



Patrick Mackey of Salcha, Alaska, holds on to his sled as his dogs drive down a hill onto the Kuskokwim river in Kalskag. Mackey was one of 20 mushers to start the Kuskokwim 300, a sled dog race which runs up the Kuskokwim river from Bethel to Aniak and back.

YKHC, including the Tobacco Prevention and Diabetes Prevention & Control departments, were proud sponsors of the K300.

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SAVE THE DATE

**Tribal Unity
 Gathering XXIV**
 Yupiit Picirarait Cultural Center
 April 5–6, 2017 ★ Bethel Alaska

YKHC’s annual Tribal Unity Gathering will be held April 5-6 at the Yupiit Picirarait Cultural Center in Bethel. Delegates from each tribe in the region will be invited, leaders and program managers offer progress reports, and tribes help to set annual priorities.

Tribal Councils—look for a letter of invitation coming soon. Select your delegates to attend our 24th Tribal Unity Gathering at your next council meeting!

myYKHealth

Immediate, online access to your medical information!

Get on-the-go access via your smart phone or home computer.

Visit registration staff at the hospital, or any village or subregional clinic to sign up.

RESOURCES

YKHC main switchboard543-6000
 Toll Free 1-800-478-3321

APPOINTMENTS

Outpatient Clinics (Yukon, Kusko, Delta) 543-6442
 Dental543-6229
 Optometry543-6336
 Audiology.....543-6466

SUBREGIONAL CLINICS

Aniak.....675-4556
 Emmonak949-3500
 St. Mary's.....438-3500
 Toksook Bay427-3500
 Hooper Bay758-3500

SERVICES

Inpatient (North Wing)543-6330
 Pharmacy.....543-6382
 Physical Therapy543-6342
 Women's Health543-6296
 Irvnik Birthing Center.....543-6346
 Behavioral Health Services.....543-6100
 Substance Abuse Treatment.....543-6730
 Sobering Center.....543-6830
 Developmental Disabilities.....543-2762
 Emergency Room543-6395
 Office of Environmental Health & Engineering
 Injury Control & EMS543-6420

ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

Administration.....543-6020
 Human Resources543-6060
 Public Relations.....543-6013
 Travel Management.....543-6360
 Facilities & Maintenance543-6203

BETHEL & REGIONAL RESOURCES

Public Health Nursing543-2110
 Tundra Women's Shelter543-3444
 Alaska State Troopers..... 1-800-764-5525

The Messenger is a monthly publication produced by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation's Public Relations Department as a report to Tribal Members.

For questions, comments, submission of articles, or subscription information, write to Messenger Editor, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, P.O. Box 528, Bethel, Alaska 99559; or call 907-677-2232.
 E-mail: publicrelations@ykhc.org.

Deadline is the 10th of the month, or the preceding Friday if the 10th is on a weekend, for publication on the first of the following month.

The Messenger is also available for download on our website at www.ykhc.org/messenger. Please ask permission to reprint articles or pictures.

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Message from the President/CEO

Going Tobacco Free



Dan Winkelman,
 President/CEO

As most researchers agree, there is no safe form of tobacco and its use is related to higher rates of cancer. Despite this, the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta experiences some of the highest rates of smoking and smokeless tobacco (or chew) use in Alaska and the Nation. However, according to the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, the good news is “within five years of quitting, your chance of getting cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder is cut in half. Ten years after you quit smoking, your risk for dying from lung cancer drops by half.”

On February 3, YKHC announced that we will become a tobacco-free campus on February 5, 2018. Currently, YKHC is a tobacco-free facility, but tobacco use is allowed outside of facilities in designated areas. This new policy means that tobacco use of any kind, in YKHC facilities or on YKHC properties, will be prohibited beginning in February 2018. We are implementing this campus-wide policy because it aligns with YKHC’s mission, vision, values and promotes the health we seek in partnership with our customers and employees.

