Tununak bikers use their heads when it comes to safety.

YKHC’s Health Education and Injury Prevention/EMS Departments teamed up with village sponsors for a grand Bike Helmet Festival. See page 14.
YKHC Board & Committee Meetings 2005

June 21
Finance Committee

June 22–23
Executive Board

July 19
Finance Committee

July 20
Governing Body

August 16
Finance Committee

August 17–18
Executive Board

September 20
Finance Committee

September 21
Governing Body

October 18
Finance Committee

October 19–21
Alaska Federation of Natives, in Fairbanks.

November 15
Finance Committee

November 16–18
Full Board of Directors Meeting

December 13
Finance Committee

Grace David, daughter of James and Emma David, graduated from Dick R. Kiunya School in Kongiganak, Alaska. She moved to Bethel to work for the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation as an Optometrist’s Assistant.

Today, she is certified in both Optician and Refractometry at the Eye Clinic and is soon to become a State Licensed Dispensing Optician once she passes her Career Progression Program Exam.

To prepare for an Optician career, “I took some home school courses for a year that taught me to accurately measure, technical optical dispensing knowledge, analyze and interpret prescription, fit and dispense spectacles and other ophthalmic devices and use standard ophthalmic equipment.

“My job at the Eye Clinic has prepared me to become an Optician. As an Optician, I will be able to provide the best quality eye care to my own people in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region. Get your degree while you are still young!

“If I can do it, so can you!”

Call The YKHC Learning Center: 907-543-6758

Dispensing Optician
- Fit eye glasses and lenses prescribed by ophthalmologist or optometric physicians
- Measure facial contours and assist in frame and lens selection
- Adjust eye glasses
- Dispense contact lenses from the prescription provided by an ophthalmologist or optometric physician
- Teach patients about the use and care of contact lenses
Is Glycemic Index important?

Glycemic index (GI) is a system that rates individual foods by how fast the carbohydrates are digested and converted to glucose, and how high they cause blood sugar to rise after a food is eaten. The higher the GI score, the greater the effect on blood sugar levels. One of the problems using the GI for menu planning is that the scores are based on single foods eaten alone. When you eat a combination of foods, the fat, fiber and protein all affect the score, usually lowering the overall GI score of a meal.

You would expect that table sugar would have a higher GI score than white bread. But table sugar has a fairly low GI and white bread a higher score. Potatoes, carrots, and most breakfast cereals have a high GI score but they also provide important nutrients.

For diabetics, there is no evidence that choosing foods based on the glycemic index is any better than simply controlling total carbohydrates. It is best to eat a variety of foods in moderation.

Healthy Recipe of the Month

Summer Breezes Smoothie

1 cup yogurt, plain nonfat
1 cup pineapple, crushed, canned in juice
1 medium banana*
6 medium strawberries*
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
4 ice cubes
*If fresh fruit is unavailable, substitute other fruit

1. Place all ingredients in a blender and puree until smooth
2. Serve in a frosted glass.

Yield: 3 servings. Serving size: 1 cup

Protection Prevents STDs

Using condoms can protect your sexual health from sexually transmitted diseases and infections (STD/Is).

Protect yourself. Talk honestly to your sexual partner about the safety of sex to reduce the risk of getting infected with STD/Is. Be honest with yourself and your partner.

Do you know if you have a sexually transmitted disease or infection? Many people do not know that they are infected. Condoms can protect you from contracting or transmitting STD/Is.

Alcohol and drug abuse are often risk factors in transmission. Limiting, or eliminating altogether, alcohol intake can aid in making better decisions to protect yourself. If you wish to quit using or abusing alcohol or drugs, resources are available.

If you want to learn more about STD/Is, please call

Public Health Nurses 907-543-2110
or 1-800-478-2456,
or Circle of Care 907-543-6941

Exercise Tip: Summer is a good time for outdoor exercise. Unplug the TV and come out and play!
Diabetes Tip: Know your A1C score. Keep it below 7.
Diet Tip: Most vegetables are low in calories and have lots of nutrients. Do you get at least three a day?
**Students discover stinkweed has the most vitamin C**

*Editor’s Note: The following article appeared in the May-June issue of “Sharing Our Pathways,” a publication of the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, UAF. Candace Kruger, the author, is the daughter of Anvik Health Aide Melody Deacon.*

**By Candace Kruger**

In 1741 Vitus Bering and his crew landed in North America on an island in Southeast Alaska, where he exchanged goods with the Native people living there. After setting sail for home, he found that his men where beginning to suffer from scurvy.

Scurvy is caused from lack of vitamin C. Some of its symptoms are bleeding gums, loss of teeth, aching joints, muscle depletion and spiraling of the hairs on legs and arms. Bering and most of his men died from scurvy that year. They died trying to get home from Alaska, when all they had to do was eat some of Alaska’s native plants to survive. Alaska has much natural vitamin C in its vegetation.

