



# **COLLABORATION CARE COMMUNITY**

**Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium 2020 Annual Highlights**

*This publication highlights key ANTHC activities in 2020. For full details, visit our online 2020 Annual Report at [anthc.org/annualreport](https://anthc.org/annualreport).*



# Collaboration. Care. Community.

While much of ANTHC's work in 2020 was driven by response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, we continued our work in pursuit of our vision with a focus on collaboration with our partners, care for our people and staff, and community-inspired solutions.

This report reflects ANTHC's fiscal year from Oct. 1, 2019 to Sept. 30, 2020.

## Board of Directors



**ANDY TEUBER**  
ANTHC Chairman & President  
Kodiak Area Native Association



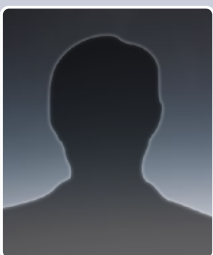
**ANDREW JIMMIE**  
ANTHC Vice Chair  
Tanana Chiefs Conference



**CHARLENE NOLLNER**  
ANTHC Secretary  
Copper River Native Association



**EVELYN BEETER**  
ANTHC Treasurer, Unaffiliated Tribes,  
Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium



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**ROBERT J. CLARK**  
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation



**ROBERT HENRICHS**  
Chugachmiut, Native Village of Eyak



**LORENA WALKER**  
Maniilaq Association



**CHARLES CLEMENT**  
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**PRESTON ROOKOK**  
Norton Sound Health Corporation



**APRIL KYLE**  
Southcentral Foundation



**KIMBERLEY STRONG**  
SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium



**CHIEF GARY HARRISON**  
Unaffiliated Tribes, Chickaloon Native Village



**WALTER JIM**  
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation



**Louie Commack, Maniilaq Association: Tribal health leader, advocate and voice for our people**

Mr. Commack was a longtime Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium board member, representing Maniilaq Association and its twelve federally recognized Tribes located in Northwest Alaska, where he served as a Tribal health leader for many years. Mr. Commack was a friend and vigorous advocate for the people in his community and across the state.

ANTHC sends our condolences to the Commack family and the Northwest Arctic region on the loss of a great leader.

# Message from the Chairman and President



*"One of our greatest strengths as a Tribal health system has been our collective focus on collaboration, and this has never been more important than now."*

Greetings,

Over the last year, ANTHC had to quickly adapt to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. To effectively combat the pandemic, the Consortium focused on collaboration, care and community. One of our greatest strengths as a Tribal health system has been our collective focus on collaboration, and this has never been more important than now. This focus has improved the availability of care closer to home for our people and increased support to our communities.

The Consortium was founded as an exercise in self-determination for a statewide collaboration of Tribes to provide better health care than was provided directly by the federal government through the Indian Health Service. Through decades of collaboration and hard work, we have greatly improved and expanded health services, blending expanded specialty care in Anchorage along with growth of the regional hospitals, sub-regional clinics and additional services at local clinics.

This year the Consortium also collaborated extensively with the State of Alaska, other health systems and testing providers. The result of our approach was that the Alaska Tribal Health System was able to build and operate a robust and extensive network of testing sites supported by lab facilities for processing COVID-19 tests to protect our people and our communities.

The 2020 Annual Report outlines many of the accomplishments of our programs and initiatives we were able to achieve in this uniquely challenging year. In spite of the pandemic, we made significant improvements in the care we provide and the health services available in our Tribal communities. Further, our efforts expanded access to services, improved rural water and sanitation in rural communities, and continued prevention efforts and training for health aides across our state.

Our continued progress can be credited to the leadership of our Board of Directors and the efforts of our more than 3,000 dedicated ANTHC employees.