YKHC chose February 3 to announce our new policy because February 4 is World Cancer Day. World Cancer Day strives to:

Explore how everyone – as a collective or as individuals – can do their part to reduce the global burden of cancer. Just as cancer affects everyone in different ways, all people have the power to take various actions to reduce the impact that cancer has on individuals, families and communities. World Cancer Day is a chance to reflect on what you can do, make a pledge and take action. www.worldcancerday.org

To offer plenty of notice to our customers and employees, the policy begins on February 5, 2018. Employees who choose to quit will be offered tobacco cessation counseling free of charge for the next year. This includes nicotine replacement therapy like nicotine gum. As always, customers who choose to quit are offered a referral to the tobacco cessation program.

The City of Bethel was one of the first communities in the state of Alaska to adopt smoke-free ordinances in public places almost 20 years ago. Our region continues to lead the state in the number of tribes that have adopted tobacco-free policies. YKHC looks forward to joining many other healthcare and education organizations in our region and across the state who already have tobacco-free campuses, such as: the Alaska Native Medical Center, University of Alaska Kuskokwim Campus, Lower Kuskokwim School District, Lower Yukon School District, Maniilaq, Norton Sound Health Corporation, Providence Alaska, South Peninsula Hospitals, Tanana Chiefs Conference and many others.

Join me, our Board of Directors, our customers and 90 percent of surveyed YKHC employees who support a tobacco-free campus!

YKHC Board of Directors

Unit 1



Mary Ayunerak Alakanuk



Michael Hunt, Sr. Kotlik

Unit 2



Geraldine Beans St. Mary's



James C. Landlord Mtn. Village

Unit 3



Billy Jean Stewart Kalskag



Betty Turner Lower Kalskag

Unit 4



Phillip K. Peter, Sr Akiachak



Mildred Evan Akiachak

Unit 5



Stan Hoffman, Sr. Bethel



Gloria Simeon Bethel



Hugh Snyder Bethel



Chris Larson Napaskiak

Unit 6



Esai Twitchell, Jr. Kasigluk



Adolph Lewis Kwigillingok

Unit 8



Vacant



James Sipary Toksook Bay

Unit 9



Patrick Tall Chevak



John Uttereyuk Scammon Bay

Unit 10



Joshua Cleveland Quinhagak

Unit 11



Marvin Deacon Grayling

Honorary Board Member



Meet Eddie Corp, YKHC's new Privacy Officer!

"I was born and raised Bethel. My parents are Stan and Cecilia Corp, and I am the second oldest of four children.



"My Yup'ik roots come from Nelson Island, where my mother was born and raised and where I spent a lot of time learning a subsistence lifestyle.

"After graduating high school, I left Bethel and attended college at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I came back to Bethel in the summer of 2012 and worked in Patient Financial Services for four years before accepting the Privacy Officer position.

"I am looking forward to this new opportunity to serve the YK Delta!"

Willie Lake retires after 40 yrs

Willie Lake has been a reliable member of the optometry family for over 40 years and will be missed. Congratulations, Willie!



Congrats Rebecca Nelson!

Rebecca Nelson retired after serving YKHC for 18 years. She worked in accounts payable for eight years before transferring to Patient Financial Services (PFS), where she worked as a dental biller and billing trainer. Rebecca was a joy to work with and learn from. She has trained quite a few billers and cash-posters over the years. Rebecca will be missed very much in the PFS department!



Keep your heart healthy and strong

February is National Heart Month, a time to protect yourself against America's leading cause of death – heart disease. The Centers for Disease Control reports that one in every four deaths are caused by heart disease. Heart disease can be prevented by small dietary changes, exercise, stress management, taking your medications as prescribed, and tobacco cessation.

Heart Healthy Diet

A heart healthy diet focuses on less sodium and switching from saturated fat (solid at room temperature like butter, Crisco, and lard) to unsaturated fat (liquid at room temperature like olive oil, canola oil, vegetable oil, seal and fish oil).

Too much sodium makes the body hold on to fluids to try to “water down” the sodium. This makes blood volume increase. The heart then has to work harder to pump the extra blood. This puts strain on the blood vessels and damages them.

