



THE

# Mukluk Telegraph

THE OFFICIAL QUARTERLY NEWSPAPER FOR THE CUSTOMER-OWNERS OF THE ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2012

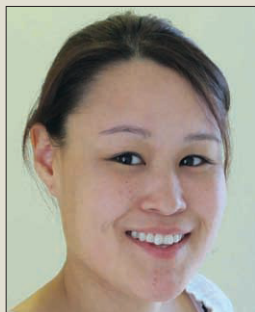
## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE



**PAGE 2:** HANF gives comfort to parents, families



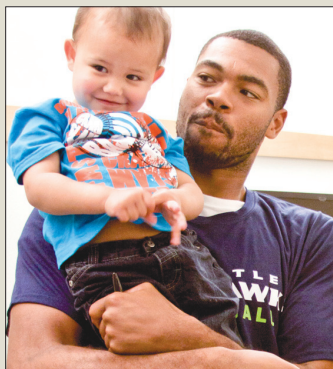
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**PAGE 8:** Stars visit kids

## Listening, learning, supporting

*ANTHC's work to combat suicide spans from personal communication to new technology*

BY ANTHC STAFF

**S**uicide continues to painfully impact families and communities in all corners of Alaska while the topic itself remains sensitive and urgent for so many around the state.

While there is no simple or single solution to ending suicide, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and many of its partners have joined community members around the state to continue providing education, support and inspiration to help those in the fight against suicide.

"Suicide is the second leading cause of years of life lost for Alaska Native people, worse than cancer and heart disease and second only to accidents," said Dr. Jay Butler, Senior Director of ANTHC's Division of Community Health Services. "But numbers only tell part of the story. They do not reflect the pain of the

large number of suicide attempts, and most importantly, they do not tell of the painful loss for surviving loved ones and communities."

Here are just a few of the unique ways that ANTHC is collaborating with others to prevent suicide and care for those who are living with suicide's effects.

### Student videos inspire viewers

Alaska's youth are taking a leadership role in

SEE LISTENING, LEARNING, SUPPORTING, PAGE 6 ►



A screenshot from the winning entry of the AASG Suicide Prevention Media Contest by the Meshik School Student Council.



A screenshot from the second place entry in the AASG Suicide Prevention Media Contest by the Barrow High School Student Council.

## Clean water, clean energy around Alaska

*ANTHC's innovative, impactful construction builds healthier communities*

BY JOSH NIVA

A busy summer of construction for ANTHC's Division of Environmental Health and Engineering (DEHE) has built healthier communities around Alaska and produced clean water, sanitation and energy for thousands of Alaskans.

DEHE teams worked on more than 40 construction projects in more than 30 communities this summer while also conducting energy audits and building partnerships that help communities maximize resources. Some of



PHOTO BY ANTHC

The ANTHC-built mini-wind farm in Goodnews Bay places modern technology in a traditional setting and helps the community tap its natural resources to power the local water treatment plant.

this summer's work is among DEHE's most innovative to date as teams tapped technology to take advantage of Alaska's available

natural resources and improve the sustainability of sanitation infrastructure.

SEE INNOVATIVE EFFORTS, PAGE 7 ►



# Raising funds, having fun, making an impact: A busy summer for HANF

ANTHC’s Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation (HANF) works constantly to raise funds and awareness that will improve the health of Alaska Native people around our state. In recent months, HANF has offered donors, volunteers and advocates many diverse opportunities to make an impact.

Last fall, the Independent Pilots Association (IPA) Foundation donated \$20,000 to the HANF Kids Wing at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) Fund. The IPA is the collective bargaining unit for the more than 2,800 professional pilots that fly the 206 heavy jet UPS fleet. This summer, HANF used those funds to purchase six new sleeper chairs, which were recently installed in the Inpatient Pediatrics Unit.