This year in science class, students were assigned to do a project and enter it in the school science fair. My partner, Erik Grundberg, and I did a project on the amount of vitamin C in the plants around our village of Anvik and in Galena, where we attend high school. We thought the information we would learn could be useful for future reference—in case we got sick with a cold, we would know which plants provide the most vitamin C. According to Dr. Jerry Gordon, on the website How Stuff Works, studies indicate that a high dose of vitamin C at the beginning of a cold reduces its symptoms in some cases; however, vitamin C does not prevent the common cold.

Choosing what plants to test...

First we chose the plants to test: cranberries, blueberries, rosehips, stinkweed, fireweed, spruce, and yarrow. Then we made a hypothesis—we guessed that rosehips would have the most vitamin C. We remembered hearing this somewhere, but we were not sure from where.

To perform the test, we followed a procedure designed by scientists that uses cornstarch, water and iodine. We boiled the plants individually and extracted the juices. We mixed an iodine and cornstarch solution, which was a dark blue-purple color. Then we added the iodine to the juice hoping that the iodine would turn clear as it mixed. The faster the solution turned clear would indicate the more vitamin C in the plant.

Dr. Gordon says that the recommended dietary allowance is 60–190 milligrams of vitamin C daily to prevent a range of ailments. He goes on to say, “Men should consume more vitamin C than women and individuals who smoke cigarettes are encouraged to consume 35 mg. more of vitamin C than other adults. This is due to the fact that smoking depletes vitamin C levels in the body and is a catalyst for biological processes which damage cells.”

Gordon explains that vitamin C is essential because it helps produce collagen. Collagen is all over the human body. It is in cartilage, the connective tissue of skin, bones, teeth, ligaments, the liver, spleen and kidneys, and the separating layers in cell systems such as the nervous system. Americans get an average of 72 mg. a day. Studies show that if the body has too high of a daily intake of vitamin C, the worst result would be diarrhea.

To our surprise, stinkweed had the most vitamin C, with rose hips coming in second. Our teacher, Shane Hughes, said that oranges have little vitamin C compared to stinkweed, regardless of the advertising that orange juice is high in vitamin C. Although orange juice may taste a lot better, stinkweed is best when you need vitamin C. You can make a tea out of it.

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**“Take the Test and Take Control”**

of your life

Set up an appointment
Get the test done
Get your results in 20 minutes

**June 27, 2005 • 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.**

**YKHC Hospital**

**NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY**

For more information please call Circle of Care
Carl Evans • 543-6486 or
Andrea Savage • 543-6941
Pager #3144
Hello, my name is Debi Olick. I am a daughter of Jimmy and Annie Michael from Kwethluk. I am a Health Educator at YKHC, working on getting my Community Wellness Advocate (CWA) Certificate through the University of Alaska Southeast, Sitka. As part of the Nutrition Track of the CWA Program, I have been doing lessons on nutrition and the food guide pyramid with Mr. Meier’s third and fourth grade class since March 1.

The eight lessons covered grains, fruits and vegetables, dairy, protein food groups and serving and portion sizes, *Sugar in Soda or Think Your Drink*.

In the last class, we celebrated with a wrap-up session. I asked the students about what they have learned and found out, which foods they liked, what they aren’t used to, and which food group they learned most from.

In the lessons, we located the food groups on the pyramid, found out how much of it is recommended to eat, what the main nutrients are in the food group, how the nutrients help the body, what the foods look like and then tasted some foods from that food group. In one lesson we learned about serving sizes and where they were located on packages. In the last lesson the students measured out the teaspoons of sugar in one can of soda.

I would like to send a great big “Thank you” to Mr. Meier and Ayaprun Elitnaurvik for allowing me to do these lessons with his third and fourth grade class. These students are awesome to work with. I have learned as much from them as, I hope, they have learned from me.

One of their class assignments was to write an essay about what they think about being healthy. I would like to share what the students have written. I know you’ll enjoy them.

---

**Healthy Food**

I like eating pineapple. I like to be healthy. I like eating apples. I like drinking orange juice. I like to eat crabs, and fish, and moose meat, and Sourdock, carrots, lettuce, and broccoli.

—Patrick

**Being Healthy**

I like to eat healthy food carrots and broccoli, strawberries, orange and meat, lettuce, and cheese and I like all of them for all day long.

—Daya N.

**My Healthy List**

1. I want to buy healthy foods like broccoli, lettuce, bananas, orange juice, watermelon, pears, apple, cherries, plums, blue berries, carrots, and pineapple.
2. I like to drink water and eat vegetables and all the healthy foods.
3. I know the healthy foods and foods are healthy to eat.

