The Harvard Honoring Nations awarded the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium’s three health aide training programs, collaboratively known as the Tribal Community Health Provider Programs, with its High Honors award during a special presentation at the 75th annual National Congress of American Indians conference in Denver, Colorado.

According to The Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, Honoring Nations “identifies, celebrates and shares excellence in American Indian tribal governance. At the heart of Honoring Nations are the principles that Tribes themselves hold the key to generating social, political, and economic prosperity and that self-governance plays a crucial role in building and sustaining strong, healthy Indian Nations.”

Based at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and administered by the Harvard Project on American Indian Economic Development, the High Honors award recognizes the Consortium’s efforts in providing culturally competent health care services to Alaska Native communities.

In 2018, the Community Health Aide Program celebrated its 50-year anniversary at the annual CHAP Forum. CHAP’s innovative method of care delivery inspired the creation of the Dental Health Aide and Behavioral Health Aide programs, all recognized by Harvard University.

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ANTHC Health Aide Training Programs
awarded High Honors by Harvard Honoring Nations

Inpatient pediatrics entertainment options

Reduce risk of slips and falls this winter

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Alaska Native artist creates murals to inspire API youth

When Tlingit artist Benjamin Schleifman was presented with the opportunity to create murals for Chilkat, the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) adolescent unit, he answered yes without hesitation. "I had no idea what the scope was," Schleifman said. "It was totally unexpected. When I found out it was for the youth wing and something that was being funded for suicide prevention—something I've battled with my entire life—I really just felt the need to do it.”

Last year, Schleifman met with Dr. Tamara Russell, API Clinical Director, two Chilkat unit leaders and a representative from the ANTHC Suicide Prevention Program. They went over Schleifman’s portfolio and came up with a plan of action. He would create three murals in the main entryway into the Chilkat wing, a button blanket chalkboard and an abstract Tlingit design surrounding the center point of the wing.

"Prior to the completion of the murals, the Chilkat unit looked pretty sterile and not interesting,” said Dr. Andrew Paul, Chilkat unit psychiatrist. “The artwork makes it look inviting and lets the adolescents know that someone cares about them, their background and their recovery. We want our kids to know that they are loved and valued. The murals, the ones done by Benjamin and the mountain scenes done by other artists, let them know they are worth a lot of effort.”

The adolescent unit has 10 beds and provides mental health hospitalization for youth ages 14 to 17 who may live in any region of Alaska. The teens often present with suicidal impulses or have engaged in self harm, may be significantly depressed or anxious, could have a significant trauma history, or may be exhibiting the first symptoms of a major mental illness such as bipolar mood disorder or schizophrenia.

As someone who has battled thoughts of suicide and depression, Schleifman understands the power of art as an outlet. “I use art as therapy every day. It doesn’t matter which medium I’m using—metal, wood, graffiti—it’s all art therapy.”

Schleifman, whose family is from the Taku River region and of Raven moiety, Frog crest, used traditional Tlingit formlines for the murals. He hopes children in the unit can find some inspiration and a connection through the art, whether they are Tlingit, Native or of another heritage.

"That’s the ultimate goal. The Tlingit formlines aren’t indigenous to this area of Alaska, there’s plenty of indigenous children in this unit who can identify with some aspect of it," Schleifman said. "Eagles and ravens are pretty universal throughout the state. It gives them a little icon that they can identify with and hopefully get them through the day.”

API provides emergency and court-ordered inpatient psychiatric services in a safe environment using culturally sensitive, effective, patient-centered treatment followed by a referral to an appropriate level of care and support for recovery from mental illness.

"Many of the adolescents admitted to API for treatment have thought about or attempted suicide. The wonderful murals on the walls help them connect with their communities and with nature. In addition, the artwork lets these kids know they are valued and that both API and ANTHC are committed to their recovery," stated Dr. Russell. "The artwork brings a sense of hope and a spirit of fun and future to the unit.”

When he’s not creating, Schleifman teaches part time in the Anchorage School District through Title VI under the Indian Education Act. He also led art classes at API in conjunction with the project. He thinks art can connect Alaska Native children to their culture and also give them a positive outlet for their feelings.

