



Provider Profile

Meet Ellen Hodges, MD

YKHC's Medical Chief of Staff

by Donna Bach, YKHC Public Relations

Dr Ellen Hodges grew up in Tyler, Minnesota, population 1,200, a town known for its agricultural ties and strong Bavarian influence. She is the fifth of seven children.

Ellen's father was a music and science teacher. Consequently, she developed a great appreciation for science, earning her undergraduate degree in chemistry with honors at the College of Saint Benedict in 1996.

She received a remarkable award from her alma mater in 2006 called the Decade Award, honoring her outstanding personal, professional and volunteer accomplishments. She attended the University of Minnesota medical school in Duluth and went on to complete her residency at Providence Medical Center in 2003. She didn't stop there. She went on to receive highly specialized training to provide emergency surgical obstetrical procedures and brought those skills to Bethel's YK Delta Regional hospital.

Health careers run in the family. Ellen's older brother Gerald is currently the administrator at the Yukon Kuskokwim Elder's Home. Her sister Betty is also a nurse practitioner.

When learning more about Ellen's specialty and her demanding schedule, I asked Michelle DeWitt, Ellen's partner of 11 years, how someone in such a demanding position ever really has any free time. Her immediate response was, "it get's rough. To the point where even on the most beautiful summer days, we can't even go on a boat ride in the event work calls her in." Michelle credits the addition of Dr. David Compton OB-GYN as instrumental in helping free up the on-call demand of both Dr. Hodges and Dr. Eggimann. "It saved our relationship. I don't envy individuals who have to work on-call. With a job like Ellen's you are almost always on-call."

Not only is she an on-call emergency OB physician, she is a family medicine doctor and to top that off, she is YKHC's Chief of Staff for all of the hospital's medical providers. This means in addition to providing leadership by way of clinical background and expertise (with YKHC's electronic medical records system RAVEN for example) but she is also in charge of conducting performance evaluations, maintaining and monitoring licensures and certifications, and managing a demanding schedule that includes clinical shifts in multiple areas of the hospital.

When Ellen isn't busy as the chief of staff in her administrative capacity, she definitely makes up for it when her on-call schedule pulls her into work to perform emergency c-sections,



Recognition for Bill O'Brien

YKHC's Bill O'Brien, Sr. EMS Instructor, has received the Master Instructor Trainer Emeritus distinction from the Health & Safety Institute for his dedicated service as a MEDIC Instructor.

Since 1997, Bill has taught more than 264 Medic First Aid classes throughout the YK Delta, teaching CPR, AED, and First Aid as well as training new MEDIC instructors.

Bill's dedicated teaching has increased the number of certified individuals in the region, making our communities safer places to live. Congratulations, Bill. And thank you!

Dental Short Call List

Need a new exam, fillings, extraction, or hygiene appointment? YKHC Dental is proud to present our Short Call List.

If you can get to the dental department in 15 minutes you can be added to our Short Call List. This allows us to call you if we have a broken appointment or cancellation.

We still suggest that you try to get an appointment on your own by calling at 8 a.m. daily.

At Dental we do our best to accommodate all of our patients.

Notice of Privacy Practices

YKHC must follow Federal and State laws regarding your protected health information.

These include the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), the Privacy Act, Freedom of Information Act, and Alcohol and Drug Confidentiality Regulations.

You can download our Notice of Privacy Practices, which describes how medical information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please read and review it carefully.

The link is at the top of the sidebar on our homepage: www.ykhc.org

SAVE THE DATE: **Tribal Unity Gathering XXI**
April 8-10, 2014
Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center, Bethel Alaska

work the emergency room, late nights, early mornings, holidays and countless weekends. Dr. Bill Eggimann, whose wife, Dr. Jane McClure, held the Chief of Staff position for nearly 10 years, acknowledges it is very demanding. “Dr. Hodges is fantastic. We are so lucky to have her. I will never forget the first night she stepped foot in the ER and said, ‘I’m gonna be your resident.’ And by the morning I wanted her forever. The YK region is so fortunate that someone of her caliber, clinical expertise, technical savvy, and appreciation for the culture here.”

When asked about her job, Dr. Hodges, without hesitation, says “I have the best job in the world.”