—Freda Berlin

---

**How to be healthy**

I will be powerful if I eat corn, broccoli, and oranges. Cheese has milk in it so its fun having cheese. Every time I have a carrot I can see in the dark. I like carrots. Ms. Olick taught us to be healthy and good.

—Riana Joseph

**I Want To Be Healthy**

I want to be healthy because I like vegetable, cabbage and broccoli. I like those all because they taste good and yummy and very good. They’re yummy. I like broccoli cooked, cabbage with oil, and vegetables cooked, cooked vegetables, and meat, and carrot. I eat all of them and they taste great!

—Francine Nicholai

**Being Healthy**

Well, I like eat spinach, broccoli, lettuce, cabbage. The most important thing about being Healthy is Eating Healthy and being Healthy, and eating nutritious foods.

—Ryan

---

**Healthy and Famous**

I wish I was strong healthy and famous! I like to eat fruit. I like fruit so much. Mrs. Olick is teaching us about nutrition. I was listening!

—Megan G.

**I Want to Be Healthy**

I love running, biking, eating broccoli, and cauliflower with dip! I love being healthy! I go ice skating every now and then with my brothers! And I go to bed at 8:00 or 8:30 (But I have to read so 9:00). Plus, I love roller skating too! Thank you Mrs. Olick!

—Shawna Jackson Williard

**Good Food**

If you’re healthy and eat good food you’ll be good at everything. I eat pineapple, grape, orange, carrot, chicken soup, and any kind of vegetables, and fruits, and meat. I drink water and I have pop once in a while. Thanks Mrs. Olick.

—Julie
Sixth Graders explore Career Pathways

Approximately 100 sixth-grade students from Kilbuck and Ayaprun Elitnaurvik elementary schools in Bethel took part in the annual Sixth Grade Hospital Tour at YKHC on May 19. Students toured several departments and stations at the Hospital and the Community Health Services Building to learn about health careers.

The Career Pathways Program would like to send a special thanks to all those who volunteered to help make the tour a good experience for students, from YKHC department personnel and tour guides, to school personnel and parents who chaperoned the students.

Department Personnel: Dalarie Peters, Dr. Allgair and Conan Murat—Dental; Rhonda Griffith—Lab; Carrie Enoch and Sam Berlin—Nicotine Control; Ronnie Fitzpatrick and Greta Warner—Diagnostic Imaging; Heather Hamblin, Curtis Callendar and Glen Jorgensen—Emergency Room; Dave Reynolds—Aeromed.

Tour Guides: Roger Lowe, Human Resources; Sephora Jones, Kusko Clinic; Lori Pruitt, Northwing; Alice Stewart, Human Resources

Thank you, teachers, aides, and parents who volunteered to chaperone students.

Below are a few comments from students about their experience:

“Thank you for letting us learn new thing about the hospital and the workers what they do, also for showing us the X-ray and the Aeromed that was really cool. I really like the Emergency room department what you did on Carrie.”
—Tyler Mockta

“I learned that on x-rays, you can see that if you smoke the other side of your lung could be smaller the other one. If you use jewelry it will look like that there is a jewelry in your bones or in your body.”
—Valerie E. Thomas

“Thanks for letting us go on the field trip. I learned that it takes along of practice to become a nurse, dentist assistant, dentist, doctor, or a boss of things. I liked the part when we saw how the Ultrasound works. It was funny when Carl was seeing his heart beat. Zach was the one who tried it.”
—Leon Jimmie

“My favorite part of being there was in the Aeromed and watching Angelica checking insider her stomach. I really like going in the ambulance because I got to turn on the siren.”
—Gwendolyn Nagasiak

I liked the Emergency room because we got to see how fast the heart beats a second, and how the blood pressure is. They said that the person was pretty healthy…. Thank you for all the things you taught us. I learned a lot.”
—Carrie Tikiun

Physicians and health aides deliver baby in village

By Martha Attie, CHAP Supervisory Instructor

Physicians from the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital teamed up with health aides from Akiak to deliver a baby early in the morning of Friday, May 13, 2005.

Dorothy Andrews, CHP, and Olinka Jones, CHA, stayed up with the patient when she was having labor pains. The Health Aides, using their excellent skills and teamwork, took care of the patient well.

Later, two providers—Drs. Leigh Gill and Scott Davis—went to the village by medevac and delivered a healthy baby weighing seven pounds, five ounces. After all was under control, the health aides went home to rest.

The Health Aides would also like to thank Phillip Phillip, Jr., the Akiak airline agent, for awaking early in the morning to greet the medevac and bring the providers to the Akiak clinic, and bringing all back to the plane afterwards. In fact, Phillip has helped out a lot in other medevacs using his own transportation and never complains or asks...
YKHC, KuC Workshop touts healthcare career planning

The YKHC Career Pathways Program and Kuskokwim Campus co-hosted the fourth-annual Health Career Planning Workshop at Kuskokwim Campus in Bethel on April 27–29. The workshop focused on health careers exploration and ASSET testing for college placement, and included guest speakers from various health professions, skills review, and academic advising for health education programs offered through Kuskokwim Campus.