Sleeper chairs in the Inpatient Pediatric Unit at ANMC are often the only beds parents use during their stay and many of the old recliner-style chairs needed to be replaced. The new chairs feature a couch design, which is easier for two people to sit on as they stay with a child. When parents get tired, the couch can be converted into a long, seamless twin-sized



Parents and families are resting easier at ANMC, where ANTHC’s Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation recently provided six new sleeper chairs.

bed. “The parents love these chairs,” said Marilyn Deykes, Director of Inpatient Pediatrics.

In July, HANF hosted its first Teeing Off for Tribal Health Golf Classic in Anchorage. The one-day event drew 78 players and 20 teams and raised more than \$25,000 for HANF. A foursome from the Anchorage public relations firm Bradley Reid + Associates took the team victory; a team of ANTHC staff placed second. HANF Director Carrie Brown said the tournament

was well received and anticipates it will become an annual event.

HANF thanks all golfers and volunteers, as well as sponsors GCI, VALIC, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Wisconsin RX/ National Cooperative RX, Alaska Rubber & Supply, Channel Construction, Klondike Advertising, Alaska Regional Hospital, Capital Office Supply and Big Dipper

## Helping HANF

Learn more about HANF’s impactful work or give a gift by visiting **inspiringgoodhealth.org** or contacting HANF at **info@inspiringgoodhealth.org** or **(907) 729-5652**.

Clothing Company.

In other recent work, HANF partnered with ANTHC’s Injury Prevention program to provide 700 smoke detectors to Alaska families through RurAL CAP, and HANF assisted in the fundraising for Camp ARCTIC, a free summer camp for Alaska youth with juvenile idiopathic arthritis and their families.

In the months ahead, HANF is currently developing its annual employee giving campaign for ANTHC employees and partners and planning its first wearable art auction. The team is also in the planning phase for its signature event: the Raven’s Ball, the annual black tie event which is scheduled to take place Saturday, March 23, at the Captain Cook Hotel in Anchorage.

# Raven's Ball

SIXTH ANNUAL

Enjoy an elegant evening

7pm SATURDAY, MARCH 23, 2013

at the HOTEL CAPTAIN COOK

to benefit the health and well-being of Alaska Native People.

HEALTHY  
**Alaska Natives**  
FOUNDATION

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

A limited number of tickets, tables and sponsorship opportunities are available. RSVP at (907)729-5652 or online [www.inspiringgoodhealth.org](http://www.inspiringgoodhealth.org)

## MISSION

Providing the highest quality health services in partnership with our people and the Alaska Tribal Health System

## VISION

Alaska Natives are the healthiest people in the world

## VALUES

Achieving excellence  
Native self-determination  
Treat with respect and integrity  
Health and wellness  
Compassion

### THE MUKLUK TELEGRAPH

The Mukluk Telegraph is the official newspaper of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

The paper is published quarterly and distributed at no charge to customer-owners, employees and partners of ANTHC statewide.

### HOW ARE WE DOING?

Have a suggestion or a compliment for the Mukluk Telegraph?

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# Awards, accreditations abound for ANMC

As usage of the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) increases by Alaska Native people from around the state, so does the quality of care and the honors that come in concert with providing that care. In recent months, ANMC staff and programs have earned national attention and accreditation for its work.

Recently, ANMC received reaccreditation from Joint Commission, an independent, not-for-profit organization that accredits and certifies more than 19,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States. Joint Commission accreditation and certification is recognized nationwide as the gold standard in health care. ANMC achieved this accreditation in 2009 and three years later, still holds the gold seal. Congratulations to ANMC, Southcentral Foundation and ANTHC staff on this much deserved accreditation.

ANMC was also selected as one of 408 hospitals in the nation, and one of just two in Alaska, to earn a 2012 Organ Donation Medal of Honor from the Department of Health and Human Services. Hospitals receive this award for achieving and sustaining national goals for organ donation and showing effort that saves and improves the lives of so many through organ donation and transplantation. ANMC



It has been a busy summer at the Alaska Native Medical Center, where staff has been recognized nationally for providing the highest quality of care to Alaska Native people from around the state.

will receive the honor at the National Learning Congress October 4-5 in Grapevine, Texas. The Studer Group recently recognized ANMC with a 2012 Excellence in Patient Care Award in the Medicine Information Composite of

the Hospital Consumer Assessment of Health Plans Survey/Value-Based Purchasing category. ANMC will accept the award at the What's Right in Health Care Conference this October in Nashville.

