. It kills bacteria and foodborne pathogens making it an effective disinfectant. It also dissolves mineral deposits from glass and other smooth surfaces.

• Baking soda or sodium bicarbonate can be used as a water softener, deodorizer and is effective in removing stains when diluted with warm water.

Identifying safe cleaning products

Knowing how to identify safe products. Read the label! Use products that:

• Are fragrance-free
• Are dye-free
• Don’t have the word “sting” on the label
• List the ingredients on the label or website
• Are colors you could find in nature

Asthma triggers and lung irritants

Asthma can affect Alaska Native people of all ages and in all parts of the state. It is a condition that makes daily activities, such as hunting, fishing or cooking traditional foods, difficult. For some people, asthma is a minor annoyance, but for others, it can be a life-threatening condition.

Known cleaning ingredients that can act as triggers and lung irritants include:

• Bhiphorin (A/BPA)
• Bleach
• Fragrance ingredients
• Parabens and phthalates
• Volatile organic compounds (VOCs)—so-formaldehyde, benzene, and toluene

EPA has the Safer Choice program that can help consumers browse safe products as well as find a retailer at epa.gov/saferchoice.

For additional information and resources, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (cdc.gov/asthma/) or Environmental Protection Agency Indoor Air Quality (epa.gov/indoor-air-quality-iaq) websites.
ANMC expands access to sleep studies and services for our people

The new Alaska Native Medical Center Sleep Center recently opened in the new Alaska Pacific Medical Building. The Sleep Center provides consultations, sleep studies and evaluation of sleep disorders, patient education, mask fitting, and PAP desensitization. We are pleased to offer this new service for ANMC patients to help get on the path to better sleep. The Sleep Center offers health care services for adult patients and is accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. The Sleep Center is working toward providing pediatric sleep services in the future. Sleep Center physicians have backgrounds in neurology, internal medicine and pulmonology, and take a comprehensive approach to diagnosing and treating people with sleep disorders. Registered sleep technologists are available day and night to perform diagnostic testing, patient education, mask fitting, PAP desensitization, and assist our providers in supporting patients. The Sleep Center also has a nurse case manager and two assistant case managers on staff. There are more than 20 recognized sleep disorders, many of which overlap with, present as, or exacerbate other health issues. Better sleep means better health and is an integral part of well-being. To be seen in the Sleep Center, the process starts with a referral from the patient’s provider. Once our assistant case managers receive a referral, they contact the patient to schedule a consult with a physician. The consult reviews any sleep-related issues as well as potential contributing health issues to determine the best course to further evaluate and treat any potential sleep disorder, including whether or not a sleep study is needed. When a sleep study is ordered, the patient is scheduled for overnight diagnostic testing.

Our 8-bed Sleep Lab features a private bathroom and shower, televisions with cable service, and a Sleep Number bed in every room – our sleep study rooms are similar in design and feel to a hotel room. What can I expect during a sleep study?

When you are scheduled for a sleep study, you will arrive at the Sleep Center at 8 p.m. (see also offer daytime sleep studies for people who work nights). You will be greeted by technologists who will show you to your room for the evening. We suggest our patients wear loose-fitting, comfortable night clothes. Patients are also encouraged to bring personal comfort items such as a favorite blanket, pillow or even a stuffed animal. Our night staff are all credentialed technologists. The technologists will apply various sensors to you to monitor you during the sleep study.

Find your way around the Alaska Native Health Campus! The map below shows ANMC outpatient clinic locations. A “*” indicates a new clinic or a clinic that has recently moved locations. If you are unsure of where to go for your appointment, call ANMC toll-free at 1-855-482-4382.
Harvesting plants for food and medicine grows our culture, tradition and health

ALASKAN PLANTS AS FOOD & MEDICINE - BENEFITS OF THE FALL HARVEST

Alaska Native people have lived in harmony with living things for thousands of years, including our traditional plants. This is the time of the year when our many variety of berries become ready to pick. Berries and plants harvested in the fall provide an abundance of high-quality nutrients.

“Our Alaskaan berries are full of fiber and antioxidants like Vitamin C, that help keep our bodies healthy,” Priscilla Russell, ANTHC Health Promotion Manager, said. “And their sweet, delightful flavors make a wonderful addition to a variety of recipes. Berries can be made into jams, jellies, fruit keathers, sauces, and desserts.”

Along with the berry bounty, fall is a good time of the year to pick yarrow for the dried flowers, stems and leaves to make healing salves. In her book “Tainaina Plantlore,” author Priscilla Russell writes, “Dry powdered flowers of yarrow were drank as a tea for sore throats or used as a gargle. Additionally, the tea would be mixed with hibiscus cranberry juice and used as a cough syrup.”

There are social benefits to the fall harvest. It’s a great time for our families to come together and share traditions. “Building a relationship with plants teaches our children to be active, to respect, and engage with our environment, engage in our culture, keeping traditions alive,” Anderson said.

SYMPOSIA FOR PLANTS AS FOOD AND MEDICINE

With the impact of commercial foods and the increased reliance on stores-bought groceries, our knowledge, skills and practice of Alaskan plants as food and medicine can be in jeopardy. At the recommendations of Tribal health organizations with the input from Elders, ANTHC Wellness and Prevention began hosting annual educational symposiums on Alaskan Plants as Food and Medicine in 2012. ANTHC has transitioned to a regional support model for Alaskan Plants as Food and Medicine symposiums.