The three-day event drew 17 participants from communities throughout the YK Delta, including Chefornak, Kotlik, Chevak, Kipnuk, Pilot Station, Chuathbaluk, Tununak, Emmonak, Napakiak, Lower Kalskag, and Bethel.

Will Updegrove, KuC Adult Basic Education Instructor; Sharon John, YKHC Training Manager; and Sara Battiest, KuC Academic Advisor, opened the workshop with introductions and an overview of college entrance requirements and the rewards of health service careers.

YKHC Professional Recruiter Ida Charles also offered an overview of the many careers available at YKHC.

Speakers from YKHC health professions and UAA School of Nursing shared personal insight about their chosen professions with an emphasis on education requirements, state and national credentialing, and both the rewards and challenges of pursuing health careers. Speakers this year were Rhonda Griffith, Laboratory Quality Assurance Specialist; Alyssa Perry, Physician Assistant – Certified; Dorothy Riley, Certified Medical Specialist; Dalarie Peters, Dental Assistant; Kathy Balasko, Dental Hygienist; Quang Vo, Pharmacist; Jay Jacobson, Licensed Practical Nurse; Holly Stanton, nursing student; Corky Corkern, Assistant Professor of Biology; Ann Evans, Assistant Professor, UAA School of Nursing; Martha Flores, Physician Assistant - Certified.

Following the presentations, participants embarked on skills review in the core areas of reading, writing, and math. The workshop concluded with individual skills assessment and advising about health education programs offered locally through Kuskokwim Campus at Bethel or via distance delivery from village sites.

Sara Battiest, with assistance from Pauline Bialy, coordinated participant housing, meals, skills review, testing and academic advising.

The Career Pathways Program is funded by a grant award from the Administration for Native Americans through January, 2006, to increase health careers awareness in the YK Delta, promote Alaska Native professionals as role models, and provide health education and scholarship referrals.

Sharon John, YKHC Training Manager, who has been with the program since its inception, said, “By co-sponsoring the Health Career Planning Workshop with Kuskokwim Campus, we are ‘growing our own’ health professionals. Adults interested in a health career get information about the differences and similarities in health career pathways and identify the first steps to education in a health profession.”

For more information about health careers or other upcoming events, contact the YKHC Learning Center at 543-6980.

The Messenger will now be available to Delta boxholders by subscription only.

You won’t be receiving it in your mailbox every month whether you want to or not.

The subscription is FREE!

All you have to do is call, fax, email or write to us and we’ll put you on the mailing list.

Copies of the Messenger will be available at your local health clinic, Tribal office and other YKHC locations in the villages and Bethel.
The WORD from WIC

WIC recognized for cost effectiveness

On Tuesday, May 17, the WIC—Women, Infants, and Children—program at YKHC received an award recognizing the many achievements of the program under the support of YKHC and its WIC director, Ester Ocampo.

The WIC program provides supplemental foods, nutrition education, and health care referrals throughout the YK Delta, with the goal of helping to improve the health of the women, infants, and children they serve.

Rebecca Corrilo, of the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), came to Bethel to present the award.

“This award is in recognition that Ester manages a WIC program that is both successful and cost-efficient,” Corrilo said. “YKHC WIC Program has the lowest per-participant cost of any WIC program in the state of Alaska.”

In addition, through YKHC’s WIC program’s participation in the 2002 Department of Labor’s Workforce Investment Act WIC grant, which was aimed at providing training for local people to earn their Competent Professional Authority (CPA) certification, Ocampo recruited 35 individuals throughout the YK Delta to receive the training, 18 of whom graduated as CPAs.

Four of the graduates received their certificates on Tuesday. The four CPA graduates receiving their certificates on Tuesday were Phyllis Sallison, Joann Andrew, Ardene Constantine, and Filma Peter, who serve Mountain Village, Akiachak, Pilot Station, and Hooper Bay.

Corrilo noted that this is a significant achievement resulting from “our collaboration with YKHC” and its abiding support of WIC initiatives.

“We are very proud of the positive impact WIC has had in the health outcome of participants served,” Corrilo said. “Among these are the reduction in the incidence of iron-deficiency anemia, baby bottle tooth decay, obesity, and diabetes.”

WIC also helps promote increased consumption of fruits and vegetables by conducting cooking demonstrations and food-tasting activities, Corrilo said.

“WIC is credited with increasing the number of pregnant women who seek prenatal care, thereby enabling a healthy pregnancy and birth outcome.”

