



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Stroke Education and Prevention Targets Rural Alaskans

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – February 4, 2009

To commemorate this year's Norman Vaughan Serum '25 Run, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium will partner with Alaska Regional Hospital, local nonprofits, health care professionals, the media and rural communities to spread the word about stroke education and prevention.

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium representatives, including CEO Don Kashevaroff, will be on hand to answer questions about the Serum '25 Run and the consortium's disease prevention outreach in rural Alaska, February 5th at 11:30 a.m. in the ANTHC Consortium Office Building Atrium at 4000 Ambassador Drive.

Campaign materials will focus on F.A.S.T., an acronym for recognizing and responding to the symptoms of stroke. It stands for face, arms, speech and time, and it is being used as part of a campaign to raise awareness about the impact of stroke.

This year's campaign will target communities in rural Interior Alaska.

Statistics provided by Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services show that stroke was the fourth leading cause of death in the state in 2004. In 2005, 162 Alaskans died from stroke. Although there has been a slight decline in the Alaskan age-adjusted stroke death rate between 1996 and 2005, the actual number of stroke deaths has increased over time by 15 percent, likely due to population aging and growth.

According to the Alaska Native Stroke Registry, stroke is the fifth leading cause of death and a major cause of disability in Alaska Native people. In addition, this population continues to experience high stroke mortality despite a drop in stroke mortality in the general U.S. population.

Serum '25 Run is a dog team journey (with snow machine support) across 768 miles from Nenana to Nome. The mission is to commemorate the men who made the 1925 trip bearing lifesaving diphtheria serum to Nome, as well as raise awareness about important health issues affecting Alaskans.

“Starting Feb. 22, we will travel via snow machines and dog teams through 13 villages in Interior Alaska over about two and a half weeks,” said Capt. Leslie Stephens of the U.S. Public Health Service. “We'll be meeting with various community groups and schools to



share educational materials and information about stroke prevention and early recognition of stroke symptoms, and what to do when they appear.”

Fundraising efforts are currently underway. Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation is selling \$20 raffle tickets for a chance to win the snow machines that will take this year’s journey. For ticket information, visit anthc.org/hanf or thealeutfoundation.org/.

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