



THE

# Mukluk Telegraph

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

JANUARY - MARCH 2015

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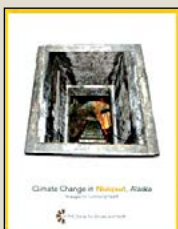


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## The best in quality and care: ANMC retains Magnet honor

*ANMC remains Alaska's only Magnet-designated hospital for nursing excellence*

The American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) recently notified Alaska Native Medical Center that the Commission on Magnet designated the ANMC hospital as a Magnet-recognized facility for a third time. Less than seven percent of hospitals nationwide are Magnet-recognized for nursing excellence. The ANMC hospital has been Alaska's only Magnet-recognized hospital since 2003. The decision to redesignate the ANMC hospital was unanimous among the 12-person Commission on Magnet, an advisory board of advanced practice nursing experts.

The Magnet Recognition Program honors health care organizations



PHOTO BY BRIAN ADAMS

*The Alaska Native Medical Center is known for nursing excellence and world-class care. ANMC recently retained its Magnet designation, which recognizes quality, care, safety and more.*

for quality patient care, nursing excellence, and innovations in professional nursing practice. Magnet designation is the ultimate credential for high quality nursing.

"Our Magnet-recognized nurses strengthen both the care provided at the ANMC hospital and throughout the Alaska Tribal Health System,"

said Andy Teuber, ANTHC Chairman and President. "Our talented nurses are helping us work toward our vision that Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world."

ANMC leadership learned of the third redesignation via conference call. The Commission on Magnet

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## Fighting cancer, caring for survivors



PHOTO BY BILL HUTCHISON

*Cancer survivors from across Alaska shared their experiences in a comfortable, and fun, setting during this fall's Men's Retreat for Prostate and Testicular Cancer Survivors in Cooper Landing.*

### Fellowship, support at Men's Retreat for Cancer Survivors

Nearly 20 cancer survivors from around Alaska had an opportunity to share their experiences and find support at the sixth annual Men's Retreat for Prostate and Testicular Cancer Survivors, which took place September 5-7 at the Alaska Wildland Adventures Kenai Riverside Lodge in Cooper Landing. ANTHC Cancer Program staff and the State of Alaska Comprehensive Cancer Control Programs partnered to host the retreat.

The two-day retreat included outdoor activities and evening fireside

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UNIQUE CANCER SERVICES, FROM PAGE 1 ▶

discussions on cancer survivorship led by experts Dr. William Lubke of ANMC and Dr. Stephen Settle from Anchorage Radiation Therapy Center.

For men diagnosed with prostate or testicular cancer, survivorship is often complicated by disease-specific treatment side effects, including urinary, bowel, sexual, and hormonal dysfunction that can challenge a man's physical, mental and social well-being and life satisfaction. Despite the proven effectiveness of support groups at reducing depression in cancer patients, men typically do not participate in support groups. The retreat setting gives male cancer survivors the opportunity to connect with one another, share their struggles and successes, and discuss survivorship with cancer experts.

The retreat is also beneficial for providers, as they gain insight on many of the issues men face when diagnosed with prostate or testicular cancers.

"It is important to find a venue that appeals to men and

provides a safe environment to share treatment and survivorship experiences," explained Stacy Kelley, ANTHC's Cancer Partnership Program Coordinator, who has helped plan and evaluate the event each year. "With the retreat, there are unique opportunities to talk with health care providers and fellow survivors."

The retreat includes lodging, meals, round-trip transportation from Anchorage, and outdoor activities like fly fishing, river rafting and hiking. ANTHC offers financial assistance for Alaska Native and American Indian participants.

Learn more about the Men's Retreat for Prostate and Testicular Cancer Survivors and how to offer the event to survivors in your area by contacting Stacy Kelley, ANTHC's Cancer Partnership Program Coordinator, at (907) 729-2827 or [skkelley@anthc.org](mailto:skkelley@anthc.org).

## Storytelling embraces Alaska Native cultures, battles cancer

Cancer is currently the leading cause of mortality among Alaska Native people. To help combat it, new ways of sharing cancer

knowledge have taken root and that are grounded in Alaska Native culture and traditional ways of life. The tradition of storytelling is part of all Alaska Native cultures, and is used to tell life lessons and pass on cultural values. It is now needed to help change the conversation around cancer in Alaska's communities. Digital storytelling combines the tradition of oral storytelling with computer-based technology to provide a creative and engaging way to share their cancer-related health messages to empower individual and community change and to open up conversations about cancer in their communities.

Since 2009, Melany Cueva, Community Health Aide/Practioners Instructor, and Laura Revels, Senior Program Manager, have taught a five-day, in-person cancer education with digital storytelling course to Community Health Workers (CHWs) and Community Health Aide/Practioners (CHA/Ps). With recent funding from the National Cancer Institute, they have been measuring the impact of cancer-related digital stories on community members, CHA/Ps and CHWs. As a result

of watching their digital stories, CHA/Ps reported that viewers have scheduled screening exams, quit smoking and are eating fewer processed foods.

"To increase cancer awareness as a catalyst for cancer conversations and wellness activities, course participants have shown their stories to family, friends, co-workers, and community members," said Revels. "Additionally, stories have been shown at Tribal council meetings, during halftime at the regional basketball tournament, and as part of health fairs and community gatherings."

As a result of participating in this cancer education and digital storytelling course, participants reported an increase in their cancer knowledge and more confidence in their ability to talk about cancer with their patients, family, and community members.

View digital stories from the Cancer Education course at [akchap.org/html/resources/cancer-education/cancer-movies/digital-stories.html](http://akchap.org/html/resources/cancer-education/cancer-movies/digital-stories.html). For more information, contact Laura Revels at (907) 729-2906 or [ljrevels@anthc.org](mailto:ljrevels@anthc.org).

### 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.

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### STAFF

**Fiona Brosnan** — ANTHC Marketing Director

**Michelle Weston** — Public Relations Director

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**Lindsay Rexford** — Marketing Manager

**Darbi Daley** — ANMC Hospital Marketing Specialist

**Todd Henry** — Multimedia Production Artist

**Karla Brollier** — Communications Specialist

**Don Steinberger** — Marketing Media Specialist

**Selma Oskolkoff-Simon** — Marketing Coordinator

### CONTACT US

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

**Attention:** Mukluk Telegraph

4000 Ambassador Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508

**Phone:** 1-907-729-1899

**E-mail:** [marketing@anthc.org](mailto:marketing@anthc.org)

**Web:** [anthc.org/news](http://anthc.org/news)

## MISSION

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

## VISION

Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world

## VALUES

Achieving excellence

Native self-determination

Treat with respect and integrity

Health and wellness

Compassion

## FIGHT THE FLU! For a healthy you and for the health of those around you – get vaccinated today!

Flu vaccination is safe, easily available and the best way to prevent you and the people you care about from getting the flu, which is easily spread and can be deadly.

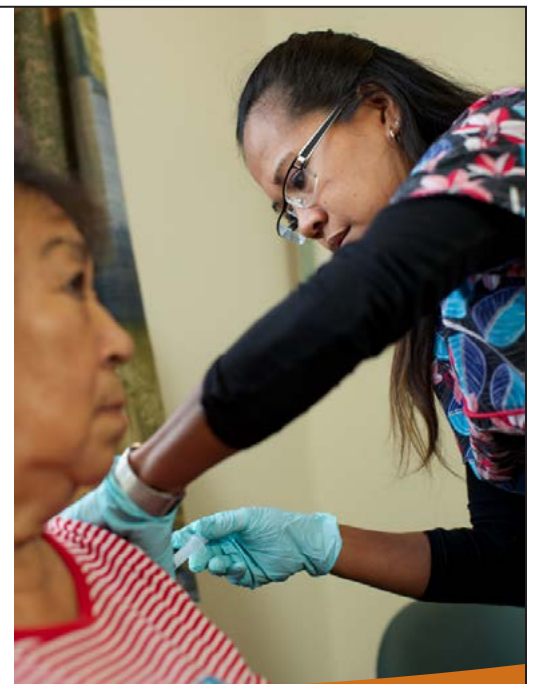
For vaccination information or to get vaccinated today, contact your local Tribal health organization or your provider at Alaska Native Medical Center.