Cholesterol is a waxy substance in the blood stream. Too much cholesterol can cause a buildup of plaque in the arteries, increasing risk for heart attack and stroke. Saturated fat (solid at room temperature) leads to an increase in the amount of plaque buildup in the arteries. Unsaturated fat (liquid at room temperature) helps the body get rid of plaque in the arteries.

Exercise

The heart is made of muscle. Just like other muscles, the heart is made stronger with exercise. When the heart is strong it is able to easily pump blood to the lungs and throughout the body. This lessens the risk for heart attack and stroke. Moderate activities like walking and vigorous activities like chopping wood help the heart become strong.

Manage Stress

Stress hurts the body. Over time, stress can elevate blood pressure, elevate blood sugar, and create an inability to get a healthy amount of sleep. Stress can also increase negative coping behaviors that increase chronic disease risk such as using tobacco, drinking, overeating, and physical inactivity. Helpful stress management techniques include talking with friends or family members, laughter, deep breathing, and positive self-talk. Talk with your health care provider if you experience a lot of stress.

Medications

Some prescription medications can help reduce the risk of heart disease. If you take these, it is important to take them along with all other prescription medicine like the provider explains. If you have questions about the medications you are taking ask your provider during your next scheduled appointment or call your pharmacist.

Tobacco Cessation

Tobacco has many harmful effects on the body and the heart. It contains a substance called nicotine, a stimulant which increases blood pressure. Tobacco decreases the amount of oxygen that flows in the blood which increases risk of blood clot and decreases the amount of nutrients that your tissues need to be healthy. Tobacco also decreases the ability to exercise. All of these things lead to increased risk for heart attack and stroke.

Give yourself the gift of heart health this February by focusing on heart healthy behaviors.

Call the Diabetes Prevention & Control Department to schedule your diabetes appointment today at 543-6133.

Recipe of the Month

Heart Healthy: Fireweed and Horseradish Glazed Salmon

Ingredients

- 1/3 cup fireweed jelly
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped chives
- 2 tablespoons horseradish
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt, divided
- 4 (6-ounce) salmon fillets (about 1 inch thick), skinned
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 2 teaspoons olive oil



Recipe and image adapted from thesmellofrosemary.com

Instructions

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. Combine fireweed jelly, chives, horseradish, vinegar, and 1/4 teaspoon salt, stirring well with a whisk.
3. Sprinkle salmon with 1/4 teaspoon salt and pepper. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add salmon, and cook 3 minutes. Turn salmon over; brush with half of fireweed mixture.
4. Wrap handle of skillet with foil; bake at 350° for 5 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.
5. Brush with remaining apple mixture.
6. Serve immediately with heart healthy sides. Enjoy!

February is Children's Dental Health Month

Children's care needs to start with the first tooth

YKHC is committed to improving oral health for children in our region. Currently, Alaska Native children experience cavities at a rate 2.5 times higher than the US average, but cavities are a disease that can be prevented.

The Impact of Poor Oral Health

Imagine this scenario: A four-year-old, call him Sam, had many issues when he arrived at Head Start. He was thin and never ate well at meal times. He had speaking problems, as well as behavioral issues such as being quiet, keeping his eyes downward, not wanting to play with others and unexpectedly striking out at other children. It wasn't until someone looked in his mouth that the problem was found. Sam had many teeth with cavities and multiple infections. When asked if his mouth hurt, his answer was always "no." He considered pain to be normal. After getting his teeth fixed, Sam got better. He gained four pounds, plays well with others, speaks well and shows good learning skills. Most of all, he is happy, plays with his classmates and there are smiles on his face every day.

In extreme cases, cavities in early childhood and their treatment can lead to serious disability and even death.

To prevent this disease from happening and spreading, we have to start seeing children before they already have the disease. Good mouth cleaning and healthy diet choices should start at birth and children should have regular dental visits starting as soon as their first tooth can be seen.

What is YKHC doing?

Dental Health Aide Therapists (DHATs) are mid-level providers that provide excellent services at the level they are trained. DHATs provide community-level cavity prevention and fillings—like a dentist.