## Future DHATs begin training with goal of serving their regions

The sixth cohort of Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) students began its first year of training with ANTHC's team at the Dental Health Aide Training Program in Anchorage in August. The five students in this cohort will undergo more than two years of training: one year in Anchorage followed by a year in Bethel, a preceptorship with a dental supervisor and then certification through the CHAP board to practice in their communities.

ANTHC started training DHAT students in 2007. This newest cohort is comprised of five Alaska Native students from around Alaska: Lauren Reed from Noatak (sponsored by the Maniilaq Association); Samantha Brown from Kotzebue (Maniilaq Association); Renee Cheemuk from Kotlik (Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation); Angelica Afcan from Emmonak, (Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation); and Shawn Martin from Bethel (Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation).

Prior to arriving in Anchorage, the students completed an online Anatomy & Physiology course through the University of Washington. The students are already certified in Basic Life Support for Health Care Providers, as well. Some of the group's first quarter courses include: Dental Assisting, Infection Control, General Health Sciences, Radiology, Primary Dental Health Aide, and Community Based Dental Prevention and Behavioral Sciences. They are also scheduled to participate in a Tobacco Treatment Specialist Course.

There are currently 28 DHATs combatting the decades-old epidemic of poor oral health around Alaska. These new students are the next wave of DHATs that will work in communities around the state, often in their home regions, to help improve the oral health status of their people.



Lauren Reed from Noatak



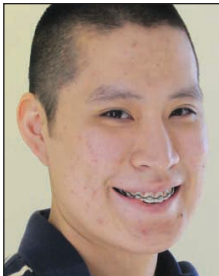
Samantha Brown from Kotzebue



Renee Cheemuk from Kotlik



Angelica Afcan from Emmonak



Shawn Martin from Bethel

**Online**  
Learn more about ANTHC's work with the Alaska DHAT program at [anthc.org/chs/chap/dhs](http://anthc.org/chs/chap/dhs)  
Keep up with DHATs on Facebook at [facebook.com/ANTHCsmile](https://www.facebook.com/ANTHCsmile)

### WELCOME NEW PROVIDERS

<b>Ryan Gerry MD</b> General Surgeon Surgery Clinic	<b>Kenneth P Moore MD</b> Urologist Urology Clinic	<b>Megan Lea MD</b> Emergency Medicine Emergency Department
<b>Sarah Sindell MD</b> General Surgeon Surgery Clinic	<b>Angelica Balingit MD</b> Internist Internal Medicine Clinic	<b>Jacob Gray MD</b> Infectious Disease Internal Medicine Clinic
<b>Mark Lorenz MD</b> Otolaryngologist ENT Clinic	<b>Coralynn Sack</b> Internist Hospitalist (Inpatient)	<b>Rolland Torres MD</b> Neurosurgeon Neurosurgery Clinic
<b>Kelly Lorenz MD</b> Ophthalmologist Ophthalmology Clinic	<b>Hari Regen</b> Internist Hospitalist (Inpatient)	<b>Robert Lieberman</b> Neurosurgeon Neurosurgery Clinic
<b>Charles Hightower MD</b> Orthopedic Surgeon Orthopedic Clinic	<b>Nathan Hemmer MD</b> Emergency Medicine Emergency Department	<b>Laura Levoy MD</b> Emergency Medicine Emergency Department





# Building better health care around Alaska

In recent months, many members of the Alaska Tribal Health System opened or continued construction of new health care and administrative facilities that will help staff and partners provide even better care, and access to care, for Alaska Native people around our state. Here's a glimpse at a few of the new buildings.