Respectfully,

**ANDY TEUBER**  
ANTHC Chairman & President



# Feature stories from 2020: Highlights from our areas of work



## COVID-19 TESTING: ANTHC’s investment in community health

Early on in the COVID-19 pandemic response, ANTHC staff recognized the need to take action to slow this virus from spreading in our communities. To achieve this, we knew we must detect infections early. By mid-March staff were preparing to test and ensure that our people had access to testing across the state.

By early April ANTHC constructed a drive-thru and walk-up testing site, invested in additional laboratory diagnostic equipment, and helped secure rapid testing equipment for our regional Tribal health partners. All patients, ANTHC staff and family members, important community partner organizations and their staff were eligible for COVID-19 testing regardless of symptoms.

From early April to Sept. 30, 2020, the ANMC Laboratory, managed by ANTHC, processed and diagnosed more than 100,000 COVID-19 tests.

[Read more about COVID-19 Response on page 4.](#)



## Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program earns national accreditation

In 2004, the innovative program met controversy. Today, it is nationally recognized for ensuring 40,000 people living in rural communities have regular access to dental care.

In August 2020, the American Dental Association’s Commission on Dental Accreditation (CODA) granted accreditation to the Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program (ADTEP).

A monumental step in advancing oral health equity, especially for Tribal communities, the recognition is a first for the mid-level dental education program, which has continued to bring community-driven oral health solutions across the state.

ADTEP started in 2004 as a certificate education program at ANTHC to hire full-time trained and qualified dental health professionals, in communities where doctorate-level dentists usually only visit once per year. This community-driven oral health solution has proven to deliver better oral health outcomes for Alaska Native people. Today, ADTEP is a successful associate degree program of Iļisagvik College in Utqiaġvik, in partnership with Alaska Pacific University and ANTHC.

Since ANTHC’s inception, we have continuously found new ways to train staff for the emerging health needs of Alaska Native people and prepare the next generation for the health careers of the future.

[Read about other Statewide Services on page 8.](#)

## Community: Lifting each other up to support mental health in times of crisis

Our communities experienced a lot in 2020, mental health issues, stress, isolation, distress, political and cultural unrest and other responses to critical incidents. This year it was more apparent how critical incidents, like these and the COVID-19 pandemic, can affect our overall health.

### Critical Incident Stress Management

Since 2018, ANTHC has helped communities and organizations address specific circumstances with our Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team, a group of trained counselors, by deploying teams to locations for in-person counseling to support people after traumatic events. With travel limited and the widespread extent of trauma from COVID-19 response, the CISM team opened up their services to virtual counseling sessions for individuals, families and organizations across the Tribal health system.

Early in the response to the pandemic, trained CISM counselors opened phone lines, email inboxes and Zoom video chats to connect with people with common stress symptoms and reactions. In 2020, the CISM team delivered hundreds of hours of community care response.

[Read about other Statewide Services on page 8.](#)







COVID-19 RESPONSE

# When COVID-19 challenges met the power of Consortium care teams

Staff at ANTHC are used to confronting challenges that push us to be innovative, decisive and collaborative. Despite the uncertainties and unknowns, the COVID-19 pandemic was no different in our drive to find solutions to protect Alaska Native health.

In 2020, the Alaska Tribal Health System worked together to respond. Driving the immediacy of our response was the historical knowledge of how previous viruses and pandemics resulted in incalculable losses to Alaska Native people and culture. ANTHC’s COVID-19 response and safety precautions included changes to how we work, how we could help our communities and how our communities could help us.

## Changes in how we work

Alaska and specialty teams of ANTHC staff at the Alaska Native Medical Center were brought into the fold of what would become the global COVID-19 pandemic much earlier than other U.S. states and hospitals, due to a flight of American citizens evacuated from Wuhan that made a refueling stop in Anchorage in mid-January 2020.

ANTHC had crisis response plans in place that helped us quickly make changes to how we work before the first case of COVID-19 was reported in Alaska. Operational changes were made at ANTHC and ANMC to limit and minimize the potential transmission of COVID-19 among our patients, staff and providers.

