



**Alaska Native  
Tribal Health Consortium**

Division of Community Health Services

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For Immediate Release

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## **\$1 million grant supports Hepatitis B research at Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium**

Anchorage, AK — The National Institutes of Health has awarded \$1 million to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), as part of one of 12 grants offered nationwide for the study of Hepatitis B. ANTHC will pool its resources with 10 other groups in Canada and the United States to complete the work.

“I’m really proud of our Hepatitis program staff. ANTHC competed with some of the world’s leading research universities, including the University of Southern California, for this grant,” said ANTHC CEO Don Kashevaroff. “It’s recognition that our researchers are world leaders in the study of causes and treatment of Hepatitis — Dr. McMahon’s protocol for treatment of Hepatitis C has been adopted by the World Health Organization for international use — and this grant allows us to continue that outstanding track record.”

Kashevaroff said ANTHC treats about 1,350 Alaska Native people who have been diagnosed with Hepatitis B, which puts them at risk for liver cancer.

“The grant will help us find better ways to detect which of our patients need treatment with antiviral medications,” said Tim Gilbert, ANTHC Senior Director of the Division of Community Health Services. “It will help us find better ways to evaluate markers for liver cancer at an early and treatable stage. We’ll also be working to find out which drug combinations are the best for treating Hepatitis.”

About 1.5 million Americans and 350 million people throughout the world have acquired Hepatitis B. A significant portion of them are at risk for cirrhosis, liver failure and liver cancer.

ANTHC researchers on the project include principal investigator Brian McMahon, MD; co-investigators Steve Livingston, MD, and Elizabeth Ferucci, MD; and research team members Mary Snowball, RN, and Susan Negas, Nurse Specialist. Lisa Bulkow, Biostatistician with the Arctic Investigations Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is also participating.

*The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium provides statewide services through the Alaska Native Medical Center, Division of Environmental Health and Engineering, and Division of Community Health Services. These services include specialty medical care; construction of clean water, sanitation and health facilities; research on the causes of disease; health promotion and disease prevention; information technology; and training and educational support. ANTHC is part of the Alaska Tribal Health System, which is made up of regional tribal health organizations and tribes providing health services across Alaska. Those tribes and tribal health organizations are represented on the ANTHC board of directors.*

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