In the less than twenty minutes I had to speak with Dr. Hodges in person, she was called to post-emergency obstetrical surgery where she delivered a baby boy. There was a line of people waiting to speak with her.

Finally, when Dr. Hodges was asked about what individuals can do to help elevate their personal health status, she said, “besides the obvious, such as stop using tobacco, getting exercise, ... embrace the idea of getting involved in the community by providing support for one another, helping in providing a support system towards a common goal in being part of the social safety net to prevent harm, abuse, neglect, and preventing unfortunate events from happening such as suicide. Public health fascinates me, and honestly my role in terms of what I can provide with my clinical background is only 10 percent of the whole health picture. I think about it all the time. We as doctors may have one visit to help change the course of individual health outcomes, but ultimately there are additional driving factors that reside with the individual, their genetic make-up, and what social norms are in place that influence that. That makes up the other 90 percent.”

She is described by many as extremely enthusiastic, passionate about saving lives and being adamant about getting YKHC’s electronic medical record system built correctly, with the end goal being lives saved.

“Ultimately, when we sat down and talked about EMR a long time ago, it grew out of a small work group and a patient who experienced a bad health outcome from the village. Our new RAVEN system saves lives. I strongly believe this. I know the build has been stressful and taxing for all involved, but now we have an absolutely invaluable product that will prevent a bad outcome like that from happening again, and it’s an invaluable investment.”

Fun Facts about Dr. Ellen Hodges

- 1991 Junior Miss Aebleskiver Queen of Tyler, MN, which involved her father driving her to every county and state fair parade the summer after her high school graduation. She toured many a county fair and parade in Minnesota in a traditional Danish frock amidst high summer temperatures. Ellen remarked, “It helped pay for my first year of college.” An Aebleskiver is a traditional Danish pastry and places the small agricultural town of Tyler, MN on the map for it’s appreciation of Danish and Bavarian culture.
- Credits K. Jane McClure for returning to Bethel after her residency. “She is a leader, visionary and helped set the stage in mentoring me right out of residency. She had your back, no matter what.”
- During her time in undergraduate school, while working in St. Benedict’s brand new science center and chemistry, a haz mat response team was called in because Ellen accidentally tipped over a bottle of sodium hydro chloride. Campus legends and many-a-chem lab partner keep this story alive.

YKHC will hold its annual Tribal Unity Gathering April 8–9, 2014 in Bethel at the Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center.

This year’s theme is “Tribal Health & Our Future,” looking at how we can best preserve, protect and sustain the great accomplishments made over the past 25 years, including new facilities, sanitation, programs, services and Native Self-Determination.

Each year, the Tribal Gathering brings representatives from YK Delta villages together to review recent accomplishments, learn about current issues relating to the Tribal healthcare system, and determine future priorities for improvement.

“As a tribal health organization, our customers are also our owners,” said President/CEO Dan Winkelman, “which makes the Gathering the most important event on our calendar for YKHC’s administra-



tive leadership and Board of Directors.”

This will be the 21st Tribal Gathering. The event was initiated following YKHC’s contracting to operate the Indian Health Service’s Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital in the early 1990s. Over the past two decades the listing of priorities has resulted in the construction of five subregional health clinics, village medevac services, many culturally relevant health service programs, CT scan capacity at the hospital, improvements in outpatient services and, most recently, a new regional nursing home.

The public is invited to attend the Gathering, which begins at 8 a.m. April 8. YKHC sponsors two Tribal Council representatives from each village. Registration for sponsored representatives is required. Deadline for registration is March 21, 2014. Visit our website at www.ykhc.org/tribalgathering to register online. For more information about the Gathering please call YKHC Public Relations 907-543-6038. ▲

CEO Transition: Peltola retires, Winkelman picks up reins

After nearly 24 years of service to the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, Gene Peltola and the Board of Directors announced his early retirement as President/CEO effective Jan. 15. The Board tapped Administrative Vice President Dan Winkelman to be the new chief executive.



Dan Winkelman.

Peltola started at YKHC in 1990 when the Board of Directors' vision was to take over management of the Indian Health Service Hospital in Bethel. That was accomplished and much more. Peltola led the development of many new health care programs, facilities and services—including subregional clinics, air ambulance services, hospital expansion and remodeling, the Community Health Services Building and a regional nursing home.

