



For Immediate Release

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Diabetes outreach offers hands-on learning to Valdez residents

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Diabetes Program (ANTHC Diabetes) recently provided diabetes education and outreach to Crowley's Valdez Marine Services operations division employees and the Valdez community. Denise Ramp, Community Outreach Coordinator for the Diabetes Program, lead seven wellness and diabetes awareness presentations for more than 55 members of Crowley's staff over two days.

"Ms. Ramp provided an exceptional diabetes awareness presentation to many of our vessel crews," said Andrea Vandegrift, Crowley's Senior Administrator of Operations. "We hope that our employees use the excellent information provided and take action to prevent diabetes in themselves and their families."

Nearly 26 million people living in the United States have diabetes (8.3% of the population), another 7 million are at risk for diabetes, and 5,205 adults are diagnosed with diabetes daily. That means 1 in 9 U.S. adults already has diabetes and 1 in 3 U.S. adults is at high risk of developing type 2 diabetes. Every day in America, more than 40 children and teens are diagnosed with type 1 diabetes. Based on 2010 data, it's estimated that 79 million American adults aged 20 years or older have prediabetes – that's 1 in 4 people in the U.S. who have prediabetes and don't know it. The time to act is now.

The Valdez diabetes presentations focused on wellness, awareness of diabetes risk factors, prevention of diabetes, and diabetes self-management. The key message was to be physically active: 30 minutes a day keeps you healthy. It also promotes well-being of the mind, body, and self. Being physically active helps maintain a healthy weight, aids in weight loss, prevents illness and diabetes, and if you have diabetes, exercise is crucial to blood sugar management.

Occasional one-minute exercise sessions were used to liven up the presentations and reinforce the message of exercise. Emphasis was on creating opportunities for exercise in tight surroundings and with minimal equipment or with what's available – staircases, jump ropes, exercise bands, the wall and floor. It's better to be a little overweight and physically active everyday than to be thin and a couch potato. You can strive for fitness at any weight.

Diabetes education also included simple suggestions to improve eating and tobacco habits. Healthy eating tips included: filling at least half of your plate with vegetables; correct portion size; waiting 20 minutes before going for seconds; drinking more water; minimizing condiments (salad dressing, mayonnaise, sugar added to drinks); and eating fruit instead of drinking fruit juice.



Smoking tobacco affects the smoker, as well as anyone who can smell the smoke or smoke residue. Smoking makes breathing harder, worsens diabetes control, forces the heart to pump harder, ages the skin, decreases the sense of smell, and makes foods taste bland. Every minute you avoid smoking, you've improved the air quality and health for yourself and everyone near you.

Other Valdez outreach sites included: Valdez City School District; the Senior and Teen Centers; Valdez Native Tribe; Prince William Sound Community College; Department of Public Health Nursing; and Providence Hospital's SWAN program and outpatient clinic. Materials shared included:

- A two-week K-12 supplemental diabetes curriculum (Diabetes Education in Tribal Schools – DETS) for school teachers, youth program coordinators/leaders, home school educators, and health educators (health aides, public health nurses, etc.). DETS curriculum trainings are also free.
- Materials on wellness, diabetes, nutrition, and physical activity are available for workforce and community health and wellness programs, personal use, and teaching aides from ANTHC Diabetes' 2010 November Diabetes Month website:
<http://www.anthc.org/anmc/services/diabetes/2010-november-diabetes-month.cfm>
- Eagle Books, a four-book set of diabetes prevention stories
- We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity and Nutrition) program
- Other diabetes prevention and self-management materials and programs
- All materials listed above are free

A food demonstration featuring lentils at the Senior Center was well received by nine community members. Lentils are often used in children's art projects in the U.S. and rarely as food. Lentils are a low-cost, low-calorie, high-fiber, and nutrient-rich food source. Food demonstration participants made a salad and vinaigrette dressing, which were eaten with brown rice and Mjeddrah, an easy Lebanese lentil dish low in fat, salt and sugar.

For diabetes outreach opportunities or additional questions, please contact Denise Ramp, Community Education Coordinator, at dbramp@anthc.org or (907) 729-3925.

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About the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is a not-for-profit tribal health organization managed by Alaska Native tribal governments and their regional health organizations. We provide statewide services in specialty medical care; construction of water, sanitation and health facilities; community health and research; information technology and professional recruiting. For more information, please visit www.anthc.org.