ALASKA NATIVE  
MEDICAL CENTER



Learn more about the flu and myths and facts about vaccination at: [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).





# Around ANTHC: Award-winning, innovative staff

## Dr. Saltonstall given Red Ribbon Award for a “lifetime of work in Indian Country”

ANTHC’s Elizabeth Saltonstall, MD, was recently honored by the National Native American AIDS Prevention Center (NNAAPC) with a 2014 Honoring the Red Ribbon Award her “lifetime of work in Indian Country.” She received the award on Oct. 2 at the United States Conference on AIDS in San Diego. Dr. Saltonstall is ANTHC’s HIV Medical Director and has been a tireless leader providing both care and advocacy for Alaska Native, Native American, and Native Hawaiian people living with HIV and AIDS.

Dr. Saltonstall’s more than 13 years of dedication to Alaska Native people brought a spotlight to the realities of the epidemic in Indian Country, on both national and local levels. Under her direction, improved testing, screening and prevention initiatives helped improve the lives of indigenous people, families and communities living in America with HIV and AIDS.

Former NNAAPC employee Larry Kairaiuak, who is Iñupiat, said, “Beth has worked and collaborated with diverse communities of color to ensure that the needs of American Indians, Alaska Natives and Native Hawaiians are met regardless of funding restrictions or program limitations. From working in Alaska’s remote villages to regional, statewide and national Tribal health programs, Beth has ensured that the voice of HIV/AIDS indigenous populations and their families were addressed.”

## ANMC Nurse Practitioner Claudia Christensen receives prestigious national award

ANMC Nurse Practitioner Claudia Christensen received the 2015 American Association of Nurse Practitioners (AANP) State Award for Excellence. This prestigious award is given annually to a dedicated nurse practitioner in each state who demonstrates excellence in their area of practice. The AANP is a national organization that leads the way in



Claudia Christensen

advocacy, continuing education, and professional development for its more than 50,000 nurse practitioner members.

Christensen works in the ANMC Surgery Department and is responsible for providing colorectal cancer screenings for ANMC patients. She is one of only a handful of mid-level providers in the nation capable of providing high quality colonoscopy services for the diagnosis and prevention of colorectal cancer.

“Claudia has long been recognized by her patients and colleagues for her hard work and professionalism,” said Dr. Frank Sacco, ANMC Chief of Surgery.

“Alaska Native people have the highest incidence of colorectal cancer in the country and one of the highest rates in the world, and Claudia has worked tirelessly to improve access to colorectal cancer screening for our patients.”

## ANTHC nurse Tammy Weaver wins DAISY Award

ANMC’s Magnet nurses provide culturally appropriate, family-centered care in a unique hospital environment, and they are constantly seeking ways to improve the services and care we provide. In an effort to further recognize our nurses for their outstanding work, ANMC partnered with the DAISY Award, an international program that rewards and celebrates the extraordinary clinical skill and compassionate care given by nurses every day.

ANMC’s first DAISY Award winner is Tammy Weaver, RN and Internal Medicine Supervisor and eight-year ANTHC employee. Weaver was recognized at an award ceremony where she was presented with a certificate, a DAISY Award pin, and a hand-carved stone sculpture. Several nurses and

colleagues attended the ceremony to show their appreciation and support for Weaver, who was grateful for the recognition.

“I am proud to be part of an organization that recognizes nurses and encourages us to provide excellent patient care and service,” said Weaver.

## Longtime Alaska DHAT Aurora Johnson receives YWCA/BP Women of Achievement Award

Aurora Johnson, a longtime Alaska Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT), joined a distinguished group in November when she was honored with nine other 2014 YWCA/BP Women of Achievement Awardees. Johnson currently works for the Norton Sound Health Corporation and practices in her hometown of Unalakleet and communities around her region.

Each year, the Women of Achievement Awards ceremony recognizes and honors women who have demonstrated qualities of leadership and excellence in their professional and personal endeavors, as well as their contributions to the larger community. This year’s group also included Senator Lisa Murkowski.

Johnson is known for her passionate care and preventative dental work around the Norton Sound region and for being a part of a handful of Alaska students who had to travel to New Zealand to begin their DHAT training. When Johnson returned to rural Alaska after two years of education, she joined a small group who were the first DHATs to practice in the nation. Ever since, she has been an important community leader, a DHAT advocate and provider of essential dental care.

Johnson once said that she grew up “living in a village where dental care only came once a year and dental products were not a priority in many homes. I was very fortunate that at a very young age I had someone in my life to encourage me to take care of my teeth. Now as a dental provider myself I make it a priority to make dental products available for kids at all school sites.”



Tammy Weaver



# Alaska Native Elder Health Advisory Committee works to help Alaska Native Elders and youth

The Alaska Native Elder Health Advisory Committee (ANEHAC) recently met at ANTHC, marking the 10th anniversary of the committee since its inception. Created in 2004, the committee assisted in an Indian Health Service (IHS) Elder Care Initiative grant project to assess the long-term care needs of Alaska Native Elders. The group meets twice a year.

In 2012-13, the State Division of Juvenile Justice sought the advice of ANEHAC on ways to improve outcomes for Alaska Native youth in their system. On the advice of the committee the division is now working to integrate Tribal courts, restorative justice, collaboration with Tribal panels and regional rehabilitation programs, and to assess experiences of past traumas and improve the odds of Alaska Native youths' success outside the juvenile justice system. Suicide prevention has been an ongoing topic for the advisory committee, and in 2008, they began collaborating with ANTHC's Suicide Prevention program. The committee has continued to provide guidance, and is actively finding ways to help the young people in



PHOTOS BY TODD HENRY / ANTHC  
Alaska Native Elder Health Advisory Committee members take a break from a recent session of its work developing solutions to long-term care issues, helping Alaska Native youth, and other work to taste some fry bread.

their regions and learning how they can help prevent suicides.

The committee oversaw the IHS elder care project "Long Term Care Needs of Alaska Native Elders" and reviewed all the information developed during the Medicaid Reform Initiative, including the

Alaska Tribal Health System's (ATHS) Tribal Long Term Care Service Development Plan for home and community-based services, and the feasibility study for a Tribal nursing home in Anchorage. ANEHAC works with the ATHS Long Term Care Committee, which is comprised of representatives working on Elder services within all Tribal health organizations.

The lack of Personal Care Attendants and Waiver services in rural Alaska is a continuing challenge and has been raised to the level of the Alaska Native Health Board to discuss jointly with ANEHAC. The committee also collaborates with ANMC on challenges and new initiatives, such as the Care Coordination Center, shuttle transportation services and changes in the Quyana House. The committee participates in ongoing discussions about the need for Tribal nursing homes in Anchorage and regional hubs.

The programs implemented from ANEHAC's efforts are the Care Bag Project, which provides care bags filled with items such as fish strips, pilot bread, red rose tea, jam, playing cards, bandanas and crossword puzzle books to Elders in Anchorage assisted living homes; the Elder Outreach Project, which

recruits volunteers to meet one-on-one with elders in assisted living homes, providing them with a social connection to someone of their own culture; and the Traditional Food Lunch Program, which provides quarterly traditional food potluck lunches to residents in Seward and Anchorage nursing homes.

## Preparing traditional food for Elders at Seward Mountain Haven Nursing Home

Providence Seward Mountain Haven is a long-term care facility located in Seward that cares for many Alaska Native Elders and is designed to create an environment in which elders can be actively involved in all facets of life, including cooking, preparing menus, activities and controlling their own schedules. ANTHC's Elder Outreach group participates in the program by visiting the facility twice a year to prepare salmon soup, fry bread, akutaq and fish strips for the 20 year-round Alaska Native residents with the assistance of facility staff.

On those visits, the nursing home staff purchases salmon, vegetables, berries and bread dough from local

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James Sipary of Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation enjoys fry bread.