YKHC has at least one DHAT stationed in every subregional clinic (SRC) who travels to surrounding villages to provide care. We've also expanded the DHAT program to include villages not cared for by a SRC.

Through improving access to care and focusing on getting children in to the clinic early for preventive care (not just emergency care), we hope to improve the overall health of the entire community over time.

What can you do to help?

It is important that children start seeing a dental provider (DHAT or dentist) as soon as their first tooth comes in.

Bringing children to see a dental provider on a regular basis—even if they are not having any problems—will help with the prevention of this terrible disease.

To schedule a dental appointment, call 543-6229 or your Subregional Clinic.

Winter Safety Tips from Injury Prevention

Cold temperatures and wind chill cause heat to leave the body more quickly, putting workers at risk of cold stress. Use proper winter gear such as thick gloves when working outside and winter boots to avoid cold stress. Here are some common types of cold stress.

Hypothermia

- Normal body temperature (98.6°F) drops to 95°F or less.
- Mild Symptoms: alert but shivering.
- Moderate to Severe Symptoms: shivering stops; confusion; slurred speech; heart rate/breathing slow; loss of consciousness; death.

Frostbite

- Body tissues freeze, typically hands and feet. It can occur at temperatures above freezing due to wind chill. May result in amputation.
- Symptoms: numbness, reddened skin develops gray/white patches, feels firm/hard, and may blister.

• Trench Foot (also known as Immersion Foot)

- Non-freezing injury to the foot, caused by lengthy exposure to wet and cold. Can occur at air temperature as high as 60°F, if feet are constantly wet.
- Symptoms: redness, swelling, numbness, and blisters.

Stay safe, stay warm

- Dress warmly in layers when going outside. Remember that your extremities, such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention
- Pace yourself when shoveling, and stretch to warm up before you begin. Shovel when the snow is freshly fallen—push it as much as possible, rather than lifting
- Have your chimney inspected and cleaned annually
- Keep a survival kit in your vehicle or boat
- If you become stranded, don't leave your vehicle unless you know exactly where you are, how far it is to possible help and are certain you will improve your situation

The Basics of Cancer

by Ellen Hodges, MD, Chief of Staff

What is cancer?

Our entire body is made of cells. In the normal course of life, cells must divide to maintain normal body function. Each time a cell divides it must copy the DNA material in the cell. This happens millions of times a day, but sometimes a mistake is made and a bad cell is produced. When that happens, the body's immune system can usually kill the bad cell. But the immune system isn't perfect and bad cells can survive.

Some of these cells go on to multiply out of control and may cause a tumor to form—a collection of these bad cells.

Many things affect whether a bad cell will turn into a tumor. Smoking is a good example of a poor health habit that causes

cancer. Smoking causes cell damage so your cells have to divide more often, creating more opportunities for bad cells to survive. Smoking impairs your immune system so you can't kill the bad cells as easily

Some viruses directly cause cancer, like HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) which causes cervical cancer. Hepatitis B causes liver cancer. Alcohol causes cancer too. As with smoking, cells get damaged and have to divide more often than they normally would. Alcohol impairs the immune system so bad cells can't be killed.