Schleifman led four 90-minute classes at API, discussing Tlingit legends and other indigenous stories the students wanted to share. Discussions took place while he shared an introduction to Tlingit formline art, allowing students to explore possible new healthy forms of expression, both artistically and conversationally.

"It’s a complicated system, having students for a grand total of maybe four hours is barely the tip of the iceberg. But there are some tremendously talented kids in there," Schleifman said. "When you’re teaching something that’s not indigenous to the population, I always encourage them to take the art form and make it their own. Watching them take snippets of the art form and take it in their own perception and create what they wanted to create was rewarding.”

ANTHC Suicide Prevention Program partners with API to promote mental health resources to Alaska Native people. Schleifman was honored to be selected for the project and is proud to know their success.

Dr. Tamara Russell added, "It was totally unexpected. When I found out it was for the youth wing and something that was being funded for suicide prevention—I didn’t know anything about the ANTHC Suicide Prevention Program until I was asked to do the project." Schleifman said, "We have the highest rates of suicide amongst any ethnicity so anything that can be done is literally loving.”

This fall, the ANTHC Suicide Prevention Program will have two new murals by Schleifman in the main entryway to the Chilkat wing. Schleifman submitted a proposal to the program for one more mural going down the hallway on the main floor, just past the main entryway. The proposal was approved, and the artwork will be on display by February 2019.

"I’m very grateful that ANTHC was able to fund this project and that they gave me the opportunity to make this artistic contribution to our community," Schleifman said.

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ANMC Inpatient Pediatrics adds entertainment options for kids

In order to make our youngest patients’ hospital stay as comfortable and pleasant as it can be, ANMC Inpatient Pediatrics, through the generosity of donors to the Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation (HANF), were able to install entertainment consoles in each inpatient room. The PlayStation 3 consoles are preloaded with child-appropriate games and movies to suit the needs of our inpatient children. "Minecraft is one of the really popular games I see our inpatient children playing a lot," said Joanna Davis, ANMC Child Life Specialist. "Our patients, their parents and nurses are all raving about these entertainment consoles. There are sports games, puzzle games, all kinds of movies and cartoons — something for everyone." Davis requested the funding of these entertainment consoles from HANF because often there was nothing appropriate on the inpatient TV programming for children to watch.

"We had a little girl who was about three years old staying in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit. She was really sick and all she wanted to do was watch some cartoons. We flipped through the channels and there were no cartoons on for her to watch. It really broke my heart that she couldn’t do the one thing she wanted to do while lying in her hospital bed," said Davis. It cost $13,000 to outfit all Inpatient Rooms. See Page 5, Kids.

The Walk-in Clinic at ANMC
Open seven days a week!

For our patients living outside of the Anchorage Service Unit, ANMC offers a Walk-in Clinic for non-emergent health care services for our people while visiting Anchorage.

ANMC’s Walk-in Clinic is for patients of all ages 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
- Vaccinations
- Fever
- School and DOT physicals
- Sore throats and colds
- Cuts and minor skin infections
- Sinus and ear infections
- Muscle strains and sprains
- Urinary tract infections
- STI testing

Located on the third floor of the Healthy Communities Building, 3900 Ambassador Drive, Open Monday-Saturday from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. and Sunday from 10 a.m.-6 p.m.

Phone: (907) 729-1500

The Mukluk Telegraph
January - March 2019

Healthy Homes and Communities
ANTHC Environmental Health and Engineering Crew construct new Akutan water impoundment and pipeline

On a hillside above the community of Akutan in the Aleutian Islands, an ANTHC Environmental Health and Engineering crew is using hand tools to build an 8-foot-tall concrete dam and accompanying five-foot-long pipeline to capture community drinking water.

The new concrete dam and pipeline, funded by the City of Akutan and the USDA Rural Development, will replace the former plywood structure and leaky pipeline.

At the community’s request, the ANTHC crews have avoided using heavy equipment and all-terrain vehicles to complete the project, keeping the sensitive hillside environment as pristine as possible. The workers start each day navigating steep, wet terrain carrying whatever supplies they need up to the project site. Anything that the crew cannot carry up the steep path to the site, which has included electric generators for power tools, sacks of concrete and pipe for the line, is flown in by helicopter. Another physically challenging element of this project involved creating the footings for the dam. The crew cut into the island bedrock with a rock saw, jackhammered the cut rock to break it up, then lifted the large chunks of basalt out of the holes by hand. In addition to the physically taxing work, the Akutan weather was also a challenge for the team.