**ELDERS, FROM PAGE 4**

sources, and ANTHC staff prepares the food on-site with the assistance of the Elders. The group discusses things like how to use fish heads in soups and the importance of traditional food like seal oil in the diet of Alaska Native people. Some of the Elders choose to assist in the cooking by helping form the dough for the fry bread. The gathering inspires stories of family recipes, reminiscing about the fastest dough former in their families, and how they made Eskimo ice cream (akutaq) back home. The

staff is engaged and helpful in providing traditional meals while also assisting in activities with the Elders such as making kuspuks and other traditional items.

“We are making a difference and this is very important to the Elders. They look forward to the being able to have traditional fish head soup and akutaq on our visits,” said Kay Branch ANTHC’s Elder and Rural Health Services Planner in the Office of Community Health Services. “Even if people can’t attend the gathering in person, they still look forward to the food and the joy it brings.”

ANTHC’s Elder Outreach is seeking volunteers to establish regular visits to Alaska Native Elders residing in Anchorage assisted living and nursing homes. To volunteer, or if you have any

questions, contact ANTHC’s Elder and Rural Health Services department by calling (907) 729-4498 or (907) 729-3602, or e-mailing [mjheflin@anthc.org](mailto:mjheflin@anthc.org) or [pkbranch@anthc.org](mailto:pkbranch@anthc.org).



Anna Frank of Tanana Chiefs Conference and ANTHC Director Andrew Jimmie discuss the issues of the day.



John Morris, Sr., of SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium takes a fry bread break.

## Tribally-Sponsored Health Insurance Open for New Enrollees



### Do you want health insurance paid for you?

The Tribally-Sponsored Health Insurance Program may pay for health insurance for you if you qualify. From now until February 15th, all IHS eligible individuals who meet the criteria below can enroll – you do not need to be a member of a federally recognized tribe or an ANCSA shareholder.

### How do I qualify?

You and your family can get Tribally Sponsored Health Insurance if you:

- Are a resident of the state of Alaska
- Are eligible for services at a Tribal health clinic/facility
- Are not covered by or eligible for Medicare, Medicaid (Denali Care), Denali KidCare, Veterans Health, or health insurance through an employer.
- Estimate your 2015 income will be within the guidelines at left

### Where can I get more information and sign up?

Visit [anthc.org/tship](http://anthc.org/tship) to find the contact in your area and see if you are eligible and get help with enrollment.

If your family has:	You are eligible if your income is above this amount:	And below this amount:
1 person	\$14,580 a year	\$43,740 a year
2 people	\$19,660 a year	\$58,980 a year
3 people	\$24,740 a year	\$74,220 a year
4 people*	\$29,820 a year	\$89,460 a year

\*Amounts increase for larger families



**ALASKA NATIVE  
TRIBAL HEALTH  
CONSORTIUM**



# Around Alaska: Community Health

## ANTHC's EpiCenter develops teen safety cards, offers workshops on domestic and sexual violence

ANTHC's Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (EpiCenter) provides health-related data and resources to promote education and preventative care for issues including teen-related domestic and sexual violence. The EpiCenter recently launched a safety card, which helps teens recognize domestic and sexual violence.

Use of a safety card in domestic violence education, assessment and response in health care settings is an evidence-based approach shown to help people in abusive relationships seek safety and support. To make this approach as culturally and locally appropriate as possible, EpiCenter staff partnered with experts from the State of Alaska to first create the We Are Worthy card for teen girls and adult women, and now, the Alaskan gender-neutral teen card, Getting Together.

The Getting Together card is a wallet-sized, foldout card with bright colors, images, and emojis. It reflects the feedback and guidance of 113 youth from villages and towns across Alaska. The card's panels encourage youth to ask themselves questions about their relationships and to learn about issues like their rights, consent for intimacy, commercial sexual exploitation, and how to help a friend in need. The card also includes multiple teen-friendly online, text and hotline resources, and encourages teens to think of an adult they trust with whom they can discuss these topics. The primary message to teens is that they are not alone in dealing with these difficult issues.

"Special care was taken to share Tribal programs and services, and to address issues such as language access and transportation from villages," said Carla Britton, ANTHC Senior Epidemiologist. "Some information may change with time, but this is the most comprehensive and engaging guide to domestic and sexual violence and prevention services in Alaska, and we hope that it will be of great use to the general public and to service providers throughout the state."

Health care providers, behavioral health professionals, Tribal leaders and others often interact with people who have been abused or have committed abuse, and with children and youth who have been exposed to abuse, but may not know what resources are available in their communities or regions to offer support. They may also feel unsure about how to describe services in a way that is welcome and non-stigmatizing. Individuals or organizations may wish to connect with trainings or resources, or become involved with prevention opportunities, and not know what is available. The newly released regional guides to domestic and sexual

**exploitation** Huh? What's that? It's a big deal in Alaska.

**It's when someone...**

- Makes you do sexual things or pose for sexual pictures in order to get things like food, shelter, rides, drugs, or \$
- Controls where you can go and who you can talk to

Often they start by being really nice or by trying to be someone close to you, like a BF or older brother/sister. It happens in cities and in the village. If you hear about this or it's happening to you, **there is help to get out and get safe.** You can call the FBI in Alaska: 907-265-8100 or the national CyberTipline: 1-800-843-5678.

**how to help someone**

If you know someone who's in an unhealthy relationship, or someone who has been sexually bothered in a way they didn't want or taken advantage of while they were drunk or blacked out, you can help:

- Listen and let them know you care
- Believe them
- Let them know it's not their fault
- Respect their privacy
- Offer to connect them to help

**how to get help**

To ask questions, get help, or just have someone listen, these resources are there 24/7, and they care. They are free and completely anonymous.

Text "LOVE IS" to 22522

Someone I trust: \_\_\_\_\_

loveisrespect.org  
iknowmine.org  
thatsnotcool.com

Local Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

National Teen Dating Abuse Helpline: 1-866-331-9474  
Alaska Careline (crisis, suicide prevention): 1-877-266-4357

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### Teen safety cards

violence-related services were created to address these needs.

EpiCenter intern Jaclynne Oyoumick, EpiCenter Program Manager Laura Avellaneda-Cruz and State of Alaska Department of Adolescent Health staff member Jenny Baker teach interactive workshops on the card. Participants of all ages engage in discussions about healthy and unhealthy relationships, media portrayals of relationships and sexuality, barriers to open conversation, and how to have non-judgmental conversations with youth. The card will be promoted on social media by the EpiCenter and [iknowmine.org](http://iknowmine.org), and through presentations and events.

You can request both patient safety cards on the EpiCenter website at [anthctoday.org/epicenter/healthyfamilies](http://anthctoday.org/epicenter/healthyfamilies). Contact ANTHC's Laura Avellaneda-Cruz with questions or requests for information or trainings at [ldavellanedacruz@anthc.org](mailto:ldavellanedacruz@anthc.org) or (907) 729-2489.

## ANTHC's Diabetes Program receives advocacy honor

The ANTHC Diabetes Program recently received the 2014 John Pipe Voices for Change by the American Diabetes Association Award in the category of advocacy for its effective diabetes treatment and prevention services in American Indian and Alaska Native communities. Receiving this award showcases the true extent of care and support the Diabetes Program provides to assist Alaska Native people in reducing the risk of complications from diabetes, including an ongoing search for innovative ways to reach our partners and patients to help prevent and manage diabetes.

Investment in community-driven, culturally appropriate prevention programs has had positive results. Average blood sugar levels among the Alaska Native population decreased

a full percentage point, from 9.0 percent to 8.0 percent, between 1996 and 2011, translating into a 40 percent reduction in risks for many complications.

ANTHC has a multidisciplinary team of two medical providers, a pharmacist and dietitians. They provide direct patient care at ANMC and in field clinics around Alaska, and maintain a registry of Alaska Native people with diabetes and those at high risk for developing diabetes. The team also provides diabetes prevention and evidence-based treatment through community outreach events, programs, trainings, writings and continuing education.