The symposiums create an opportunity for collaboration, networking and sharing valuable traditional plant knowledge throughout Alaska. Each region is diverse with its own indigenous plant knowledge, Elders, traditional healers and other natural resource professionals such as botanists. At the symposiums, groups are able to collaborate and partner collectively to promote discussion, education and increased practical skills related to Alaskan plants as food and medicine use. Activities and discussions include hands-on classes, plant walks, ethical plant harvesting and Elder knowledge.

In 2017, ANTHC collaborated on three symposiums across the state drawing more than 275 attendees. The Interior Plants as Food and Medicine symposium was hosted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks and Kuskokwim Campus’ Elleta Nunnawak. Let’s Study Plants program in Fairbanks in partnership with the Tanana Chiefs Conference and ANTHC. Nipjisk Nijkarvuk, Traditional Foods That We Eat symposium was hosted in Kotzebue by Maniilaq Association’s Office of Environmental Health, Nuhnedi:sh Qalshiyi: Dena’ina Plants as Food and Medicine Conference in Kenai was hosted by the Kenaitze Indian Tribe, in partnership with CIRI Foundation, ANTHC and Alaska Humanities Forum. Planning has begun for symposiums in 2018. One will be hosted by Southcentral Foundation in Anchorage and another will be hosted by the Yudon Plats Health Center in Fort Yukon.

“If you are interested in learning more about plants, know it takes time,” Anderson said. “And their sweet, delightful flavors make a wonderful addition to a variety of recipes. Berries can be made into jams, jellies, fruit keathers, sauces, and desserts.”

Our vision is that Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world. Learn more at www.anthc.org.
Recently, Alaska Pacific University announced the launch of five innovative undergraduate and graduate programs designed to meet the pressing workforce development needs of the state and strengthen Alaska Native communities. Building on the strategic partnership with ANTHC, APU has developed new programs in nursing, community health, and rural management and redesigned programs in counseling psychology. Each of these academic programs supports career advancement in high-demand fields. They are grounded in cultural competences, place-based and experiential learning, and innovative, indigenous models of professional practice.

Dr. Robert Onders, APU President, reflected on these new opportunities: “The addition of these programs is part of APU’s focus on delivering programs that are relevant to Alaska's workforce needs, allow for education at a distance or with shorter periods of time in Anchorage and are culturally relevant to the communities the students will be serving. APU is excited to work with ANTHC, ANMC and the Alaska Tribal Health System in creating these and future programs to help meet their workforce needs through meaningful student educational opportunities.”

**“AK BRIDGE” RN TO BSN PROGRAM**
- Culturally relevant “bridge program” taking Registered Nurse (RN) program graduates to a Bachelor of Science in Nursing
- Courses online in modular format to provide flexibility for working adult students
- Must have unencumbered RN license to apply
- Classes start Fall 2018

**COMMUNITY HEALTH – AAS AND UNDERGRADUATE CERTIFICATE**
- APU is partnering with Tribal Health Organizations and CHAP Training Centers to provide a stackable degree pathway for Community Health Aides
- Students must be employed by a Tribal health organization in Alaska or have previously earned Community Health Aide certifications to earn academic credit in the undergraduate certificate
- Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degree combines Community Health Aide training (as major courses) with APU’s Foundational Studies in effective communication, critical thinking, cultural and historical perspective, scientific inquiry, and ethical engagement
- Foundational Studies courses are offered in a variety of formats (including all online) to be accessible to students working in rural communities
- Limited housing is available on the APU campus for CHA training residencies

**ALASKA RURAL MANAGEMENT CERTIFICATE**
- 18-credit undergraduate certificate focuses on basic business skills with courses in Alaska Native governance, business foundations, entrepreneurship, budgeting and ethics
- Relevan t educational opportunity for community leaders, Tribal administrators and managers representing the broad scope of Alaska’s industries: government, utilities, technology, transportation and beyond
- Courses are offered in evenings online in seven-week modules — courses offered in Spring, Summer and Fall sessions
- Credits may be applied to associate or bachelor’s degree in business

**COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY: MASTER OF SCIENCE IN COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY (MSCP) AND DOCTORATE IN PSYCHOLOGY (PSYD)**
- Both programs are now offered in hybrid formats that allow for enrollments from across the state
- Students meet on campus for three weekend intensives per semester, supported by online learning across the semester
- Programs focus on capacity building in behavioral health profession — MSCP articulates seamlessly with the PsyD
- MSCP graduates work in occupations such as licensed counselor, health educator and prevention specialist
- PsyD prepares students for work as licensed psychologists, particularly for those who want to establish private practice or work within Tribal health organizations
- Cohorts start each fall semester

For more information, please contact APU Admissions: (907) 564-8248 or admissions@alaskapacific.edu.

Scholarships and other forms of financial assistance are available for these programs. For more information, see APU and ANTHC websites: alaskapacific.edu/student-financial-services/financial-aid or anthc.org/scholarship-opportunities.

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