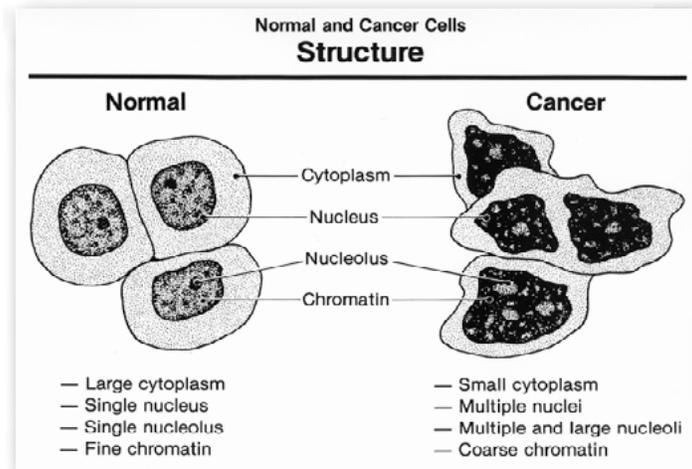
Cancer Symptoms

The symptoms of cancer vary greatly depending on where the bad cells end up when they start to multiply out of control. In many cancers, the symptoms are vague and non-specific until the collection of cells gets large enough that we can detect it by some study. Common cancers in the YK Delta include lung cancer, almost exclusively caused by smoking, and colorectal cancer, caused by a combination of genetic risk factors and environmental effects. Breast cancer is almost exclusively caused by genetic factors with minor environmental effects.

Detection of Cancer

There are two ways to detect cancer—screening, which is meant to find cancer before it causes any symptoms, and diagnostic testing, which occurs after symptoms develop. Examples of cancer screening are mammograms, PAP smears, colonos-

see **CANCER BASICS**, p. 11



Cervical Cancer Awareness

Cervical cancer is cancer of the cervix, which is part of the female reproductive system. Most cervical cancer is caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV). The good news is that cervical cancer can be prevented by a routine screening called a pap test and follow-up if needed. Sometimes an HPV test is done along with the pap test. In most cases, the presence of HPV and the start of abnormal cervical cells have no symptoms, so the best protection is early detection through routine pap tests.

Who needs a pap test?

Women between the ages of 2 and 65 need a routine pap test, usually every three years or every five years.

How do I know if I am due for a pap?

Call Women's Health at 907-543-6990. We can let you know when you are due for your next pap, and we can schedule you an appointment if needed.

Too expensive to come to Bethel just for a pap?

The Women's Health Grant provides free travel for eligible

patients who need a pap. To qualify for travel through the grant, you only need to answer a few questions that are asked at the time you schedule your appointment. Call 907-543-6990 for more information.

What else can I do to prevent cervical cancer?

Get your kids vaccinated against HPV. HPV is known to cause cervical cancer, but it can also cause other cancers. The HPV vaccine is a three-dose series that can protect against the harms of this virus. Talk with your provider about getting your child vaccinated.

Cervical cancer is preventable. Don't hesitate to take the steps that are needed to prevent this disease. Do it for yourself. Do it for your family.

Visit alaskagetsscreened.com for more information on cervical cancer, cancer screening, and financial assistance to get screened.

CARE for you for others

YKHC IS GOING TOBACCO-FREE

YKHC is going tobacco-free from the ground up on Feb. 5, 2018

As a healthcare organization, YKHC is committed not only to healing illness, but to promoting wellness.

YKHC's Board of Directors adopted the decision to implement a tobacco-free campus policy on Feb. 5, 2018, in recognition of World Cancer Day. YKHC is committed to the health and safety of our employees, patients, and visitors. We believe we have a responsibility to take a leadership role on this major health issue and promote a healthier environment by becoming tobacco-free.

Tobacco use has a direct link to many types of cancer, as well as many other harmful health effects. Using tobacco can cause not only lung and throat cancers, but stomach, liver, pancreatic and other types of cancers in addition to causing lung disease, heart disease and increasing complications from diabetes.

More Alaskans die annually from the direct effects of smoking tobacco than from suicide, motor vehicle crashes, chronic liver disease and cirrhosis, homicide, and HIV/AIDS combined.¹

Quitting tobacco can result in immediate health benefits. For instance, within eight hours of quitting tobacco the level of oxygen in your blood rises back to normal. Within 24 hours your risk of heart attack starts to drop. Within two weeks to three months your circulation starts to improve, shortness of breath decreases and energy returns¹

This policy will cover all YKHC owned and rented properties both in Bethel and the surrounding communities of the Delta, including all village clinics, and all Bethel-based facilities.

Changes you can expect to see at YKHC

As a health care organization, we are committed to the health and safety of our employees, patients, and visitors.

Tobacco use on YKHC premises by all patients, staff and visitors will be prohibited.

Patients and visitors found using tobacco at YKHC facilities will be asked to stop, and offered information about resources to quit tobacco.