## Changes at ANTHC

- Universal mask use in our facilities by patients and staff
- Reduced entrance points, screening and restrictions for visitors in the hospital to preserve personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies
- Converted patient rooms for potential COVID-19 cases
- Closure of gathering areas
- Physical distancing protective measures
- Telehealth appointments encouraged whenever possible
- Staff reassigned to Incident Command roles
- Business travel suspended
- Remote work arrangements approved for hundreds of employees
- Community environmental health construction projects suspended

## How we helped our communities

ANTHC was able to deliver community solutions for the Alaska Native people we serve, through partnerships with State leadership; CDC, Indian Health Service and other federal partners; Tribal health organizations; Congressional delegates; state health, nonprofit, Tribal, military and other organizations; Municipality of Anchorage; and Anchorage-area hospitals.

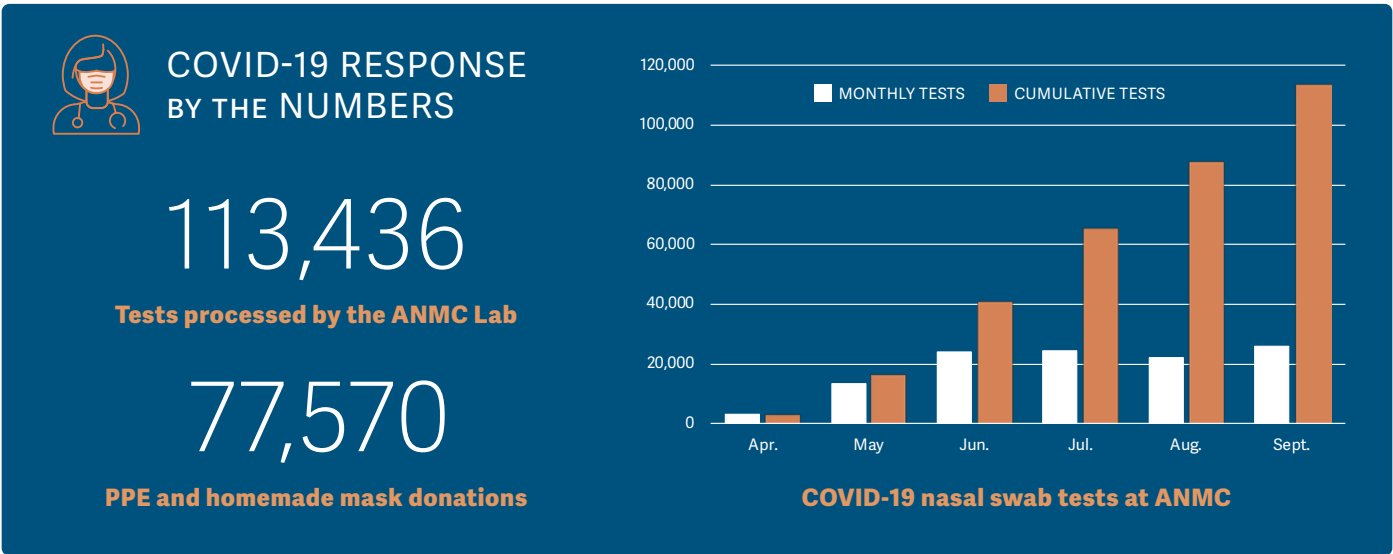
- COVID-19 testing
- Securing and preserving PPE and other supplies
- Emergency preparedness support
- Distance learning and technology solutions
- Statewide mental health support
- Weekly teleconferences and dedicated support to ensure our partners had supplies, materials and resources they needed



## How our communities helped us

Community support of ANTHC and especially our health care providers was essential to help ensure Alaska had adequate health care capacity. This included support from our staff, business and other donors, and the communities in which we work.