Learn more about ANTHC's Diabetes Program by contacting Judith Thompson, ANTHC Diabetes Program Director, at [jbthompson@anthc.org](mailto:jbthompson@anthc.org) or (907) 729-2164.

## Maternal Child Health and Immunization Conference brings together providers

The recent 2014 Maternal Child Health and Immunization Conference in Anchorage had a theme of Advancing Wellness Across the Lifespan. The conference provided attendees with the latest in best practices, skills, tools and surveillance data related to the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of women's, children's and adolescent health issues in Alaska, as well as the latest information in regards to childhood and adolescent immunization.

More than 220 people attended, with about a third of attendees representing Alaska Tribal health organizations. Keynote speakers presented on "The First 1,000 Days of Life" campaign, epigenetics, the status of Maternal Child Health in Alaska, maternal vaccination, Indigenous midwifery and Maternal Child Health, and positive youth development. Breakout session topics ranged widely, and included sessions covering immunizations, domestic violence, pregnancy and outcomes, adolescent health, and tools available to providers and public health professionals.

Visit [alaskamchconference.org](http://alaskamchconference.org) for more information.

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**Read copies of Hot Topics in Alaska Native Health and We Are Getting Healthier at [www.anthc.org/news](http://www.anthc.org/news).**



# Around the Alaska Native Medical Center

## ANMC campus planning clinical expansions

ANMC constantly works on improving access and services for our people. Recently, ANTHC governance approved several expansion projects across the Alaska Native Health Campus to increase clinic space and access so ANMC can better serve our growing patient population.

“These new projects will significantly improve our efficiency on campus, provide growth opportunities that meet known demand, and allow us to serve patient needs on multiple levels,” said LeeAnn Garrick, Strategic Access Development Director.

Following the recent move of the ENT, Audiology, and Ophthalmology Clinics from the ANMC hospital to 3801 University Lake Drive, there is clinic space available at ANMC which will allow for shifting and expansion of the following clinics: Orthopedics, Oncology, Urology, General Surgery, and the Emergency Department Fast Track. These expanded clinic spaces will allow for increased patient access and satisfaction. The project is currently in the planning phase with a developing completion schedule.

ANMC’s Critical Care Unit (CCU) has been experiencing a very high patient census, and it is expected that the CCU will, on average, exceed 80 percent of actual occupied beds by the end of 2014. In comparison, the median national average occupancy benchmark for a CCU is 60 percent. Additional CCU beds will allow ANMC to handle unexpected emergency or trauma patients, changes in acuity of current inpatients, flexible staffing, and the unexpected needs of post-operative patients. Keeping occupancy below 80 percent will allow staff to accommodate admission surges and better manage risks. The concept plan for the CCU expands up from the roof adjacent to the existing CCU to meet these needs, employing one of the scalability strategies of ANMC’s architectural design.

## ANMC Maternal Child Health construction update

As part of the commitment to provide the very best care and experience, a multi-phase, large-scale construction project continues on ANMC’s Maternal Child Health Services, finishing the last phases of construction in the Mother/Baby Unit.

The entire Mother/Baby Unit (MBU) is included in this construction project, with upgrades and improvements complete in the OB Triage and Support Areas, where six stand-alone OB Triage rooms were added for expectant mothers. Within the OB Triage and Support area, there is an updated nutrition room, nurses’ station, staff and patient lounges, staff locker room, bathrooms and equipment storage room.



PHOTO BY BRIAN ADAMS

*Generations of happy and healthy families have been born and received the best care at the Alaska Native Medical Center.*

Construction also included adding three brand-new labor and delivery rooms. Right now, construction teams are updating and refreshing three of the original rooms, and once those are complete, teams will update and refresh the final two. Upon completion of construction, the MBU will have a total of eight labor and delivery rooms. Construction is expected to be complete in early 2015.

One C-section operating room (OR) was also added to the unit. Staff is working on provisioning the room and it will be online soon. Once the room is open, there will be two C-section ORs in the MBU.

Construction crews are also fully updating and refreshing all postpartum mother/baby rooms. So far, six postpartum rooms have been fully remodeled, and two are under construction; after that, there are four more rooms to complete. The improvements in each room include new paint, flooring, wood paneling, cabinets, tile, fixtures in bathrooms, and high-efficiency lighting. All postpartum rooms will be completely updated by early 2015.

## ANMC’s Endoscopy Department works to reduce colorectal cancer in Alaska

ANTHC is always looking at new and innovative ways to improve patient care and services at the ANMC hospital. ANMC’s Endoscopy Department is doing just that – working at the forefront of providing colorectal cancer screening care for all ANMC patients. Alaska Native people have some of the highest rates of colorectal cancer in the world, and regular screening and early detection is key for positive outcomes.

All nine of the ANMC Endoscopy Department’s nurses are approved to administer propofol, a drug used for endoscopy and colonoscopy procedures, to patients for moderate sedation, making them the only nurses in Alaska

with this approval. Only a handful of U.S. states allow nurses to do propofol conscious sedation. All of ANMC’s nine endoscopy nurses have a specialty certificate in moderate sedation, and have received extensive education and training on administering conscious sedation and monitoring patients who are under sedation.

Claudia Christensen, ANMC Nurse Practitioner, provides most of the colorectal cancer screenings for ANMC patients. She is among the select few nurse practitioners in the nation who performs colonoscopies, procedures typically performed by physicians.

The Endoscopy Department’s five technicians play an integral role on the team, assisting physicians with removing polyps, taking biopsies, helping maneuver the patient to advance the scope further into the colon, and much more.

## Radiology Department increases access for ANMC patients

Over the past year, ANMC’s Radiology Department has dramatically improved patient access to MRI services. To effectively improve access, ANMC’s Imaging team worked collaboratively with the Advance Services Access team to map a progressive plan to reduce the backlog. As a result, more capacity was added, new staff was hired to meet existing demands, permanent weekend clinics were added and the Imaging team restructured their scheduling process.

The weekday capacity has increased by 10 percent each day. In addition, a weekend clinic was opened which added 16 new appointment slots on both Saturday and Sunday, for a total of 168 additional appointment slots each month.

## ANMC’s Health Benefits Specialist team is now mobile

ANTHC’s mission is to provide the highest-quality health services in partnership with our people and the Alaska Tribal Health System. To achieve that mission, ANTHC constantly evolves its services. One such improvement is the development of ANMC’s Health Benefits Specialist team, formerly known as Family Health Resource Representatives. This team is mobile and able to meet with individuals and families around campus and elsewhere.

The team is trained to help individuals and families through the screening and enrollment process for various health care coverage programs such as Medicaid, Denali KidCare, VA Benefits, Medicare and the Tribally-Sponsored Health Insurance Program. The goal is to create awareness and offer enrollment assistance for all coverage options available to the Alaska Native and American Indian people. Billing insurance helps Tribal health facilities continue to grow and be strengthened for future generations.

For patient registration assistance, please call the Central Registration office at (907) 729-1395. For health care coverage application assistance, please call the Health Benefit Specialists at (907) 729-5696 or email [hbs@anthc.org](mailto:hbs@anthc.org).



# Around Alaska: Environmental Health and Engineering

## ANTHC receives \$2.1 million energy efficiency grant from the Denali Commission

ANTHC's Rural Energy Initiative recently received a \$2.1 million grant from the Denali Commission to implement energy efficiency measures in up to 45 rural Alaska sanitation systems. The grant also funds energy audits for sanitation systems in up to 39 additional rural Alaska communities.

In conjunction with energy efficiency-focused funding from USDA Rural Development, the State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Alaska State Legislature, this grant is expected to generate \$643,200 in annual energy savings in rural sanitation systems once all work is complete.

Skilled craftsmen and engineers from ANTHC's Department of Rural Utility Management Services will carry out work under this grant by providing training, installing retrofits, and improving the resiliency of the aging sanitation infrastructure across rural Alaska. Implementing appropriate new technologies such as LED lighting and high-efficiency pumps and replacing aging water system controls can realize significant energy savings. By providing hands-on, personalized training, water plant operators will learn how to operate their sanitation facilities more efficiently and maintain energy savings for their community for years to come.