PHOTO BY JOSH NIVA / ANTHC



PHOTO BY RACHEL SAYLOR / TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

**Above:** ANTHC employees prepare to move into the Consortium's new Healthy Communities Building, which houses ANTHC's Division of Community Health Services and the Division of Environmental Health and Engineering.

**Left:** Tanana Chiefs Conference recently opened the new Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center in Fairbanks to provide health care services to the Alaska Native people of Interior Alaska.





PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION

**Above:** Leaders from Southcentral Foundation, Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, Knik Tribal Council and the Alaska Area Indian Health Service celebrate the opening of the new Valley Native Primary Care Center in Wasilla.

**Left:** Construction continues at the new Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital in Barrow. The new 109,000-square-foot hospital is scheduled to open in early summer 2013.



PHOTO COURTESY OF ARCTIC SLOPE NATIVE ASSOCIATION

## SAVE THE DATE

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)  
Annual Meeting  
Monday, November 26  
In Anchorage

ANTHC's Annual Meeting features opportunities to learn more about the Consortium's work around Alaska and discuss opportunities with ANTHC leadership.

Call (907) 729-1915 for more information or look for updates in your mail and at [www.anthc.org](http://www.anthc.org).



Amaya Ayojajak. Photo by Vanessa McDonald

## Inspiring *Good* health for all our families.

As we gather from across Alaska at this year's AFN Convention, let's remember the unique health challenges facing us all. With your help, the Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation can continue raising awareness and resources for health care improvements, wellness and prevention and healthy village environments.

When you give to HANF, you help create a healthier tomorrow for Alaska Native families near and far.



Make a *difference* today.

Visit us at [www.InspiringGoodHealth.org](http://www.InspiringGoodHealth.org) or call 907-729-1900.



LISTENING, LEARNING, SUPPORTING, FROM PAGE 1 ▶

bringing suicide awareness and prevention conversations to the forefront. For the past two years, ANTHC has partnered with the Alaska Association of Student Governments (AASG), Alaska’s Careline and GCI to promote the AASG Suicide Prevention Media Contest. The contest empowers youth around the state to produce short videos about suicide’s impact. Winning entries are then turned into 30-second public service announcements and broadcast more than 20,000 times on GCI Cable in communities around Alaska.

Madison Manning and the Meshik School Student Council in Port Heiden recently took first place in the 2012 media contest. That group took a playful tact with their winning message, writing positive messages on their hands and setting the film to music. The second place video was submitted by Nuala Kelly and the Barrow High School Student Council. Their message was more direct: the piece showed residents naming close relatives and friends that have died by suicide.

Watch the public service announcements and other entries at <http://bit.ly/McSBoF>.

safeTALK training continues growing

safeTALK suicide intervention training sessions are designed to help people make direct contact with someone who is in a crisis and connect the at-risk person to suicide first aid resources. This summer, ANTHC collaborated with the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium Behavioral Health/Suicide



PHOTO BY ANTHC  
Community members and high school leaders from the Kodiak area recently attended a safeTALK suicide intervention training.

Prevention Program to host two workshops and provided a workshop for employees from the Kodiak Area Native Association. The Southeast workshops worked with counselors, teachers and community members on one day, then with workers from a local homeless shelter on the next. In Kodiak, the group included four high school students.

Barbara Franks, ANTHC Suicide Prevention Program Associate and safeTALK trainer, explained that safeTALK is a complementary product to Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), which is well-taught around Alaska. She added that the turnouts in both communities were the largest she’s seen for Alaska training events. That kind of energy encourages her that the work is making a

**More info**  
Learn more about safeTALK, ASIST and other suicide intervention, education and support work by contacting ANTHC’s Barbara Franks at [bjfranks@anthc.org](mailto:bjfranks@anthc.org) or (907) 729-3751.

Learn more about ANTHC’s work around suicide prevention and survivor support at [anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/suicide-and-suicide-attempt-prevention.cfm](http://anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/suicide-and-suicide-attempt-prevention.cfm)

difference.

“What people have told me after the training sessions are comments like ‘I didn’t know that was a warning sign’ or ‘I just thought that person was acting out,’” Barbara said. “They learn what to look for, warning signs that someone might be at risk to die by suicide.”