- Staff adapted to unexpected needs with flexibility in new roles
- Community donations supported health care workers, Elders and patients
- Community and personal action supported slowing the spread of COVID-19







ALASKA NATIVE MEDICAL CENTER

# Care centered on our people

The Alaska Native Medical Center operates a state-of-the-art, 173-bed hospital providing specialty medical services to Alaska Native and American Indian people. ANMC is Alaska’s first Level II Trauma Center, is a Level II Pediatric Trauma Center, and shared the American Hospital Association’s Carolyn Boone Lewis Living the Vision Award with the Alaska Tribal Health System.

In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reemphasized the ways that health and access to health care are central to our quality of life. And our health care workers and staff in the hospital continue their work dedicated to caring for our people and providing the highest-quality care, even in the middle of a worldwide pandemic.

COVID-19 response and safety precautions continue to change the way ANMC cares for our people. But our work advancing Alaska Native health care endures.

*ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation jointly own and manage ANMC under the terms of Public Law 105-83. These parent organizations established a Joint Operating Board to ensure unified operation of health services provided by the medical center.*

### ALASKA NATIVE MEDICAL CENTER BY THE NUMBERS

1,427	Births
16,113	Surgical cases
49,093	Emergency visits
7,916	Inpatient discharges
47,343	Total inpatient days
170,335	Specialty clinic visits

## Highest-quality, award winning health services

**“Meritorious” distinction for surgical outcomes:** ANMC was deemed “Meritorious” for outstanding quality scores in eight surgical care outcome areas. Nationwide, the American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS NSQIP®) recognized 88 of the 592 eligible hospitals participating in the adult program this year. ANMC was the only hospital recognized in Alaska.

**Weaver/Penna pharmacy award:** The Board of Pharmacy Specialties (BPS) recognized the ANMC Pharmacy with the 2020 Warren Weaver/Richard Penna Award, which is granted annually in two categories, individual and organization. Recipients are recognized for outstanding voluntary contributions to the advancement of BPS board certification of pharmacists. ANMC was unanimously selected as the 2020 winner for our work to advance health care by promoting specialized training, knowledge and skills in pharmacy.

## Patient experience

Beyond access to specialty clinic appointments and the quality of our care, ANMC also continued improving hospital care and environment through Patient Experience initiatives.

To help patients navigate ANTHC buildings, this year we added more prominent exterior signage that makes it easier to find the correct locations. ANMC has also continued to invest in technology solutions that thoughtfully considers how people are used to getting directions. This year, ANMC began work to introduce the myCarePath app, a mobile application to navigate the Alaska Native Health Campus’ specialty clinics, primary care clinics, shuttle transportation and other health services. The first phase of work included turn-by-turn mapping to help patients navigate from their starting location to the clinic reception desks for their appointments.

## Care from your door to ours: Travel management and patient housing

Traveling to Anchorage for care is a part of the health care journey for 60% of patients in ANTHC specialty clinics. ANTHC places patient care conveniences at the center of the process with travel coordination services from your door to ours and comfortable lodging in our 200-bed Patient Housing at ANMC facility. ANTHC is also beginning work to expand on-campus housing.

During the COVID-19 response, the Travel Management Office continued to maintain high-level patient service by monitoring constantly changing travel guidelines and statewide health mandates that would keep both patients and staff healthy and ensure the safety of their home communities and regions.

While there were fewer patients staying with us due to travel restrictions (occupancy decreased by more than 70% in April 2020), Patient Housing staff provided extra levels of care to ensure patients stayed safe. The Patient Housing cafeteria closed on March 17 due to a Municipality of Anchorage mandate closing all restaurants to encourage physical distancing and reduce indoor gatherings. ANMC Food Services and Patient Housing quickly adapted by delivering breakfast, lunch and dinner to guest rooms.

Patient Housing staff also increased sanitation of rooms and public areas, helped coordinate visits to the ANMC COVID-19 testing site and offered additional services to make things easier for patients under quarantine monitoring.







STATEWIDE SERVICES

# Statewide health and prevention services

Our health is rooted in our traditional values, cultures, families and communities – in partnership across Alaska. Despite Alaska’s unique features among different regions, we come together to better our health and strengthen our communities.