The goal of reducing energy costs in rural sanitation systems is to improve the sustainability of critical public health infrastructure and reduce the cost of water and sewer service for homeowners. Up to 35 percent of a community's total energy usage can be attributed to water and sewer.

## ANTHC crews complete replacement dam construction in Ouzinkie

After months of hard work, ANTHC's Division of Environmental Health and Engineering completed Ouzinkie's newly renamed Kelly Larson Memorial Dam following a final inspection in November. The dam



PHOTOS BY CLARK JAMES MISHLER  
ANTHC staff examines the new community dam of Ouzinkie, which recently began operation.



The Kodiak-area community of Ouzinkie.

replacement is the latest effort in a long partnership between ANTHC and the City of Ouzinkie to deliver clean, reliable drinking water to the Spruce Island community, located north of Kodiak.

The \$2.3 million project replaced a deteriorating wooden dam, constructed in 1986, with a new, state-of-the-art concrete-faced rock-fill facility built to withstand magnitude 8.8 earthquakes and major floods while efficiently providing affordable hydroelectric power to residents. The dam also impounds the primary water supply for the community.

"The new dam will supply the community with a source of renewable energy and water for more than 50 years," said John Warren, ANTHC Director of Engineering Services.

Construction on the new dam began in April after a breach formed on the old structure in mid-March, accelerating the timetable for building the replacement. A dedication ceremony is planned for spring 2015, during which a

plaque honoring Kelly Larson and acknowledging the efforts of those who made the construction of the facility possible will be unveiled. Teams also hope to complete additional updates to the dam. A grant application has been submitted to the Alaska Energy Authority, and if everything goes smoothly, ANTHC staff anticipates construction to begin in 2016.

## Shungnak saved from catastrophic water system freeze-up

The water line from the Kobuk River, which is the only source of Shungnak's drinking water, froze recently due to shifting river ice. If the water in the storage tank was depleted and the tank emptied before the line thawed, then the water would have stopped circulating and the water pipes in town would be frozen. This would have left the community without water until late summer 2015.

Remote maintenance worker Jeff Luther guided a team of six

local workers to spring into action and thaw the frozen water line. Since Shungnak is a member of the Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative (ARUC) Water/Sewer Management Program, nearby member communities sent equipment to help quickly thaw the line.

The community conserved water so the water storage tank would not be emptied before the river line was thawed. Community members hauled water from the river and shut down the school to conserve as much water as possible. This allowed the river line to be thawed, restoring water service to the entire community.

The Kobuk River water line has become vulnerable in recent years due to a shifting river channel. Shungnak and ANTHC's Environmental Health and Engineering staff are working on a long-term solution to this vulnerability.

Recently, ANTHC was able to combine State of Alaska ARUC startup funds with Indian Health Service money, which will allow construction of a well and buried waterline, so shifting ice will no longer cause freeze-ups. The engineering work for this project is complete and construction will begin in the spring, when ice is thick enough to support heavy equipment. Construction is expected to be complete before winter 2015, which will eliminate the risk of the Kobuk River line freezing next winter.

## Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management brings together Tribes

ANTHC's Division of Environmental Health and Engineering, Environmental Health Support program hosted the 20th Annual Alaska Tribal Conference on Environmental Management (ATCEM). This annual conference focuses on educating, equipping and empowering Alaska Tribal environmental workers with the latest information available for addressing environmental challenges in Alaska's Tribal communities.

Highlights from the 72 breakout sessions included presentations on

SEE CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, PAGE 9 ▶



**CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS, FROM PAGE 8**

respiratory health and indoor air quality, climate change's impacts to traditional foods, and cleaning up landfills by backhauling solid and hazardous wastes. The final day of the conference was set aside for technical trainings. This year's trainings included indoor air quality and healthy homes, water rights and water sampling, and rural Alaska landfill administrator training.

The conference opened with Senator Lisa Murkowski addressing a crowd of over 450 attendees representing over 100 Alaska villages. Another highlight from the four-day conference was the Environmental Excellence Awards Banquet. This year's Walter Porter Memorial Award, presented by Richard Porter, CEO of the Knik Tribal Council, went to Cynthia

Paniyak of Chevak Native Village. This annual lifetime achievement award recognized Paniyak for her lifelong dedication to environmental stewardship.

Next year's ATCEM will be held October 26-30 in Anchorage. Learn more at [atcemak.com](http://atcemak.com)

**Heat recovery project completed in Savoonga**

As fuel prices and energy costs continue to climb across Alaska, ANTHC's Alaska Rural Utility Collaborative (ARUC) and partners are working together to help rural communities and their residents save money and maximize resources. In collaboration with the Alaska Energy Authority, the latest ARUC heat-recovery project was completed recently in Savoonga, bringing previously unutilized energy from the power plant to the water treatment plant. Once the

system is fully operational, it is expected that the community will save 8,800 gallons of fuel – around \$40,000 per year.

Ten ARUC-participating communities in Alaska have updated heat recovery systems, including Sleetmute, a community of 86 residents located on the upper Kuskokwim River that incorporated a heat recovery system last year. Since its completion, it is estimated

that the community will save about 1,800 gallons of fuel per year.

Due in part to this high cost, around 40 percent of water/sewer expenses in ARUC-participating communities stem from energy costs, primarily heating fuel and electricity, and ANTHC's Department of Environmental Health and Engineering aims to cut those energy expenses in half over the next five years.



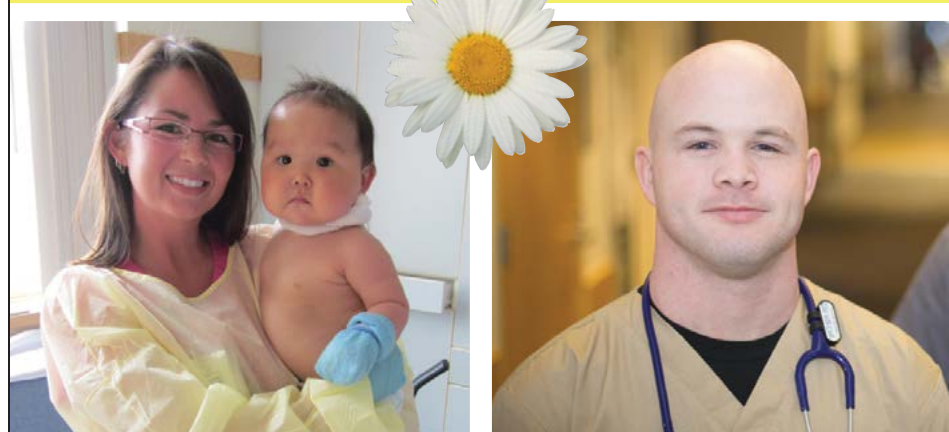
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**Nominate an ANMC nurse for the DAISY Award!**

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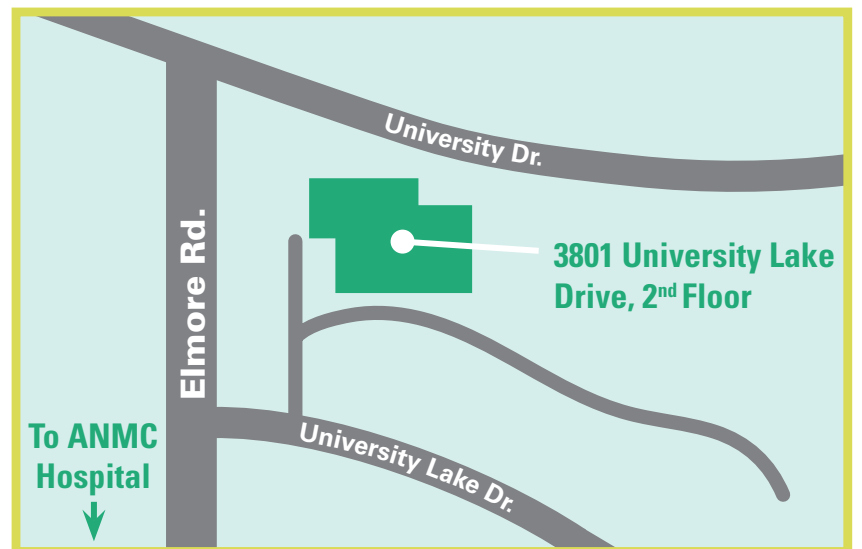
The Alaska Native Medical Center is proud to be a DAISY Award Partner, recognizing one of our nurses with this special honor every quarter.