“On behalf of the Board of Directors, I wish to thank Gene for his years of service and wish him nothing but the best,” said Board Chair Ray Alstrom.

Winkelman has worked at YKHC for 13 years. He is Deg Hit'an Athabascan and is an enrolled member of one of YKHC's 58 member tribes, the Shageluk Native Village. He earned his Bachelors of Science degree from the University of Oregon and his Juris Doctorate from the University of New Mexico's School of Law. Winkelman is recognized for his leadership to improve health care for Alaska Natives.

“I am humbled and honored for this privilege to lead our organization. I look forward to working with our Chairman, Ray Alstrom, and our Board of Directors to focus on our patients, employees and tribal communities. I would like to recognize Gene Peltola for his 24 years of dedication and commitment to YKHC and the people of the Delta. Gene's done a phenomenal job in helping build the organization to what it is today,” said Winkelman.

A community reception was held Jan. 31 to honor Peltola's years of service. A capacity crowd at the Bethel Cultural Center included well-wishers from all over the state, his family, and many friends, colleagues and co-workers. Typically, Peltola attributed YKHC's success to the dedication of its employees. “Improving the quality of life for the people of this region—that's what it's all about,” he said.▲



STAYING HEALTHY

Spring Travel Safety Tips

Those cold dark winter days are fading away. The sun is shining brighter, and temperatures are rising.

As these changes take place, the ice on the river is weakening. This makes it increasingly important to be alert when traveling on the ice.

As you make your last few trips before breakup, here are some tips to help make your trip a safe one:

Watch out for open holes along the trails and be aware of different ice conditions

Dark ice, brown ice, and purple ice is always unsafe, and any ice covered by water is extremely dangerous.

Always wear a Personal Floatation Device!

Wearing a Personal Floatation Device may help save your life should you fall through the ice. It may also offer good hypothermia protection.

Always travel with a friend!

It is always best to travel in a group. Travel in a single-file line and keep a safe distance between each other.

File a travel plan with a responsible person who will check up on you.

Your travel plan should include:

- Everyone who will be traveling, what you are taking (equipment)
- Where you are going and the route you plan to take (if you change destination or route be sure to inform the responsible person of your changes)
- How long you plan to be gone and when you plan to return.

If you aren't sure who to tell, you can always file your plan with the Alaska State Troopers.

**Brought to you by
YKHC Injury
Prevention**



In Memoriam
Julia Twitchell
March 24, 1954
February 23, 2014

Julia was a dedicated Health Aide of 24 years in the villages of Kasigluk and Nunapitchuk. She greatly enjoyed and loved helping people through her profession.

Julia loved to laugh, giggle, tease, Ingqeq-ing, and in a loving way, she spoke her mind.

Her loved ones and extended families surrounded her as she passed on.

What are we doing to improve the patient experience?

We are working hard to improve patient care and reduce harm for our patients. Nursing has implemented a Fall Team on the Inpatient Unit (Northwing).

When a patient is admitted, the patient receives a full assessment, including a fall risk scale, called a Morse Scale. If the patient is identified as a high risk for falling, a fall protocol is initiated. This includes a yellow blanket, socks, bracelet, and a magnet sign on the door, and more frequent checks on the patient.

If a patient does fall, the Fall Team is paged and conducts a Fall Huddle, which includes the nurse taking care of the patient, the Falls Team, Pharmacy, and the patient. The circumstances of the fall are examined to see if there was something that could have been done to prevent the fall and to prevent other falls.

So far this has been very successful and we have identified some items that will improve the safety of our patients.▲

Smile Alaska Style

Saturday, March 22 at Cama'i Dance Festival
Bethel Regional High School – 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



FREE DENTAL SCREENINGS
FREE ORAL HEALTH AIDS

"Bring your Smile and dress Alaska Style!"



YKHC's strategic plan for achieving excellence in health care is called **Napartet**, a Yup'ik word for a ship's mast, a trail marker, or a supporting pillar.

Patient Centered Excellence

2014 Goal: Design and implement a real time patient satisfaction survey tool hospital wide by the end of FY14

In response to Tribal Gathering priority concerns, PCE rolled out a real-time patient satisfaction survey in the Emergency Room in February. At discharge, patients are given an e-tablet with nine questions to rate their visit. Not all patients are able to participate, but nearly 60 percent are. Chief Nurse Executive Barb Jacobson says out of 2,000 ER patients a month, only 7 would typically return the mail-in Press Ganey surveys the hospital has been relying on for customer feedback—usually weeks after the visit.