SurvivorVoices talking circle and training

ANTHC Suicide Prevention Program Associate Barbara Franks has long advocated for bringing a new type of training made specifically for suicide survivors to Alaska. Recently, she found success: Alaska’s first SurvivorVoices, a three-day workshop on talking circles and training about suicide loss, took place in Anchorage and drew a group from around the state.




PHOTO BY ANTHC  
A group celebrates after graduating from Alaska’s first SurvivorVoices talking circle and training about suicide loss for survivors of suicide.

SurvivorVoices was an opportunity for survivors to learn how to tell their stories safely and effectively and then become trainers to bring the education back to their communities. Most of the training focused on public speaking, issues to be aware of when speaking about suicide, and safe messaging.

Four men and four women participated: two from Tanana, two from Seldovia, two from Dillingham, one from Fairbanks, and one from Barrow. The eight were chosen in teams so they could later deliver workshops together in their communities in the months ahead. Franks will serve as support and even a backup trainer if the four teams need assistance.

“The health of my people starts with me”

 Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

**Mark**  
ANTHC Supervisor of Facilities  
Athabaskan, Yupik, Aleut, from Homer

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**1-800-528-6680**



INNOVATIVE EFFORTS, FROM PAGE 1 ▶

One of those state-of-the-art projects is currently spinning in Goodnews Bay in Southwest Alaska along the Kuskokwim Bay. DEHE teams built a mini-wind farm there; it went online in June. The three turbines expect to power 75 percent of ANTHC’s two-year-old water treatment plant, which makes Goodnews Bay’s sanitation infrastructure more sustainable by reducing costs of water treatment and distribution. DEHE agreed with the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative so that excess power produced by the facility can be sold to the utility.

The project is expected to pave the way for similar projects and has made national headlines in a pair of eco-focused online publications.

Emergency efforts in Kivalina

This fall’s heavy rains in Northwest Alaska led to devastating flooding in Kivalina. The flooding took out about 3,000 feet of the community’s water supply line; residents were unable to pump water or have access to potable water; and there was a forced closure of the community’s school.

ANTHC partnered with local, state, federal and tribal partners to provide relief to area residents and support for those trying to establish a safe water source. ANTHC used emergency funding to provide materials like a pump, piping, hosing, water filters and more to help those working in the area. ANTHC also provided technical support like engineering and operations management to the agencies involved.

Selawik celebrates new plant

In mid-August, DEHE teams started Selawik’s



PHOTO BY ANTHC  
Teams work on providing clean water to the community of Kivalina, which recently suffered devastating flooding that took out the community’s water supply.



PHOTO BY ANTHC  
Workers test a flush hydrant in Huslia, where ANTHC teams are completing a multi-year water main replacement project.

Online

Learn more about ANTHC’s Division of Environmental Health and Engineering at [anthctoday.org/dehe/](http://anthctoday.org/dehe/)

new water treatment facility, which supplies high-quality treated water and addresses some of the area’s challenging water quality issues. The community’s water source has some of the state’s highest levels of organic contaminants with increasing silt loading in the nearby river caused by melting permafrost. Selawik has been required to boil water for extended periods and suffered with poor taste and odor in the water. The new treatment plant employs enhanced coagulation and a MIOX disinfection system, both firsts for DEHE systems.

ANMC telecardiology work makes impact across the state

The Alaska Native Medical Center’s (ANMC) Cardiology department continues expanding its telecardiology work. The team has conducted more than two dozen telecardiology appointments via video conferencing (VTC) since June and has seen patients in regions across Alaska that would otherwise face a difficult trip to Anchorage and ANMC.

“This is extremely exciting – the patients, families and especially

elders have been absolutely thrilled with getting subspecialty care without having to drive or fly long distances,” explained Dr. Matthew Schnellbaecher, a longtime ANMC cardiologist. “It’s very exciting for us, as well, because we know it’s a better way to care for people, keep track of them and offer better disease management care.”