Joe Hess, ANTHC project engineer, noted that sometimes people working on the dam struggled to reach the community when helicopters couldn’t land due to thick fog, rain, or gusting winds. When the remnants of a Pacific typhoon made landfall on the island, the drainage where the dam was being built filled in a matter of hours, sending a deluge through the construction site, keeping the crew from work that day.

Despite the challenging terrain, weather and remoteness of the job site, the project moved forward and completed on schedule.

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The Mukluk Telegraph
January - March 2019
Following a subsistence hunt in Selawik

Subsistence is a way of life in Selawik. In the fall, that means hunting caribou and gathering tundra berries.

“We hunt to fill our freezers,” said Enoch Stalker Jr. He and other hunters in the community share the bounty with friends and family members who are unable to harvest caribou meat for themselves. An unseasonably warm October day made for a picturesque backdrop during an afternoon hunt. However, the inclement weather has made the typically bountiful herd’s presence on the tundra notably absent. Hunters, who usually begin to use snowmachines on the frozen ground and rivers around this time, were able to take out their boats later than usual.

The warmer fall also allowed for late-season berry picking while out on the hunt. Low-bush cranberries and blueberries help supplement fiber in diets of those in communities who do not have steady access to fresh produce.

Families build scouting towers at subsistence hunting camps along the river to get a better view of the tundra.

“Never lie down in the tundra,” Tille Ticket (left) recalls a saying that means don’t be lazy. Berry picking provides needed nutrition but also is a great way to stay active.

Above: Alaska Native hunting traditions have evolved to allow for harvest of caribou without displacing their historic migration routes.

Left: Late season low-bush cranberries deliver fiber and other nutrients for community residents in Selawik.

Subsistence hunters look for animals that are fat and in good shape before they shoot. The shape of the back, the color and quality of the hide, and the upward curve of the tail can be clues they look for when choosing an animal to harvest. *

Processing the bounty is a family affair with children learning to help at a young age.

Mealtimes are when families can gather and enjoy each other’s company.

* Information provided by Caribou Trails, a publication was released by the Alaska Department of Fish & Game to support the Western Arctic Caribou Herd Working Group, adfg.alaska.gov/stats/home/library/pdfs/wildlife/caribou_trails/caribou_trails_2018.pdf
Healthy People and Prevention

Supporting children’s grief and loss from cancer: Q&A about Camp Coho

Often, loss from cancer in rural Alaska can have a widespread impact on our Native communities. To address the need for grief support for children ages 6 to 12 who have experienced the death of a loved one from cancer, the ANTHC Cancer Program created a one-day grief camp called Camp Coho. To help bring healing closer to home, the Cancer Program supports regional Tribal health organizations host a Camp Coho through their own healing journey. Finally, children play, laugh, listen and believe that the sadness they feel will get better.

Learn during Talking Circles that it is important to share memories. Participants to visit positive memories and emotions in a healthy manner. Children take their memory boxes home to share with a person that died. Children take their memory boxes specifically about the experience of emotions that children might feel. Talking Circles, which explore the range of emotions that children might feel, are responsible for their Little Buddy’s opportunity to talk about the death of a loved one from cancer.

Does my Tribal health organization need clinicians to host a Camp Coho?

Coho does not require a clinic on site during camp. However, having someone with a clinic background available can be helpful for making observations during camp and debriefing with parents at the end of the camp day.

How can ANTHC support a Camp Coho in my region?

ANTHC can offer training, technical assistance and on-site support to a regional Tribal health organization offering its first camp. Where can my Tribal health organization go for more information on Camp Coho?

You can find more information about how to host a Camp Coho in your region by contacting Karen Morgan, ANTHC Program Coordinator, by email at kmorgan@anthc.org or phone at (907) 790-4491.

Where can we go to find resources about cancer and cancer prevention?

You may find resources about cancer and cancer prevention by visiting ANTHC’s website at anthc.org/cancer-program.

I already have IHS care at my Tribal health clinic. Why do I need health insurance?