All smoke shacks and ash cans will be removed and smoking in vehicles on YKHC property will also be prohibited.

For those patients and visitors who are current tobacco users, this policy does not mandate individuals to quit smoking or using tobacco products. Tobacco use of any kind will need to be off YKHC property beginning Feb. 5, 2018.

If you would like to make a positive change and quit tobacco, counseling services are available in both Yup'ik and English, and you can enroll by walking in, asking your provider to make a referral, or calling 907-543-6312 or 1-800-478-3321 ext. 6312.

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services 2014 report, "The health consequences of smoking: 50 years of progress: a report of the Surgeon General." <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress>.

February, 2017

Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project

For more information about PJCP, visit our website: www.ykhc.org/pjcp



Guiding Principles: Represent the Y-K region's Culture & Identity | Promote Customer Centered Care | Affordable Cost & Sustainable Operations

PJCP Design

Bettisworth North Architects and Planners (BNAP) continued to refine the PJCP Clinic and Hospital design as part of the 65 percent Design Development (DD) phase. The second DD workshop was held December 12–16. The ZGF/BNAP/Jones & Jones design team met with medical staff and each department within YKHC to advance the project design, review mock-ups and ensure the project remains in alignment with project goals.

Exterior building material options and costs were reviewed with YKHC. The surgical suite was significantly modified. YKHC worked with the City of Bethel on the design/route/timing of trails and walking paths in the area adjacent to the new clinic. This grant has now been declined by the City.

Fifty percent design documents were submitted by BNAP on December 19. ASKW/Davis Constructors will generate a revised cost estimate for the project, which will be the basis for negotiating the Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP).

The Innova Group (TIG) will be in Bethel in mid-February to review the hospital's existing medical equipment and meet with the project and design teams to review medical equipment needs for the PJCP.

TIG will provide recommendations to YKHC and the project team on which medical equipment should be purchased new, re-used or leased for the new clinic/hospital renovation to provide maximum value. A DD workshop was held on January 17. The next DD workshop will be held February 6–10. Both workshops will be held in Bethel.

Arcadis worked with YKHC to issue three (3) RFPs in December: 1) dental furniture, fixtures and equipment planning, design and vendor services; 2) non-medical furniture, fixtures and equipment planning, design and vendor services and 3) commissioning services. Proposals are due in January.

YKHC is providing low-voltage equipment location mark-ups on floor plans. YKHC authorized BNAP to provide additional design services for comprehensive security systems: access control, duress, CCTV, intrusion detection and audio visual systems.

PJCP Construction

ASKW/Davis has installed most of the thermal probes and pile caps are being tack-welded in place. Utility connection work continues.

The team is working on the ADOT&PF driveway permitting. Highway upgrade designs were provided to ASKW-Davis to develop construction cost information.

YKHC and ASKW-Davis are committed to local hire. From the early stages of planning and forward, ASKW-Davis is committed to training, contracting and hiring locally for this project. Job openings and subcontracting opportunities will be posted on the website: <https://www.askwdavis.com/>.

YKHC Staff Housing

YKHC has completed review of the 50% design documents for the 54-unit staff housing project, designed by Bethel Services Inc. (BSI). The housing project will be prefabricated modules. Inspection of modules for a similar housing unit was held first week of January. Construction is scheduled to be complete and ready for occupancy in November 2017. BSI is working on finalizing the wetlands permitting with the City of Bethel. Equipment rental agreement is in progress. An RFP for housing furniture/housewares is under development.



Cardboard mock-ups allow YKHC staff to experience actual room layout and sizing proportions to refine design.

Talking Wall Question of the Month:

What non-craft items should be sold at the PJCP Gift Shop? (such as diapers, formula, flowers, etc.)?

Write on the Wall, or call into our suggestion line: 907-543-6600 or send an email to ykhcproject@ykhc.org.



Ribbon cutting commemorates opening of new healing center

The opening of a new drug and alcohol treatment center in Bethel was celebrated January 11 as Board Members, funders, YKHC staff and community guests gathered for a ribbon cutting.