Pick up a nomination form today or visit [www.anmc.org/the-daisy-award/](http://www.anmc.org/the-daisy-award/) to nominate a nurse online.



**ANMC's ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics have moved!**

**The ANMC ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics are in a new location to better serve our people.**



**New location:**

The ANMC ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics have moved into a medical building at 3801 University Lake Drive. The clinics are located on the second floor of the building. Our phone number remains (907) 729-1400 and our hours of operation are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday.

**Why the move?**

As ANMC's population grows and the need for services increases, we decided to move into increased space to meet the needs of our people from across Alaska. The new location for the ENT, Audiology and Ophthalmology Clinics allows us to better serve our people.

**Directions from the hospital:**

1. From Diplomacy Drive, turn right on Tudor Centre Drive
2. Turn left on Ambassador Drive
3. Turn right on Elmore Road
4. Go through the roundabout and then take the first right on University Lake Drive
5. The clinic is located in the first building on the left (2nd floor), 3801 University Lake Drive



The Alaska Native Medical Center is jointly owned and managed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation.



# Partnership, ConocoPhillips grant supports injury prevention efforts around Alaska

ANTHC's Injury Prevention Program partners with regional Injury Prevention Programs, many of which operate safety shops for the benefit of area residents. Shipping costs to remote locations can be high. By increasing access to affordable safety equipment, there should be an upward shift in use of helmets, flotation coats, life vests, ice cleats, gun safes and car seats.

To boost the success of this work, ANTHC partnered with four regional Tribal Injury Prevention Programs to purchase safety equipment. And ConocoPhillips supported the efforts by awarding ANTHC with a \$10,000 grant. ANTHC's Injury Prevention Program contributed \$20,000, and an additional \$16,409 was committed via local support.

This grant and the partnership between ANTHC, ConocoPhillips, Maniilaq Association, Norton Sound Health Corporation, Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health

Corporation supports the ANTHC vision of Alaska Natives as the healthiest population in the world by providing affordable safety equipment for daily use in rural Alaska. This includes:

**NORTHWEST ARCTIC**  
Maniilaq Association's drowning prevention items include white flotation jackets and white flotation bibs. Transportation safety items include SOS kits.

**BERING STRAIT**  
Norton Sound Health Corporation's fall prevention items include wall-mount grab bars, rubber anti-slip mat bathtubs, rug grippers and over shoes. Drowning prevention items

include FXR flotation jackets and FXR bibs. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) prevention items include Vega ATV helmets.

**BRISTOL BAY**  
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation's drowning prevention items include materials for personal flotation device (PFD) kiosks.

**YUKON-KUSKOKWIM**  
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation's drowning prevention items include FXR flotation jackets and FXR flotation bibs. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) prevention items include FXR helmets.

When Jaylene Wheeler, ANTHC's Injury Prevention Program

Coordinator thinks about safety, part of her goal is to help make the equipment accessible and affordable for rural residents.

"Our community is impacted by a number of injury hospitalizations and fatalities. In an effort to prevent injuries for Alaska Native people, we encourage the proper use of safety gear. Much of the work is done collaboratively," Wheeler said.

To learn more about injury data and other success stories, visit the newly revised Alaska Native Injury Atlas at [anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/upload/Inj-Atlas-101314-rev.pdf](http://anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/upload/Inj-Atlas-101314-rev.pdf)

Learn more about ANTHC's Injury Prevention Program at [anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/](http://anthc.org/chs/wp/injprev/)

**MAGNET HONOR, FROM PAGE 1 ▶**

noted ANMC is among the best in the nation for its Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) rate. More than 81 percent of ANMC's frontline nursing staff are BSN-prepared. The commission also stated that it was clear that ANMC has significant and consistent alignment with the vision and mission of the organization. Customer-owner and family-driven care, and the Nursing Professional Practice Model, are exemplary models of quality of our nurses and the care they provide.

"As we take time to celebrate this momentous occasion, I would like to sincerely thank our nurses for their hard work and dedication to providing our patients with the best care," said Richard Hall, ANMC Chief Nurse Executive. "Our talented nurses are committed to providing innovative, family-centered care every day at ANMC. This is a well-deserved recognition."

Learn more about Magnet nursing at ANMC by visiting [anmc.org/services/magnet-nursing/](http://anmc.org/services/magnet-nursing/)

**The health of my people starts with me**

—Karlene, Customer Experience Specialist  
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
Orutsararmiut Native Council, from Bethel

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# New map of active Environmental Health and Engineering projects keeps stakeholders updated

While the summer construction season is the busiest for ANTHC's Environmental Health and Engineering division, work is done year-round in Anchorage and around rural Alaska to plan, build and improve water and sanitation facilities, health clinics and energy resources for our Alaska Native people. ANTHC often receives questions about this unique and diverse work. Staff, partners and community members now have access to information about the projects and their managers thanks to a website created by Environmental Health and Engineering staff.

Kerry Wilson, Environmental Health and Engineering Program Services Manager, and Joshua Vo, an ANTHC summer intern from First Alaskans, built the website, which features a Google Map of Alaska and pinpoints of active projects around the state. When clicked, most pins give an overview of the project, as well as contact information for the project manager, community staff and even regional health corporations. The pins are color-coded to note if the project is managed by ANTHC, the State of Alaska Safe Water Program, or by Municipal Grants and Loan.

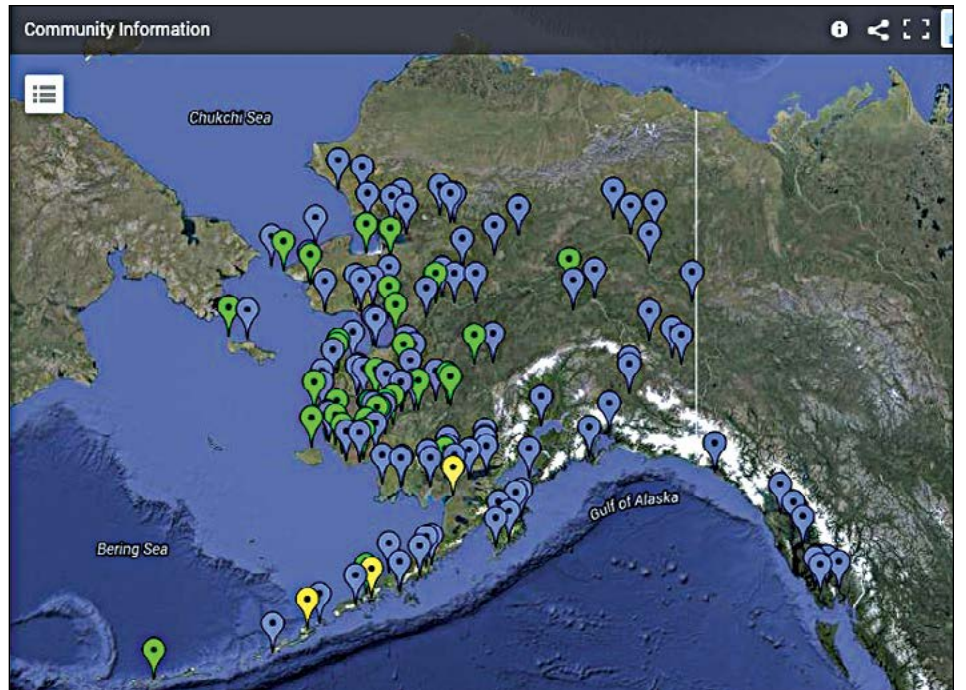
"This is a great tool that gives our customers and partners opportunities to see and learn more about the vast work that we do around the state," explained Vo.

