Provider Profile

Meet Dr. Ron Bowerman

YKHC’s Inpatient Unit Director is a family medicine physician whose dedication to public health, missionary work and tuberculosis research has affected people all over the globe, including Papua New Guinea, India, Taiwan, Barrow, and Bethel.

Tall (6’5”), unpretentious and calm, Dr. Bowerman recently shared insights about living and loving his work at Bethel’s YKDRH hospital, as well as some personal history.

Bowerman was born in Sweet Home, Oregon. His father worked for the U.S. Forest Service and consequently their family—including Ron and five siblings—lived “off the grid” in Northern California. He credits his early childhood for giving him an appreciation of rural living. He mostly grew up in San Francisco, however, graduating from Lowell High, an alma-mater which he coincidentally shares with YKHC Pediatrician Dr. K. Jane McClure.

The attraction of faraway places affected Bowerman before he went to medical school—he spent three years in the Polynesian island of Samoa as a Peace Corps Volunteer between 1974-1977.

see DR BOWERMAN, next page

HEALTHY HALLOWEEN

The lobby of the Community Health Services Building turned into Spookville on October 31 as witches, goblins, pirates and monsters showed up for healthy Trick or Treat alternatives to candy candy candy.

KUDOS!

Way to Go, Joyce Rivers!

Congratulations to Joyce Rivers, Behavioral Health Aide in Mt. Village who was nominated and chosen to receive a Behavioral Health Aide Recognition Award by ANTHC.

The award was presented during a luncheon at the Behavioral Health Aide Forum on Tuesday, November 6.

Congratulations, Sheri Miller!

Sheri Miller, born and raised in Bethel, has started the YKHC career ladder and successfully passed the nationally recognized ASCP Board of Certification for Phlebotomy Technician! Sheri has worked with us for more than a year and we are happy to watch her grow. The laboratory professional career ladder is supported by YKHC. Having completed the first step of Phlebotomy Technician training, Sheri has a bright future in front of her and we are excited to help her grow personally and professionally in our community and organization. She is considering continuing the career ladder in the laboratory as a Medical Laboratory Technician or Medical Laboratory Scientist.

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In Bethel? Stop by and see what we have!
He met his wife Kathryn, the daughter of Chinese immigrants, while attending the University of California Davis in the late 70s—in the fellowship hall at their community church. Bowerman was studying Zoology at the time. By the early 80s he was in med school at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Married and with two children (a toddler and infant at the time), the family went to India for a month during his residency.

World travel, missionary work, and an affinity for remote regions of the world have shaped the Bowerman family history. They spent a number of years in Barrow during the early 90s and came to Bethel in 1999. In between there have been missions and research stints in Papua New Guinea and Taiwan. “The Christian faith and mission work is important in our family and we learned early in my career to ‘trust and pray God would look after us.’”

Now, of their four grown daughters—all graduates of Bethel High School—three are pursuing degrees in the health care field. Sarah is in her final year of residency as an OB/GYN graduate of University of Washington. Second oldest Kristen is also studying medicine at the University of Washington. Emily is in her third year of Physical Therapy school at the University of Puget Sound; and youngest Katie is an English major at Seattle Pacific University.

What has drawn him to stay in Bethel and continue to serve the people of the YK Delta? “I enjoy working ... with like-minded individuals who want to help the greater good. Bethel is an exciting, intensive place to be, and it really is what you make out of it,” he says.

“YKHC has done a tremendous job in being on the cutting edge of positive change for delivery of health care in a very unique model,” Bowerman says. “The first (Alaska) regional hospital to obtain a CT-scanner, daily use by our Health Aides of the EKG on the telemedicine cart, paving the way to graduate local talent as the country’s first Dental Health Aide Therapists...the list goes on and on. I feel (YKHC) is the most established medical provider in the bush and there is an essence of quality. It’s a real honor to work here.”

Some other things about Ron and Kathryn you might not have known
• Bowerman received a Congressional nomination from one of California’s senators to attend West Point in an attempt to follow the footsteps of his father, a WWII Air Force pilot whom he considers his “all-time hero.” He decided not to attend.
• He is an avid Giants and 49ers fan. He said after the Giants swept the World Series, he took off his Giants hat around the clinic so as not to “rub it in.”
• His wife Kathryn received a scholarship out of high school to attend the University of California Berkeley and has a degree in landscape architecture.
• He has published numerous articles on arctic health issues, primarily tuberculosis research.

— Story by Donna Bach, YKHC Public Relations
Device means mobility for 7-year-old

Atsa Bill will be able to get around a lot better now with the help of a “Rabbit Stander” device obtained through YKHC’s Physical Therapy Dept.