Are you enrolled?
call YKHC’s Medicare / Medicaid Enrollment Office

907-543-6087

EMS CORNER

Disaster Preparedness

by John Dickens

“How do you eat a whale?”
ANSWER: “One bite at a time”

It is easy to feel overwhelmed when facing the daunting task of preparing for an emergency. The American Red Cross has come up with six steps that will help you through the process: They are TALK, PLAN, LEARN, CHECK SUPPLIES, TELL, PRACTICE.

TALK: Talk with your family and friends about disasters that can happen where you live. Talk with your family about why you need to prepare for these events. Calmly explain the potential dangers, and plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team. Make sure family members and friends know their job. Pick an alternate in case that person is absent.

PLAN: Plan where to meet after a disaster. Choose two places: Right outside your home, in case of a fire. Outside your neighborhood, in case you cannot return home or are forced to evacuate. After picking your meeting places you should also determine the best two escape routes out of your home, and out of your town. Maybe a fish camp or a nearby village can provide shelter. Ask an out of town friend to be your “family contact.” After a disaster, getting word to that friend using phone, VHF, or runners can help you find your family. All family members should know how the contact’s name, number and location of the rally point.

LEARN: Try www.redcross.org or www.ready.gov. These sites have an immense amount of information available about what to do in a disaster, including specifics about making kits and what dangers you will face. Calmly explain the potential dangers, and plan to share responsibilities and work together as a team. Make sure family members and friends know their job. Pick an alternate in case that person is absent.

CHECK SUPPLIES: Try to stock up on some water, food, batteries, fuel, ammo, cash and other essential items like medicines. Remember that we are on the very extreme end of an incredibly complex and fragile supply line. Remember how quickly the shelves of our stores emptied.
Did you know that this is the Chinese Year of the Rooster? More importantly, in Alaska 2005 is the Year of the BOOSTER.

The mascot for the 2005 Year of the Booster, the BOOSTER ROOSTER, will be making an appearance in Bethel at the Booster Day Immunization Clinic June 25.

Vaccine boosters like the Td vaccine (Tetanus & Diphtheria) can protect us from diseases (see below). In an effort to reach more people, give more shots, and offer you more flexibility, Public Health Nursing and YKHC are teaming up to offer you a day to come in for your boosters.

Everyone is welcome to come to Booster Day: infants, toddlers, school age children, adolescents, and adults.

Infants & toddlers
Children under the age of 2 need their shots on time, every time they are due—2 month, 4 month, 6 month, 12 month-15 months, and 2 years of age. Children who do not receive their vaccinations on time are susceptible to diseases that can be life-threatening. For example, Pertussis, otherwise know as whooping cough, can be thwarted by getting the DtaP vaccine. There are cases of whooping cough in adolescent and adult populations.

Although we as adults can handle the ongoing persistent cough, for young infants, the outcome can be tragic. Pertussis can lead to pneumonia, seizures, brain damage, and death. Last year there were several outbreaks around the country where immunization rates were low; this disease spread to hundreds of children. Please make an appointment for your child to get his or her shots on time, every time.

School Age Kids
Beat the rush this fall—your kids will need to get their school shots.

Immunizations required for children going into school (K-12)

DtaP Diphtheria, Tetanus, acellular Pertussis
Polio
MMR Measles Mumps and Rubella
Hepatitis A
Hepatitis B

Immunization Requirements for your child going into preschool or head start include those listed above and the two following:

Hib Haemophilus Influenzae Type B
Varicella Chicken Pox

Adults:
Some adults incorrectly assume that the vaccines they received as children will protect them for the rest of their lives. Generally this is true, except that:

• Some adults were never vaccinated as children
• Newer vaccines were not available when some adults were children
• Immunity can begin to fade over time

As we age, we become more susceptible to serious disease caused by common infections (e.g., flu, pneumococcus)

Vaccines for adults include:

• Tetanus-Diptheria Vaccine (all adults, every 10 years)
• Influenza (Flu) Vaccine (adults 50 and older)
• Pneumococcal Vaccine (in Alaska 55 and older or at risk)
• Hepatitis B Vaccine (adults at risk)
• Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR) Vaccine (susceptible adults)
• Varicella (chickenpox) Vaccine (susceptible adults)
• Vaccines for travelers (see CDC travel web site for specifics)

Not just for kids... adults need shots, too.

Tetanus (lockjaw) is caused by harmful bacteria that enter the body through a cut or wound. This disease causes painful tightening of the muscles, usually all over the body. Three out of 10 people who get tetanus die.

Diphtheria is caused by bacteria, which can infect the nose, throat or lungs. Breathing becomes very difficult and the child can suffocate. Death results in one out of every 10 cases.

Pneumococcal disease can cause serious infections of the lungs, the bloodstream, and the covering of the brain (meningitis)

As you are preparing for fish camp, gardening, and summer activities, make sure to stay healthy and safe from vaccine preventable diseases. Get your boosters!