The Indian Health Service (IHS) is not health insurance. IHS provides many services, but it may not cover all your health care needs. There may be times when you need certain care that is not covered under IHS services at our Tribal hospitals or health clinics. Many American Indian and Alaska Native people qualify for health insurance through Medicaid, Donal Kelleher and the Health Insurance Marketplace. New health insurance options can give you the peace of mind knowing you are covered. When you have insurance, you can sit down with your Tribal health facility. Your Tribal health provider can sell your new insurance for services, making more health care resources available for more people.

Can I get coverage? The Tribally-Sponsored Health Insurance Program (T-SHIP) provides health insurance coverage for you if you qualify.

Where can I get more information and sign up?

Visit anthc.org/ship to find the contact information for a T-SHIP staff who will see if you are eligible and help you with enrollment.
Healthy Homes and Communities

Portable Alternative Sanitation System connects in-home sanitation systems where it was impossible before

Innovative Health Solutions: Portable Alternative Sanitation System

In response to this issue, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) engineers designed PASS (Portable Alternative Sanitation System). PASS is an intermediate solution developed the Portable Alternative Sanitation System or PASS. The PASS is an intermediate solution for protecting public health in communities without piped water and sewer systems, and it functions as a stepping-stone toward more permanent sanitation solutions. ANTHC engineers designed PASS to contend with two major problems facing communities using honey bucket's health hazards and climate necessary community relocation.

Health hazards from honey bucket use include potential contamination from servicing the honey bucket inside and outside of the home, as well as the issues from inadequate access to clean water. Having in-home water and sanitation makes hand washing and healthy hygiene practices easier, which have been shown to reduce illness according to public health research including reports from ANTHC research studies. Infants in villages with limited water service have five times more hospitalizations for respiratory infections and 17 times more hospitalizations for pneumonia than the overall U.S. population.

The second issue is community relocation due to climate change. As communities experience the effects of climate change, such as erosion due to lack of sea ice coverage and thawing permafrost, their need to relocate grows immediate. Communities identified as increasingly vulnerable to this threat are those most threatened by a changing Arctic is a priority for ANTHC Environmental Health and Engineering staff.

Research Study: Understanding the Health Benefits of the Portable Alternative Sanitation System

In order to understand the health benefits of PASS, the National Tribal Water Center (NTWC) is conducting a health study to explore the ways that the system affects health and well-being in Kivalina and Newtok. Kivalina, in the northwest Arctic Borough, has homes with PASS currently installed. Newtok, in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, is relocating due to climate change and does not currently have PASS in homes.

PASS is a health study in homes in Newtok's new village site Mertarvik as a way to provide water and sanitation for community members before piped infrastructure is funded and built.

Data on water use, water sources, and sanitation, as well as individuals' perspectives on overall well-being will be collected before and after PASS is installed in homes in order to see any changes in water access, usage, sanitation, and health of the community members who participate in the study. NTWC hopes to learn how, or if, the system changes water use, germs in the home, visits to the doctor, and the way that people feel. Researchers will collect data during each of the four seasons in all of the communities. The PASS Health and Wellbeing Study is currently funded for two years through ANTHC and the American Indian/Alaska Native Clinical and Translational Research Program of the National Institutes of Health. The Alaska Area Institutional Review Board, ANTHC, and the regional health organizations, Maniilaq Association and Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation all approved NTWC interviewing homeowners and collecting data for the health research study.

Basic Fish Tacos

**Ingredients:**
- 1 pound cooked fish
- 1 medium green, chopped
cup chopped
cup chopped
cup chopped
cup chopped
cup chopped
cup chopped
cup chopped
- 2 tablespoons oil
- Taco seasoning

**Directions:**
1. Saute chopped and onion in oil until tender.
2. Add cooked fish, spices and tomatoes.
3. Mix gently until warmed through.
4. Serve in warm tortillas or taco shells.

**BEYOND:**
- Try using *salmon, cod, halibut, sheefish, whitefish, flounder or rockfish.
- Add a variety of vegetables, such as: bell peppers, lettuce, red or green cabbage, broccoli, peas, raducchini, squash.
- Enhance flavor by adding salsa, hot sauce, cilantro, guacamole, sour cream, lime juice, jalapenos, wild chives or beach voyage.
- Use healthy cooking oils, such as olive or canola.
- Experiment with healthy options such as *beans, brown rice, *chinese, plum, goyte, *cabbage, black beans, orange or pineapple.
- Try making your own tortillas with *blue or *yellow cornmeal.
- Create your own taco seasoning with 2 tablespoons chili powder, 2 teaspoons cumin, 1 teaspoon garlic powder and red pepper flakes to taste.