The YK Ayagnirvik Healing Center, formerly PATC, was designed in 2013 and when nearing completion was totally destroyed by fire. Newly rebuilt, the 16-bed facility, with separate wings for men and women, is providing alcohol and substance abuse treatment programs, including opioid addiction treatment.

Along with offices and group meeting rooms, the building includes a large multi-purpose room with a basketball half-court. Deanna Latham, YKHC's Interim Support Services Vice President, said the room is an important component. "As people are fighting their addictions, they need to have a place to be physically active." Along with addressing program needs, the building is economical. It is "fifty percent larger than the old facility, but will cost a lot less to heat and operate," Latham said.

The ribbon-cutting and dedication ceremonies began in the multi-purpose room with the fourth grade Ayaprun Elitnaurvik students performing. Thank yous and congratulatory remarks from leadership, staff and funding agencies were followed by tours of the building and refreshments. President/CEO Dan Winkelman recognized funders Hearst Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation, and Alaska State Legislators Rep. Bob Herron and Sen. Lyman Hoffman.

Board First Vice Chair Gloria Simeon, speaking on behalf of the Board, said, "This is a great day. We celebrate not only a new building, but the warriors, the behavioral health people, the counselors, the community—everyone that made this possible."

Program Director Ray Watson said of behavioral health and treatment work, "it's not because of the money, it's because of love and compassion—to help people who are suffering. That's why we're here. I have a deep respect for those kind of people who choose this kind of work. It takes a lot of humility and love. We like to see people get better; we like to see people heal; we like to get them back to their families."

Diane Kaplan, Rasmuson Foundation President, referring to the fire that destroyed the facility as it neared completion three years ago, said, "there was a great effort to build it, then something happened, it fell down and now it's been picked up again. And that really is the message for people who struggle with alcohol."



Honorary Board Member James Charlie and First Vice Chair Gloria Simeon cut the ribbon while fellow board members look on. (photo by Mitchell Forbes)



Fourth grade students from Ayaprun Elitnaurvik entertained the crowd filling the multi-purpose room at the YK Ayagnirvik Healing Center. (photo by Mitchell Forbes)



Board Member Stanley Hoffman prepares to enjoy some cake. (photo by Michael Faubion)

December Health Aide of the Month Justina Phillip, CHP — Full Time Float

Justina was hired as a Community Health Aide in her home village in 2006. She became a “float” CHA/P and got CHP certificate in 2009. In 2008 she became a full time “float.” She travels to different villages for six weeks at a time and takes two weeks off to rest. Justina says she likes to go to busy clinics instead of slow ones.

During her time off she flies into villages by medevac with her husband, who is a pilot, and picks up patients. She enjoys this a lot as well. Her husband is very supportive of her in her job as a float CHP.

On November 21, 2016, Chevak Clinic had a power outage for four hours. Justina called the Immunization Dept. immediately and was able to insulate all the vaccines so well that even through the 4-hour power outage the temperature maintained the “cold chain” within normal limits. The vaccines were still viable to be used and the department was saved the immense

cost of replacing a large inventory of vaccines.

Health Aides not only save lives, they save medicines. And they make sure patients are receiving the right medicines and the right patient care.

Justina, keep up the excellent job!

—Martha Attie, Supervisor Instructor



Justina Phillip, CHP

This is Quitting — A New Resource to Help Tobacco Users Quit

In partnership with the Truth Initiative, YKHC is launching a “quit tobacco” text messaging program (called This is Quitting) to provide tobacco users support on their quit journey. The program provides easy-to-use, evidence-based support for tobacco users acknowledging that quitting is like a boxing match: it can be a struggle, but with training, you can succeed.

This free program sends customized text messages to support quitters in their journey. Using the program, people can receive feedback from others on their journey to quit tobacco, set a quit date, and receive customized messages of support when they are having relapses or cravings. The text-based program can also connect them with resources for further support like YKHC’s Tobacco Cessation Counseling Program and the Alaska Quitline. The service can be easily canceled at any time.