Not sure when your last Tetanus or Pneumococcal shot was or when your child is due? Please call your village health clinic or the YKHC Immunization Program 1-800-478-4471 or 543-6955 or 543-6437 in Bethel.

Some information used in this article is used with permission from and graciously shared by the State of Alaska Section of Epidemiology Immunization Program.
State approves more money for tobacco prevention

On May 24, the Alaska State Legislature approved the full amount of requested funding by the State of Alaska Tobacco Control Program for tobacco use prevention in the 2006 Operating Budget.

An additional $1.6 million dollars was added to the FY05 budget to meet the need for tobacco prevention, education and cessation treatment services in the State of Alaska. This is great news for Tribal Health Organizations in the State of Alaska!

Statistically, Alaska has the highest rates of tobacco use in the nation. Unfortunately, the Delta experiences some of the highest tobacco use rates in the state.

Delta Tobacco Use Rates — May, 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tobacco Type</th>
<th>Chew</th>
<th>Smoke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adults</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnant Women</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cancer is the leading cause of death among Alaskan Natives. Lung cancer is the leading cause of all tobacco-related deaths. Addressing tobacco prevention, education and initiation among youth through education and outreach is absolutely necessary to improve the health status of our people. Treating tobacco dependence is just as important.

To date, the YKHC Nicotine Control Program has treated more than 2,100 patients who have entered the Cessation Program, with a whopping 750 actively enrolled!

If you are interested in stopping tobacco use, we are open Monday-Friday. Call us at YKHC Nicotine Control & Research Program at 1-800-478-3321 or 543-6312

Don’t let Summer ‘sneeze’ you down

With the summer arriving, it is important to be aware of the potential for seasonal allergies. Allergies often arise from pollen, dust and other particles floating in the air.

Pollen levels in the air are at the highest during the evening hours of the spring and summer months. Pollen can come from weeds, grasses, and trees, and pollen allergies (hay fever) affect 1 out of 10 Americans. Pollen can enter the body through the ears, eyes, nose, and mouth, leading to allergy symptoms that consist of water eyes, sneezing, and congestion.

Although seasonal allergies cannot be cured, symptoms can be decreased with the help of medication. Over the counter (OTC) medications may work for some allergy sufferers whose symptoms are less severe. Others who experience more serious allergy symptoms may need the help of prescription medications, which your doctor can prescribe.

The following is a list of popular OTC allergy medications

- **Diphenhydramine / Benadryl**® — Helps treat sneezing, itchy throat and nasal allergies.
- **Loratadine / Claritin**® — Relieves nasal and non-nasal symptoms of seasonal allergies.
- **Pseudoephedrine / Sudafed**® — Helps treat runny nose, sinus pain, congestion and cough.
- **Phenylephrine / Afrin®, Vicks**® — Relieves nasal congestion.
- **Chlorpheniramine / Chlor-Trimenton**® — Helps treat itchy throat, ears, and sneezing.

The following are common prescription allergy medications

- **Fexofenadine / Allegra**® — Relief of symptoms associated with seasonal allergic rhinitis.
- **Cetirizine / Zyrtec**® — Treats allergic symptoms including rhinitis and rash.
- **Desloratadine / Clarinex**® — Relief of nasal and non-nasal symptoms of seasonal allergies.
- **Mometasone Furoate / Nasonex**® — Treatment and prevention of nasal allergy symptoms.
- **Fluticasone / Flonase**® — Management of seasonal rhinitis.

If you have any questions about allergies, talk with your provider or pharmacist. For more information, visit the FDA website at www.fda.gov.
‘New Patient Appointment’ system improves dental care

YKHC’s Dental Department is adjusting the current appointment system to see more patients and to provide more treatment at each visit. A “New Patient Appointment” is a time for a patient to get all the necessary x-rays taken and a check up.

The dentist and the patient, together, will make a list of everything that needs to be done to have a healthy smile. You can now stay with the same dentist until your treatment is complete. Follow-up appointments can be made before you leave. A walk-in dentist is available if you are in pain or need care immediately. For most people, the “New Patient Appointment” is a better choice.

We hope this system will reduce the number of trips to the dentist necessary to complete your care. Oral health is an important part of your overall health and well being.

Broken Appointment Policy

In an effort to serve more patients, the YK Dental Clinic has implemented a broken appointment policy as of May 16, 2005.

The policy is: Any appointment (new patient exam or revisit appointment) not attended or cancelled within 10 minutes of appointment time will be considered a broken appointment. After three broken appointments you will be unable to schedule

see DENTAL, p. 15

Kusko and Yukon Family Medicine Clinics

Family Medicine Goal:

To provide the best care for our patients and to maximize continuity of care by improving availability of services of Healthcare Providers.