*Indicates FDPIR Food

Our vision is that Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world. Learn more at www.anthc.org.
HEALTHY PEOPLE AND PREVENTION

Reduce risk of winter slips and falls

As the winter months set in and walkways become slick with snow and ice, the risk of falling increases, even amongst the most surefooted of us. Anyone can experience a slip and fall, leading to injuries ranging from a minor scrape to as serious as a broken bone or traumatic brain injury, or even worse, a fatality.

From 2012 to 2015, the rate of Alaska Native fatalities from fall injuries (13.6 per 100,000, age adjusted) was 67 percent higher than that of Alaska non-Natives (6.8 per 100,000, age adjusted) and 31 percent higher than that of all races in the U.S. (8.6 per 100,000, age adjusted).

To help prevent a slip and fall when it’s icy out, clear off snow and ice on entry and walkways, wear appropriate shoes with good gripping soles, take extra time and small careful steps. Keep a mat near the doorway for wiping shoes or keep a broom handy for knocking off snow.

For our Alaska Native Elders, the threat of severe injury or fatality from a fall increases and often happens indoors. For Alaska Native Elders age 60 and older:
• 4 out of every 5 hospitalizations for injuries were caused by a fall.

TIPS FOR FALL PREVENTION
The Centers for Disease Control provides safety tips on how to prevent Elders from suffering an injury due to a trip and fall:
1. TALK TO YOUR PROVIDER
• Ask your doctor or health care provider to evaluate your risk for falling and talk with them about specific things you can do.
• Ask your provider to review medicines you take to see if any might make you dizzy or sleepy.
• Ask your doctor or health care provider about taking vitamin D supplements and eating food rich in calcium.

2. DO STRENGTH AND BALANCE EXERCISES
Do exercises that make your legs stronger and improve your balance.

3. HAVE YOUR EYES CHECKED
Have your eyes checked at least once a year and be sure to update your eyeglasses if needed. If you have bifocal or progressive lenses, you may want to get a pair of glasses with only your distance prescription for outdoor activities, such as walking. Sometimes these types of lenses can make things seem closer or farther away than they really are.

4. MAKE YOUR HOME SAFER
• Get rid of things you could trip over.
• Add grab bars inside and outside your tub or shower and next to the toilet.
• Put railings on both sides of stairs.
• Make sure your home has lots of light by adding more or brighter light bulbs.

Oogruk boots with Yaktrax.

Alaska youth invited to PLAAY Day on Feb. 21

Jumping, dancing and fun await 10,000 Alaskan children from Ketchikan to Kotzebue and all points in between on Feb. 21 – the statewide PLAAY Day, an event celebrating the importance of incorporating physical activity into our daily routines.

At 10 a.m. on Feb. 21, elementary-aged students will be led in a series of synchronized exercises and adaptable body movements aimed to keep Alaska children active and healthy. Positive Leadership for Active Alaska Youth, or “PLAAY” Day, partners with ANTHC, University of Alaska Anchorage Health, Physical Education and Recreation department and GCI to present the event across Alaska. UAA students will host children in person at the Special Olympics facility in Anchorage. Simultaneously, children in rural communities across the state are invited to follow along via a streaming video link, utilizing technology provided by GCI.

“Empowering our children with an opportunity for fun interactive play and a strong sense of community not only strengthens their sense of belonging, it also gives them another layer of protective factors they can draw from as they enter adolescence,” said Dr. Tina Woods, ANTHC Senior Director of Community Health Services.

ANTHC has been a key sponsor of PLAAY Day since its inception. Our Healthy People and Prevention work focuses on preventative health services and programs to elevate the health status of Alaska Native people. PLAAY is an initiative of the Alaska Sports Hall of Fame, dedicated to celebrating the positive impact of sports in Alaska. Sports and physical activity are effective ways to address childhood obesity and its associated health risks. Adults play a key role in helping to encourage children to maintain a healthy weight and stay active. For more information on healthy activities for children, visit healthychildren.org.

For more information on PLAAY Day, visit PLAAY.org.