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NEWS RELEASE

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Recognized For Community Outreach

WASHINGTON (December 12, 2011) - The American Hospital Association (AHA) awarded the Carolyn Boone Lewis Living the Vision award to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) in Anchorage for its work to improve the health of Alaska Natives and American Indians through actions that go beyond traditional hospital care. The award will be presented to ANTHC by the AHA at an event next year.

ANTHC serves 140,000 Alaska Natives who make up diverse tribal communities (including Inupiat, Yup'ik, Athabascan, Aleut, Tlingit, Haida and other cultures) across the vast state. In addition to Alaska Native Medical Center, a 150-bed facility which provides comprehensive medical services to Alaska Natives and American Indians, ANTHC's outreach efforts extend around the state. The consortium focuses on wellness, community-based provision of care, and public health status and improvement to achieve their vision of Alaska Natives being the healthiest people in the world.

"The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's wide range of health care work fully reflects its philosophy of a lifelong commitment to the people and communities it serves," said AHA President and CEO Rich Umbdenstock. "Their efforts touch every part of an individual's health – from ensuring homes have clean water to improving employee health to helping seniors receive appropriate care. I am pleased and honored to recognize the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium for its achievements and commitment to communities."

ANTHC believes in keeping people out of hospitals by preventing disease and injury. Outreach efforts are centered around its Community Health Aide Program, a network of about 550 Alaskans who practice in more than 170 rural communities. Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps) are selected by their villages to receive training. Additionally, public health nurses, physicians and dentists visit villages to see clients in collaboration with the CHA/Ps.

ANTHC's wellness and prevention efforts also include planning, design, construction and operations support for clean water and sanitation projects throughout Alaska and in partnership with its Division of

Environmental Health and Engineering. The work is critical since almost 25 percent of Alaska is still without sanitation facilities services and clean running water and wastewater disposal. Communities that recently moved from honey buckets to running water and pipe sewage disposal include Akiak, Fort Yukon, Goodnews Bay, Pitkas Point and Nunam Iqua.

Additional ANTHC community outreach efforts include:

- An [Elders Program](#) (long-term medical, personal and social services) focusing on culturally appropriate care and services if patients are unable to stay in own homes.
- [Injury Prevention](#) work that tackles the most common injuries facing Alaska Natives, like drowning and fall prevention, with a focus on helping Elders.
- A [Nutrition and Food Distribution Program](#), a pilot expansion funded by the United States Department of Agriculture to evaluate the impact on the diet and health of the Alaska Native population. It aims to benefit remote Alaska Native communities by using culturally appropriate methods to promote increased fruit and vegetable consumption and increased use of traditional foods. In the next phase, nutrition education will assist people in increasing their cooking skills to help them better use the new commodity foods.
- [Health Promotion and Disease Prevention](#) work that ranges from tobacco education to encouraging testing and education for sexually transmitted diseases to providing training and technical support that will help build health delivery capacity in regions around Alaska.
- [Worksite Wellness](#) solutions that help improve the health of Alaska Native people through employer-based wellness programs.

"The Consortium came into existence to exemplify the approach of Alaska Native people taking ownership of our own challenges and responsibilities not only related to personal health, but the wellness of our communities as a whole," said Andy Teuber, ANTHC chairman and president. "Though care is provided in the most visible manner at ANMC, without staff from all our divisions, as well as our numerous partners across the State, we wouldn't be the recipient of such a tremendous honor."

Established in 1996 and first presented in 1998, The Living the Vision Award recognizes institutions or individuals living the AHA's vision of a society of healthy communities where all individuals reach their highest potential for health. In 2002, it was renamed the Carolyn Boone Lewis Living the Vision Award, in memory of the first hospital trustee to serve as AHA chair. An important element of the award is that a hospital must be recognized as a leader and nominated by others in the health care field.

About the AHA

The AHA is a not-for-profit association of health care provider organizations and individuals that are committed to the improvement of health in their communities. The AHA is the national advocate for its members, 4,800 hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, and 42,000 individuals. Founded in 1898, the AHA provides education for health care leaders and is a source of information on health care issues and trends. For more information visit the Web site at www.aha.org.

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. ANTHC provides 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.anthctoday.org.

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