Giving communities, partners and staff this information is critical since the project managers are often spread out across the state. This summer alone, ANTHC Construction staff, along with community crews, worked on more than 20 construction projects and several smaller work request tasks. This summer's construction projects created more than 220 seasonal construction jobs in 25 communities in 2014, and

paid more than \$2.5 million to those workers, which boosts local economies. ANTHC also provides training and other development opportunities for local workers.

"People are very excited about this tool, and this is just a start," explained Wilson, "We want to take it a lot further by adding elements like project photos, CAD drawings and plans."

View the ANTHC Environmental Health and Engineering projects map at [anthctoday.org/dehe/map.html](http://anthctoday.org/dehe/map.html). If you have feedback about the map, please contact Kerry Wilson at [kwilson@anthc.org](mailto:kwilson@anthc.org).



A new interactive map keeps rural community residents, construction teams, partners and the public up to date on construction and energy work around Alaska.



## ANMC Shuttles Let us do the driving!

A fleet of ANMC Shuttles are available to help patients and families get to and from ANMC and a handful of other important Anchorage destinations, including the Ted Stevens International Airport. We recently added two larger, wheelchair accessible buses for our customer-owners.

Let us drive! Find our ANMC Shuttle schedule and information about traveling to ANMC at [www.anmc.org/travel](http://www.anmc.org/travel). For more information, call us toll free at (855) 482-4382 or in Anchorage at 563-ANMC (2662).

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# Celebration, appreciation at Community Health Aide training completion ceremony



PHOTOS BY  
**TODD HENRY**  
ANTHC

*Attendees of the sixth annual ANTHC Behavioral Health Aide Forum gather for a group photo.*

ANTHC's Community Health Aide Training Center recently hosted two Community Health Aide (CHA) completion ceremonies. The 12 students who completed training were part of a new blended approach in which students are able to complete the first section of coursework through online e-learning modules before coming to Anchorage for the clinical and skills training section. CHA and Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps) are the frontline providers in the Alaska Tribal Health System for people in 180 rural villages and provide primary and emergency health care combined with regular referral provider consultations. CHA/Ps also provide coordination with health providers that travel and provide specialty services for customer-owners across Alaska.

The six graduates in the first class are: Sheila Baker, Teller (Norton Sound Health Corporation); Brianne Gologergen, Savoonga (Norton Sound Health Corporation); Riza Bendixen, King Cove (Eastern Aleutian Tribes); Alfred Perkins, Nikolai (Southcentral Foundation); Rena Greenley, Togiak (Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation); and Julia Walcott, Ekwok (Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation). The six graduates in the second class are: Bonita Babcock, King Cove (Eastern Aleutian Tribes); Olaf O'Domin, King Salmon (Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation); Kathryn Brooks, Manley



*ANTHC's Dr. Rita Blumenstein addresses attendees of an awards luncheon held during the Behavioral Health Aide Forum.*

Hot Springs (Tanana Chiefs Conference); Karen Swearingen, Kodiak (Kodiak Area Native Association); Crystal Fagerstrom, Golovin (Norton Sound Health Corporation); Danielle Togiak, Aleknagik (Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation).

The CHA/P Distance Learning Network will continue to develop content for distance delivery to assist CHAs to meet their educational goals. To learn more about the Distance Delivery Network go to [akchap.org](http://akchap.org).

## Behavioral Health Aides and Practitioners attend sixth annual forum, receive awards

The ANTHC Behavioral Health Department recently hosted the sixth annual Behavioral Health Aide (BHA) Forum November 10-14 on the Alaska Native Health Campus. The BHA Forum is a weeklong training conference for Behavioral Health Aides and Practitioners (BHA/Ps). This year's forum hosted 80 BHA/Ps, representing 11 Tribal health organizations and Tribal councils. Forum attendees also included numerous clinical supervisors and State of Alaska and university partners.

BHA/Ps are counselors and health educators working around the state advocating and helping to address community behavioral health needs. These needs include alcohol, drug, and tobacco abuse problems; and mental health issues such as grief, depression and suicide.

The forum is designed to help BHA/Ps gain training toward certification and certification advancement, and to enhance BHA/Ps' knowledge and skills within their practice. This year's forum theme was "Bonafide. Certified. BHAs." Which highlighted the importance of certification as a tool to show that BHA/Ps have achieved a high level of knowledge and skills to assist them in serving their communities.

Six BHA/Ps were recognized for their work and dedication to making a difference in their communities. This year's awards were presented to: Alice Hunter, BHA II, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, Rising Star award; Aubrey Wegeleben, BHP, Aleutian Pribilof Island Native Association, Rising Star award; Gail Evanoff,

BHP, Chugachmiut, Shining Star award; Brenda Wilson, BHP, Eastern Aleutian Tribes, Super Star award; and Janice Hamrick, BHP, SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, Super Star award.

For more information about ANTHC's Behavioral Health Program and about BHA/Ps, visit [anthc.org/chs/behavioral/index.cfm](http://anthc.org/chs/behavioral/index.cfm)

## CHA/P program awarded research funding from National Cancer Institute

The ability for Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps) to design and deliver distance cancer education at the community level supports ANTHC's goal of providing our people with comprehensive education on cancer prevention, screening and early diagnosis and treatment to reduce cancer death and disease. This year, ANTHC's Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) received one of nine National Cancer Institute (NCI) cancer education research awards for a five-year project titled Distance Education to Engage Alaska's Community Health Aides in Cancer Control. This award represents national recognition for the critical role CHA/Ps play in delivering health care to Alaska Native people in rural Alaska.

The project includes the development of a semester-long course containing 11 cancer education modules, allowing CHA/Ps from every community across Alaska to access cancer education from their communities.

"Currently, there is no comprehensive, culturally tailored cancer education course for CHA/Ps utilizing web-based distance learning," explained Melany Cueva, CHAP Educational Consultant. "Course development will include input from community members and CHA/Ps, assuring that learners receive meaningful, culturally respectful and medically accurate cancer education to support community wellness, cancer awareness and timely referral of patients for medical evaluation and cancer screenings."

For more information on distance-delivered cancer education, please contact Melany Cueva [mcueva@anthc.org](mailto:mcueva@anthc.org).



# ANMC Patient Housing continues forward momentum

The ANMC Patient Housing project continues coming to life and remains on schedule for a tentative groundbreaking in May 2015 and estimated completion date in summer 2016. The project design is now complete and went out to bid for construction at the start of November.

More than half of ANMC's patients travel to Anchorage for care and services, and providing suitable housing for our guests can be a struggle

at times. The goal of the ANMC Patient Housing facility is to improve access to care and services at the ANMC hospital for our people, as well as provide appropriate travel lodging and support while they receive care and recover. The 170-room facility plus pre-maternal home will be connected to the ANMC hospital via sky-bridge and will alleviate many of the lodging problems

traveling guests currently face when coming to Anchorage.

In late August, the State of Alaska's bond sale closed for Certificates of Participation to individual investors, which provides \$35 million in funding to ANTHC to build the patient housing facility. ANTHC has already received the first portion of this funding.

Adjacent to the ANMC Patient Housing facility will sit a major contributor to increased access – the new multi-floor ANMC hospital parking structure. Construction teams recently completed the concrete pour of the parking structure's fifth floor, which was a significant achievement with the varying weather. This project also remains on schedule, with a completion date of summer 2015.



Learn more about the ANMC Patient Housing project at [anmc.org/newanmc-patient-housing](http://anmc.org/newanmc-patient-housing)

## Explore or expand your career at ANTHC

Increasing and strengthening ANTHC's Alaska Native workforce is critical for the Consortium to be the employer of choice for talented professionals and the service provider of choice for our people around Alaska. Dozens of job seekers, including many Alaska Native people, attended ANTHC's annual Job Fair in September at ANTHC's Consortium Office Building. Staff from ANTHC's four divisions discussed job openings and opportunities with visitors.