During the telecardiology encounter, the patient and the region’s health aide meet

with ANMC’s Cardiology staff on televisions thanks to VTC established by ANTHC’s HIT teams. Prior to the appointment, the health aide draws blood, gets orders prepared and performs an electrocardiography (EKG). When the appointment takes place, ANMC’s doctors can discuss the patient’s current health and how they are feeling, go through the EKG and blood results, and review the patient’s medications to ensure

the timing and doses are correct.

Dr. Schnellbaecher said that his team has connected for telecardiology appointments in communities from Pelican to Barrow, Ouzinkie to Teller, and more. He added that this kind of work improves quality of life and frequency of care for patients, prevents errors, saves money in many ways, and ultimately makes the patients, particularly elders, happier.

Staying safe during Alaska’s winter months

As winter approaches in Alaska, snow and ice increase the potential for injury. ANTHC’s Injury Prevention Program would like you to please keep these safety tips in mind.

ON THE ICE

- Wear ice grippers or ice cleats
- Walk slowly and take smaller steps
- Give yourself enough time to get to your destination safely
- Keep sand or salt handy at home – it can be used to make walkways less slippery

Online

More safety tips can be found on the ANTHC Injury Prevention website at [anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/](http://anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/)

PREVENT SLIPS AND FALLS

- On an annual basis, have your vision checked by an eye doctor
- Ask a pharmacist to review your medication once a year
- Walk and participate in subsistence

activities – exercise helps with strength and balance

WOODSTOVES

Woodstoves are a common source of heat during the winter. While great for heating your home, it is important to operate them safely:

- Make sure the fire is kept under control – shield it and watch for sparks
- Have a working smoke alarm on every floor

- Burn only approved material
- Refrain from consuming alcohol; it may increase the risk of fire by impairing your judgment and coordination

Stay safe this winter season and remember that safety is everyone’s responsibility.



# Good sports

Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) offers the best care and services to the youngest Alaska Native people and their families when they are facing health issues. ANMC’s Pediatrics area is also a popular stop for visiting VIPs, who enjoy spending time with children, families and ANMC staff. In recent months, members of the Harlem Globetrotters traveling basketball team and Seattle Seahawks football franchise have stopped by the ANMC Pediatrics unit to hang out, sign autographs and have a little fun.



SEATTLE  
SEAHAWKS  
PHOTOS BY  
KIRA BRIEZE  
ANTHC  
•  
HARLEM  
GLOBETROTTERS  
PHOTOS BY  
TODD HENRY  
ANTHC

## Newborn Channel educates Alaska’s moms-to-be

Becoming a mother is a life-changing experience. Often there is so much change happening in a new or expecting mom’s life, and so much new information coming at them constantly, that sometimes important details can get lost in the mix.

The Alaska Native Medical Center’s (ANMC) Mother Baby unit now airs the Newborn Channel, a television network for parents that is used in more than 1,000 hospitals around the country. The station currently plays in 12 rooms at ANMC and plans to expand to five additional rooms are



underway; it is also available for visitors and families in the Mother Baby waiting area. Programs loop continuously, providing patient education specifically for new parents including topics like feeding fundamentals, making homes safe for babies, helping babies rest well, postpartum care, and more.

The education and access to the Newborn Channel does not end

when mothers and babies leave ANMC. Mother Baby Director Shelly Inda said that post-discharge, new moms are provided with a code that will allow them to view the Newborn Channel online, where many videos are posted. There is also a Newborn Channel app available for smartphones, making the information accessible and convenient for new families.

Online

Learn more about the Newborn Channel at ANMC by contacting Shelly Inda at (907) 729-3209 or by visiting [thenewbornchannel.com](http://thenewbornchannel.com)

“It is very easy for our new families to feel overwhelmed with information as they prepare for discharge,” explained Inda. “The best part of the Newborn Channel is that if a review of any information covered during the hospital stay is needed, our families can access it at home when they feel less stressed and can really let the information absorb.”