Key features of This is Quitting include:

- Free text messaging available on Android and iOS
- Motivation and inspiration about quitting from other tobacco quitters in the program



- Strategies and tips to stay tobacco free
- Access to resources like YKHC’s program and medication information
- Encouragement to set a quit date and the ability to set and reset a quit date as desired (standard message and data rates apply, but no charge for enrolling)
- Proactive support for quitting tobacco via text ~3 weeks prior to and 8+ weeks following the user’s quit date
- On-demand keyword support (e.g., COPE, SLIP)
- Unique library of support messages written by and for other tobacco quitters

To sign up, send a text message to 907-891-7140 and follow the prompts to participate.

CANCER BASICS, from p. 6

pies, periodic ultrasounds for patients with Hep B and Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) for prostate cancer.

Sometimes cancer screening causes more harm than it prevents. PSA is a good example of this. It is too sensitive and detects precancerous lesions that won't ever turn into cancer. Mammograms might be in this category as well; we have to wait for more studies. Other cancer screening is very good. PAP smears for cervical cancer screening and blood tests for liver cancer in patients who have Hepatitis B infection for example.

Most cancers do not have any screening tests available or the screening tests are not very good and cause more harm than they prevent.

Cancer Diagnostic Testing

Most of the time, we have to rely on testing once a patient has symptoms. But symptoms for initial cancers can be vague and non-specific. Many complaints can be explained by non-cancer causes. For example, abdominal pain is a common presenting complaint of someone with stomach cancer, but there are many non-cancerous causes of abdominal pain.

Cancer Screening in Bethel

In Bethel we have several ways to screen for cancer:

- PAP smears for cervical cancer
- Ultrasound for liver cancer in Hep B patients
- Mammograms for breast cancer
- Colonoscopy for colorectal cancer
- Ultrasound for ovarian cancer
- CT scanner for many types of cancer
- Blood work available for certain cancers

Photo ID for Medical Records

We are starting a project this month to add a picture of each patient in his/her medical record to aid in identification. This picture will only be part of the medical record and will follow release of information guidelines.

We'll start by having two photo booths—one at the hospital and one at the CHSB to take pictures of patients before an appointment. You are welcome to visit one of the booths any time to take your picture without a scheduled appointment.

Sometimes we identify a patient with symptoms that *might* be cancer. We refer those patients to the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) in Anchorage for specialty care and more sophisticated testing.



Healthy lung compared to smoker's lung.

More Information

Lung cancer is one of the most common types of cancer in the YK Delta. There is no screening test for lung cancer. It is very difficult to treat and once symptoms are present it is often too late to cure.

Pancreatic cancer: This type of cancer is very difficult to detect and treat. Survival rates are very low, even when it is diagnosed at a very early stage. The treatment for this type of cancer is very strenuous.

Gastric Cancer is a very common cancer in the YK Delta. There is no screening test for gastric cancer. It is often detected after a patient has had symptoms. It is detected with EGD but this doesn't work for screening.

Colorectal Cancer: We can screen for this with a colonoscopy. This test is invasive and requires appointments and operating room time. It is difficult to convince some patients to have this test done.

Breast Cancer: Mammograms can detect breast cancer before it is symptomatic. We have lots of capacity for this in Bethel. We recommend that all women over 45 years of age get a mammogram every other year.

What to do?

Get the screening tests that do prevent cancer and encourage others to do so as well.

Promote a healthy lifestyle, quit tobacco, limit alcohol, eat a subsistence diet, get exercise and maintain a healthy weight.

YKHC has earned The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval®

The Joint Commission, an independent and not-for-profit national body, has been accrediting health care organizations for over 50 years. Accreditation and certification by The Joint Commission is recognized nationwide as a symbol of excellence and commitment to meeting performance standards.

YKHC's Hospital, Behavioral Health and Long Term Care programs must be accredited every three years. Because The Joint Commission reviews are unannounced, we must be prepared at all times. YKHC would like to **thank all of our employees** for their tireless efforts in helping to maintain accreditation and in ***Working Together To Achieve Excellent Health.***