This margin of error has been greatly reduced and the patient's immediate response can be evaluated even further by the ER Team and YKHC Leadership.

ER Manager Jeff Clark says the results are impressive. "With the use of the tablets and the Fast Track, customers visiting the Emergency Room for treatment have been given a voice." Satisfaction of care for "Agree" and "Strongly Agree" have been between 79% –90%. "This positive feedback is a direct reflection of the Emergency Room Team providing excellence in care and striving to ensure our people are heard and responded to," Clark said. "Without a doubt, the implementation of the survey provides a tool for guidance to improve the delivery of customer care and empower the customer concern to be addressed."

ER has piloted the survey for the past couple months. The PCE team goal is to implement the survey in Northwing, OB and the subregional clinics by April and Outpatient Department, Surgery, Dental, and Optometry by the end of the year.

HELP US IMPROVE WAITING TIMES

You asked us to work on reducing our patient wait times.

You can help us make more appointment slots available by making an appointment and keeping it.

If you know you will not make it to your appointment, call to cancel or reschedule as soon as possible in order to give the appointment to someone else who may need it.

This allows us to make the most use of our schedulers, providers, case managers, and ultimately, your time.

YKHC Scheduling desk: 543-6442
or 1-800- 478-3321 ext 6442

Elders Home welcomes new administrator

In mid-December the Long Term Care facility welcomed a new Nursing Home Administrator Gerald Hodges. Born and raised in Minnesota, he attended College in South Dakota and obtained a degree in Business Administration. He has worked as a Nursing Home Administrator in Nebraska, New Mexico, South and North Dakota and some other states. After six years in the southwest he decided to move to colder climates, which he finds more agreeable.



Gerald Hodges.

Hodges has grown to understand and appreciate the complexities of the medical care that must be provided in a long term care facility and will be focusing on coordination and teamwork.

Hodges has been to Bethel a couple of times prior to moving here and finds it a wonderful and a remarkable town. He is excited to be able to join the YKHC team and serve the Elders of this community.▲

Girl Scouts learn First Aid from the pros

YKHC's Injury Control and EMS Department held a volunteer CPR/First Aid class with Bethel's Girl Scout Troop 140 on Feb. 9.

It was a non-certified class, but was still pretty thorough at three hours long, Troop leaders had requested ICEMS assistance in helping the girls complete their First Aid merit badges.



They learned CPR, bleeding control, and assessment—and had a fun time playing a zombie game where the players donned moulage gear and those who were touched by a zombie had to get properly bandaged by a medic player before they could return to the game.

(Names withheld at the request of the Troop)

—Jennifer Amigliore,
Injury Control & EMS

RESOURCES

YKHC Website: www.ykhc.org

YK Delta Regional Hospital.....	543-6000
YKHC main switchboard.....	543-6000
Toll Free.....	1-800-478-3321
Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital	543-6300

APPOINTMENTS

Outpatient Clinics (Yukon, Kusko, Delta)	543-6442
Dental.....	543-6229
Optometry.....	543-6336
Audiology	543-6466

SUBREGIONAL CLINICS

Aniak SRC.....	675-4556
Emmonak.....	949-3500
St. Mary's.....	438-3500
Toksook Bay.....	427-3500
Hooper Bay.....	758-3500

SERVICES

Inpatient (North Wing).....	543-6330
Pharmacy.....	543-6382
Physical Therapy.....	543-6342

Women's Health.....	543-6296
Irrivik Birthing Center	543-6346
Behavioral Health Services	543-6100
Substance Abuse Treatment PATC	543-6730
Sobering Center	543-6830
Developmental Disabilities.....	543-2762
Emergency Room	543-6395
Home Care.....	543-6170
Office of Environmental Health & Engineering Injury Control & EMS.....	543-6420

ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

Administration	543-6020
Human Resources	543-6060
Public Relations.....	543-6037/38
Travel Management.....	543-6360
Facilities & Maintenance	543-6203

BETHEL & REGIONAL RESOURCES

Public Health Nursing.....	543-2110
Tundra Women's Shelter	543-3444
Alaska State Troopers	1-800-764-5525