Like the rings of a fishing net, our strength is tied to one another across the state. And like a fishing net, if one ring develops a hole, the strength of the entire net is compromised. Creating a stronger net of health, ANTHC and Tribal health organizations work with the state to set health priorities based on data; more education for dental therapists; deeper understanding of trauma through an interactive walk across history; construction projects to increase access to sewer and water; and ensuring our services are accessible and easy to navigate for all of our patients and caregivers.

## Healthy Alaskans 2030

Alaska’s diverse terrain, people and cultures provides a challenging opportunity to deliver health care. Healthy Alaskans 2030, the state’s health improvement plan, is a continued effort between ANTHC and the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). Alaska is unique in that it is the only state health improvement plan in the nation that is led by a state and Tribal partnership. The joint effort provides data-driven goals for improving the health of all Alaskans. The Healthy Alaskans 2030 plan is composed of 15 priority health topics containing 30 health objectives. Learn more at [www.healthyalaskans.org](http://www.healthyalaskans.org).

## Dental Health Aide Therapist program earns American Dental Association accreditation

ADA’s Commission on Dental Accreditation granted accreditation to the dental therapy education program at Ilisagvik College in Utqiagvik. In Alaska, dental therapists ensure that 40,000 people living in rural communities have regular access to dental care, often bringing care to people where they are, while simultaneously improving the health of their communities.

## Healthy Homes and Communities

After a statewide pull back from construction in March, ANTHC staff returned to communities starting in June following the development of our COVID-19 Safety Plan. As of Sept. 1, ANTHC’s Environmental Health and Engineering provided water and sewer service to 67 homes, 26 of those following COVID-19 shutdowns. This includes service to homes in the unserved communities of Akiachak and Lower Kalskag, unserved subdivisions of Elim and individual homes along the road system with our Scattered Sites Program. In Kivalina, ANTHC installed the Portable Alternative Sanitation System (PASS) units for 25 more homes.



### STATEWIDE PREVENTION BY THE NUMBERS

67

Homes with first time water service

Access to water makes hand washing and healthy hygiene practices easier

23,000

Construction labor hours in 11 communities by local employees

ANTHC-led construction projects not only provide public utility improvements, they also provide jobs and local economic benefit

5

New health indicators in HA2020 plan

Together with the State of Alaska, ANTHC helped design data-driven goals to improve the health of all Alaskans

## ANTHC SUPPORT SERVICES - CONSOLIDATED FINANCIALS

Revenues (M)		Expenses (M)	
Indian Health Service	213.9	Alaska Native Medical Center	393.0
Patient Revenue	356.3	Environmental Health & Engineering	89.2
Grant/Project Revenue	94.6	Business Support Services	159.0
Rental Income	4.9	Community Health Services	14.6
Tuition and Fees	5.0	Alaska Pacific University	15.8
Contributions	10.1	Alaska Native Resource Development	2.7
Warehouse Revenue	3.7	Grants	17.3
Misc. Income	27.2	Fundraising	1.7
Investment Income	12.3	Passthrough	8.2
Total Revenue	728.0	Total Expenses	701.4

This financial summary is preliminary as of October 31, 2020, and is subject to a formal audit for the 2020 fiscal year.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is a nonprofit Tribal health organization designed to meet the unique health needs of Alaska Native and American Indian people living in our state.

Our services include specialty medical care at the Alaska Native Medical Center, community wellness programs, disease research and prevention, rural provider training, and rural water and sanitation systems construction across Alaska.

ANTHC is a national leader in Tribal health. We are the largest, most comprehensive Tribal health organization in the United States, and an employer of more than 3,000 health service professionals.

## OUR MISSION

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

## OUR VISION

**Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world.**

Throughout the year, find more stories from ANTHC at [\*\*anthc.org\*\*](https://anthc.org).



ALASKA NATIVE  
TRIBAL HEALTH  
CONSORTIUM