Staff also shared information about ANTHC's benefits and work environment, and guided prospects on how to apply for jobs online and in person.

If you were not able to attend, ANTHC sends a weekly job openings email to a large list of individuals and organizations around Alaska and beyond. The message includes featured openings as well as access to the Consortium's full list of current employment opportunities. This message is also shared each week on ANTHC's Facebook page and Twitter feed. If you would like to be added to the ANTHC weekly job email list, visit [bit.ly/11XQ3lZ](http://bit.ly/11XQ3lZ).

To learn more about career opportunities at ANTHC, please call ANTHC's Human Resources department at (907) 729-1301, email [careers@anthc.org](mailto:careers@anthc.org), or visit [anthc.org/careers](http://anthc.org/careers).

## Opening doors to better health



Improving access to health care and services for our Alaska Native people when and where they require it is a driving force behind our work at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

This year, Opening Doors to Better Health was the theme of ANTHC's Annual Meeting, as well as our annual report and video.

Learn more about ANTHC's work in 2014 and our work ahead in our new annual report and video at [www.anthc.org](http://www.anthc.org).

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ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM



# ANTHC releases three new community climate change reports, receives national media spotlight

ANTHC's Center for Climate and Health staff recently released three reports in its Climate Change and Health Impact Assessment series, focusing on the rural Alaska communities of Wainwright, Atqasuk and Nuiqsut. The reports describe climate impacts observed in Alaska communities and rely upon those observations, as well as data and traditional ecological knowledge provided by local partners.

Additionally, scientific data on environment, health and climate is provided where available. The reports offer opportunities to help develop adaptive strategies that encourage community health and resilience.

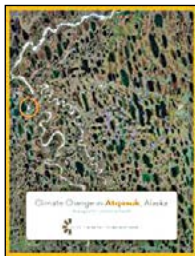
"These reports help to inform about environmental impacts and health effects, positive and negative, that are occurring in these communities," explained Michael Brubaker, Director of ANTHC's Center for Climate and Health. "It is the first step in developing effective adaptive strategies."

ANTHC partnered with the North Slope Borough (NSB) to produce the climate change and health impact assessment for Wainwright. The report covers topics including landscape



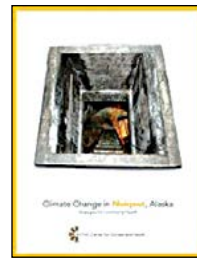
change and food and water security. Wainwright residents are challenged by permafrost thaw impacts to water, sanitation, traditional food cellars and changing seasons and sea ice conditions. A fall whaling hunt started in recent years is one example of local adaptation. Read the report at [anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Wainwright-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf](http://anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Wainwright-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf).

In Atqasuk, a traditional Iñupiat community located 60 miles south of Barrow, residents are challenged by extreme weather, permafrost thaw, erosion, changes in the Meade River, and impacts on subsistence practices. ANTHC partnered with the NSB to produce the assessment. Read it at [anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Atqasuk-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf](http://anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Atqasuk-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf).



Nuiqsut is a traditional Iñupiat community located on the west bank of the Colville River, 18 miles south from the inlet to the Beaufort Sea. In recent years, residents have reported changes in the timing of the seasons, weather, land, river and sea conditions. These changes pose potential health effects like damage to health infrastructure related to erosion and permafrost

thaw, and even food insecurity related to changes in wildlife health, harvest success and the thawing of traditional underground ice cellars. ANTHC partnered with the NSB and the Native Village of Nuiqsut on the assessment. Read it at [anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Nuiqsut-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf](http://anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Nuiqsut-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf).



[anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Nuiqsut-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf](http://anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/upload/Nuiqsut-AlaskaCHiAR.pdf).

To read and download Climate Change and Health Impact Assessment community reports, visit [anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/climateandhealthreports.cfm](http://anthc.org/chs/ces/climate/bbs/climateandhealthreports.cfm). Learn more about the work of ANTHC's Center for Climate and Health by visiting [anthc.org/chs/ces/climate](http://anthc.org/chs/ces/climate).



**We're listening!**

At the Alaska Native Medical Center, we listen to our people so we can provide the very best care and service. If you have a concern, comment, question, or compliment, please contact the ANMC Customer Experience team. Email us at [customercontact@anthc.org](mailto:customercontact@anthc.org) or call (907) 729-3990 or toll free at (877) 223-9284.

**Thank you!**

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# Let ANTHC guide you through the Affordable Care Act Indian Exemption process

Under the Affordable Care Act (ACA), every American must have health care coverage, but there are special exemptions that exist for Alaska Native and American Indian people. Alaska Native and American Indian people are exempt from the requirement to purchase insurance if they can show evidence of:

- Enrollment in a federally recognized Tribe
- Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) shareholder status (village or regional), or
- Eligibility to receive services from a Tribal health clinic or an Indian Health Service (IHS) facility

Until recently, only members of federally recognized Tribes and shareholders of ANCSA corporations had the option to apply for the ACA Indian Exemption through the tax filing process. A recent announcement from the federal government allows individuals who are not members of federally recognized Tribes or ANCSA shareholders, but who are descendants and have a Certificate of Indian Blood (CIB) or who are eligible for services through a Tribal health care provider, with the option of claiming the Indian Exemption through the tax filing process.

ANTHC's Health Reform team assists people with the Indian Exemption application. Applications sent to the federal government for processing have faced numerous issues. Due to the ongoing problems with the government paper application process, ANTHC's Health Reform group has a new recommendation for those who still need an exemption to avoid the tax penalty for not having health care coverage.

ANTHC Health Reform recommends claiming the Indian Exemption when you file your taxes. Email the ANTHC Health Reform group at [healthreform@anthc.org](mailto:healthreform@anthc.org) to join an email distribution list to receive the IRS Tax Form 8965 when it is finalized. More information on the Indian Exemption and the ACA is available at ANTHC's The Affordable Care Act and You website at [anthc.org/aca/](http://anthc.org/aca/).

## Frequently asked questions about the ACA:

**Q:** *What if I already have health care coverage?*

**A:** If you have health care coverage

through Medicaid, Medicare, Denali KidCare, Veteran's Benefits or employer-provided health insurance, you have met the requirements of the individual mandate and do not need to purchase additional health care coverage to avoid the tax penalty. You do not need to complete the Indian Status Exemption paperwork if you have health care coverage. However, the Indian Exemption is a lifetime exemption and can be used any time you have a gap in health care coverage.

**Q:** *What if I already received a response with my Exemption Certificate Number (ECN)?*

**A:** Keep the letter with the ECN

for you and/or your family in a safe place. You will need to report this number on your taxes. When filing taxes, you will report an exemption certificate number on IRS Tax Form 8965, titled Health Coverage Exemptions. The form isn't final yet, but it will be ready by tax time.

**Q:** *What if I sent in my exemption application but haven't heard anything on it yet?*

**A:** Keep a look out for a letter from the Health Insurance Marketplace. It could still arrive. If you don't receive a letter with an ECN, you can claim the Indian Exemption on IRS Tax Form 8965, titled Health Coverage Exemptions, with your taxes.

**Q:** *What if I lost the letter with my ECN?*

**A:** If you received your ECN in the mail and misplaced the letter, you can claim the Indian Exemption on IRS Tax Form 8965, titled Health Coverage Exemptions, with your taxes.

**Q:** *If I don't buy insurance, will I still be able to get health care services at my IHS/Tribal health facility?*

**A:** Yes. The health care services provided at IHS/Tribal health facilities are not changing; however, you will need to apply for an exemption to avoid the tax penalty.

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Members of the 2014 ECHL Kelly Cup champion Alaska Aces recently visited the Alaska Native Medical Center hospital's youngest patients and their families in the Inpatient Pediatrics Unit. Players shared autographed Christmas cards, signed autograph books, and helped spread a little cheer to our people spending time at ANMC during the holiday season.



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TODD HENRY  
ANTHC