Yukon Clinic Villages Served

Atmautluak
Chefornak
Eek
Kasigluk
Kipnuk
Kongiganak
Kwigillingok
Marshall
Mekoryuk
Mountain Village
Napakiak
Napaskiak

Kusko Clinic Villages Served

Akiachak
Akia
Alakanuk
Aniak
Anvik
Chevak
Chuathbaluk
Crooked Creek
Emmonak
Grayling
Holy Cross
Hooper Bay
Katli
Kwethluk
Lower Kalskag
Nunam Iqua
Red Devil
Russian Mission
Seammon Bay
Shageluk
Sleetmute
Stony River
Tuluksak
Upper Kalskag

Clinic Hours: Monday–Friday — 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

For an Appointment call: 543-6442 or 1-800-478-3321

Delta Walk-in Clinic

The Delta Walk-in Clinic is available for acute/urgent needs that require same-day attention. The staff consists primarily of Certified Physicians Assistants and Nurse Practitioners who emphasize quick encounters with referrals to other clinics when necessary.

“Delta Walk-in Clinic Project”

Project Priority: Improve patient satisfaction by decreasing wait times.

The Delta Clinic opened in March, 2001, to allow patients to “walk-in” for acute/urgent medical needs. The average number of patients seen is 70 per day, with an average of 3-4 medical providers per day.

In an effort to decrease waiting time, a group of nursing staff attended an extensive Quality Improvement workshop through Alaska Native Medical Center and have brought back several ideas for improvement. We have developed Nursing Protocols for the Delta walk-in clinic. The Clinic is also opening one hour earlier to capture the early morning rush. So far we have already seen a decreased wait time by 25 percent. We are excited to achieve and maintain a continued decreased wait time.

Clinic Hours: Monday–Friday — 8:30 a.m.–7 p.m.

Pediatric Clinic

The Pediatric Clinic is designed to provide care for chronic sick children. This clinic offers local primary care and specialty consultative care for children. At the parents request an appointment with a pediatrician can be scheduled.

Clinic Hours: Monday–Friday — 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

For an Appointment call 543-6297

Specialty Clinic

The Specialty Clinic provides services to patients by referral only. Some examples: Gynecology, Urology, Cardiology, Neurology, and Dermatology. Please schedule an appointment with your designated healthcare provider for referrals.

Clinic Hours: Monday–Friday — 9 a.m.–5 p.m.

For an Appointment call 543-6442 or 1-800-478-3321

We treat patients of all ages, from infants to elders, in many areas such as:

- Routine physical exams:
- Pre-employment physicals
- Women’s routine health care
- Well child exams EPSDT and immunizations
- Prenatal care
- Family planning
- Cholesterol screening
- Chronic medical conditions
- Preventative services
- Hypertension management
- Lesion removal
- Specialty Clinic referrals
- Joint injections
- Medication refills
- Lab and Blood testing
This month’s column includes a general overview of common injuries, and some easy stretches to try if you are having troubles with your neck.

Common injuries include whiplash, disc protrusion or rupture, and nerve impingement. A general overview of each will be provided, with easy stretches to try listed at the end of the column. Keep in mind that the exercises are done gently. Any increase in numbness, tingling, pain or other symptoms that does not go away as soon as you stop the stretch should be reported to your health aide or medical provider. If you have had any recent neck or head injury, please check with your health care provider before performing the stretches.

Whiplash injuries are most often a result of a sudden, unexpected stop or change in direction of travel. Most frequently seen as a result of motor vehicle accidents, whiplash injuries can also be caused by slips, trips and falls. The head is like a bowling ball held on a stick (the stick being your neck). Your muscles hold the head in place, and provide movement. Any unexpected movement causes the muscles to strain, and can cause tears in the tissue. When the muscle tears, it takes a long time to repair itself, since the muscles are working whenever we are upright.

Whiplash injuries can take a long time to heal. Often there are other problems associated with the healing process. Nerve impingement is one of them. When a muscle is strained or torn, the tissue tightens up as part of the healing process. If there are any nerves passing through the muscle, they will be pinched or trapped in the tightened muscle tissue. If the pressure is great enough, the nerve will become irritated, creating symptoms of numbness, tingling, and perhaps decreased sensation and strength. If left untreated, this can cause permanent damage to the nerve. A gentle stretching program is an important component of the treatment process, to decrease the tension in the muscles, decrease the pressure on the nerve, and return the tissue to its optimal function. Stretching or exercising too hard or too soon can irritate the muscle and connective tissue, and slow down the healing process.

Another place the nerve can be irritated is at the spine. Each nerve exits the spinal canal through a hole or foramen in the vertebral column. On the outside (or lateral to) the foramen is a joint. On the other side (the medial side) of the foramen is a disc. If there are bony changes in the joint (degeneration or arthritis), the nerve can be pinched or impinged. If there is a loss of disc space due to injury, degeneration, or other mechanism, the foramen will become smaller, and can irritate the nerve. The nerve may swell, and create an impingement syndrome. If the disc bulges, or protrudes, into the foramen, this can also pinch the nerve.

Any of these mechanisms can result in similar symptoms: numbness, tingling or changes in sensation in the arm and/or hand. The area of symptoms is important to know, to help in determining where the nerve is pinched. Remember from last month that the nerves travel from the neck into the hand, branching off and coming together along their paths. A detailed report on the path of symptoms helps to diagnose the area involved, and the cause of the problem.

Gentle stretches done daily can prevent some types of degeneration, loosen tight muscles, decrease pressures on the nerves, and increase blood flow to the muscles and connective tissue. Be sure to take deep, slow breaths in and out as you stretch. This allows more oxygen to get to the brain and the connective tissue, creating a healthy environment for the muscles. Holding the stretches for 45–90 seconds also allows the less contractile tissues to relax. Prolonged stretches create more permanent changes in the tissue, and the results last longer.

Here are some easy stretches for you to try—

- **Flexibility: Neck Retraction**
  - Pull head straight back keeping jaw and eyes in line
  -_clasp hands together in front with arms extended_Gently pull shoulder blades apart and head head forward

- **Upper Cervical Flexion/Extension**
  - Gently flex and extend upper neck by nodding head. Try to make a "long neck."

- **Lower Cervical/Upper Thoracic Stretch**
  - Clasp hands together in front with arms extended_Gently pull shoulder blades apart and head head forward

- **Shoulder Stretch**
  - Strog shoulders up and down, forward and backward

- **Neck Lateral Flexion**
  - Tilt head toward shoulder, then slowly toward opposite shoulder

Watch for next month’s column on the thoracic spine. Have a safe and healthy summer!
YKHC and Tununak team up for kid’s bike helmet festival

The first village-based collaboration between Health Education and Injury Control/EMS can be counted a success!

The Injury Control/EMS Department donated dozens of children’s bike helmets and goodie bags for the Tununak Bike Helmet Fest, organized by Health Educator Alma Kanrilak and held on May 31. Health Education Department staff Lisa Aguda and Debi Olick participated by lending helmet fitting services and set-up and clean-up duty.

The continually heavier rains of the afternoon could not dampen the spirits of the 76 participants, ranging in age from 2–14, who showed up at the Tununak Rock People Youth Center. Equally enthusiastic were volunteers Nellie Lincoln, Susie Walter and Theodore Angaiak.

The Paul T. Albert Memorial School, Tununak TRC, Tununak Native Store, and the Native Village of Tununak supported this event through generous donations of a variety of door prizes, with the grand prizes being one girl bike and one boy bike. The winners wore great big smiles, as well as their new helmets, when their names were called.

Our Mission:
“Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health”

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION
More than 20 seniors gathered at Pinky’s Park in Bethel last month to celebrate National Senior Health and Fitness Day with a walk in the park.

Clear skies and warm weather made for a great day to get out and exercise.

Kim Jung, YKHC’s Diabetes Outreach Coordinator, led the group in stretching exercises. Everyone who came was able to get involved, with activities tailored to a variety of fitness levels.

The group gave great reviews about the event, said Jung, and asked for walks to be held every week in the summer. Jung is now planning with the Senior Center to add walking in addition to the weekly aerobic exercise activities she does with the seniors.

Fresh fruit and snacks were provided by the Eddie Hoffman Senior Center while YKHC Diabetes Prevention and Control gave out water bottles. Subway Sandwiches supplied bags for everyone to put their goodies in.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success!

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Thank you to everyone who helped make this event a success!
Rural Providers gather in Bethel

The theme of this year’s Rural Providers Conference (RPC) was “Strong Families—Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow.” The conference opened in Bethel on Monday evening, June 6, and ended June 10.

The RPC, an annual gathering of substance abuse service providers, youth, elders and family members, is coordinated by the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAlCAP) and promotes the growth of the Alaska Sobriety Movement.

The conference is held in different Alaska communities each year. This year, it was Bethel’s turn to host the gathering.

Activities included discussions on health and community issues in Alaska, featuring ceremonies, talking circles, workshops, group sessions, and cultural events. There was a Culture Camp on the Moravian Church grounds and the traditional Sweat Lodge conducted as well during the weeklong event.

Youths participated in the Native Youth Olympics, rubbed elbows with the Dragon Slayers of Aniak, listened to rap by the Blood Family of Scammon Bay, and watched the BRHS JROTC drill team perform their national championship moves.

“This is a period where we get re-connected with rural providers from all over Alaska and support each other,” said Liz Sunnyboy, YKHC’s Behavioral Health Services Coordinator. “It is a celebration of all our accomplishments throughout the year in promoting healthy living for our people and families,” Sunnyboy added.

Due to the deadline for publishing this month’s Messenger, full coverage of the RPC will be provided in next month’s issue.