Atsaruaq “Atsa” Bill, age 7, with sister Alev’aq Motgin, age 4, and Physical Therapists Jesse Gefroh and Keira Beck, is happy to show off her “Rabbit Stander” which will allow her to be more active with her classmates at Bethel’s Ayaprun Immersion School.

Atsaruaq is diagnosed with arthrogryposis, also known as Kuskokwim Syndrome, which affects her lower limbs. Weighing only 30 pounds, this young girl will now be able to move to keep up with other young kids her age by pushing the apparatus which weighs about half of her body weight.

Physical Therapist Keira Beck says, “We have been seeing Atsa in Physical Therapy since the fall of 2011. After assessing her limitations and strengths, a team of therapists worked with Medicaid (a long, involved process to get this equipment approved) and Frontier Medical (a medical equipment company in Anchorage) to order the equipment.”

Atsa is unable to walk on her own without any assistive device. The stander will give her much greater freedom. It is also adjustable and will extend in height and width as she grows.

Kuskokwim syndrome primarily affects the lower limbs (frailty in bones with subsequent weakness in surrounding muscles) but can also affect the entire body.
The surveyors commented on how appreciative they were that the staff was so open and forthcoming.

In addition, I would like to thank the staff that worked hard behind the scenes to get everything ready for the surveyors review.

—Jane Russell, Vice President for Hospital Services

Congratulations to YKHCs new PDHAs!

YKHCs Dental Department is proud to announce three new Primary Dental Health Aides (PDHA). Charlene Joe of Chevak, Darian Erik of Chefornak, and Charles Redfox of Emmonak are all wonderful additions to the dental department.

Charles has been working as a dental assistant in Emmonak for more than a year. Charlene is excited to make a difference in the oral health in her community. Darian is thrilled to help kids avoid pain due to tooth decay.

PDHAs help to reduce tooth decay through prevention efforts. They educate children and parents about the importance of daily home care and food choices. As well as educating the community they apply fluoride varnishes up to four times a year.

2012 Blood Drive a Success!

The Bethel Blood Drive, held Sept. 18-20, in partnership with YKHC and the Blood Bank of Alaska, along with many community sponsors, was a great success.

Nearly 60 percent of those who attempted to donate blood were first time donors. There were a total of 129 people who registered or attempted to donate. A total of 88 people were eligible to donate over the course of the three-day drive. An increase from last year! Some
BLOOD DRIVE, from previous page

of those who wanted to donate blood were ineligible for any number of reasons, including having a cold or other illness.

As a result of this great response, an estimate of nearly 264 potential lives may be saved due to this community-wide effort.

Much thanks is owed to our major local sponsors, including Alaska Air Cargo, Northern Air Cargo, KYUK, Crowley, KUC, Bethel Car Rental, Subway, and AVCP Allanavik hotel for making the event such a success for the Blood Bank of Alaska team.

Newly Certified Record Custodians

Congratulations to all of the individuals who have successfully completed the Record Custodian course! As Record Custodians they are the only YKHC employees recognized and authorized to disclose information from the organization.

This Level I and II training curriculum focuses on ensuring that proper disclosure processes are completed in accordance with the Privacy Act and YKHC policies and procedures.

Level III consists of additional training to ensure disclosure processes are completed in accordance with regulations for Behavioral Health and Alcohol & Drug programs.

Attending the classes and successfully passing the examinations are required prior to receiving this prestigious recognition.

“These individuals have willingly accepted a tremendous amount of responsibility and I commend them for that. ‘The training is intense,’” said Roger Lowe, Interim Corporate Compliance Officer and instructor of the Record Custodian courses, “but they have clearly demonstrated that it can be accomplished!”

Think Pink!

Are you a football fan? Have you channel surfed through this election season’s political ads and debates and found flashes of bright pink everywhere – on shoes, on commercials, arm bands, head bands and more? Even your favorite baseball teams as they bid to win their league championships are part of this growing trend.

October was National Breast Cancer Prevention and Awareness Month, and the signature color for breast cancer awareness is – you guessed it, PINK!

Our Women’s Health and Radiology teams, with tremendous support from Senior Leadership and subregional clinic staff, work 12 months a year to accomplish the Patient Centered Excellence goal to “Increase screening rates for colorectal, breast, and cervical cancers to meet or exceed Healthy People 2020 Goals.”

What does this mean? If you ask Luke Vanasse, Director of the Women’s Health Grant, he’ll tell you that prevention and early detection saves lives. Vanasse works closely with the case managers and SRC teams that travel with “Sophie,” our mobile mammography machine. Sophie visits all of our Subregional clinics during the year.

This month, THINK PINK— and encourage your mothers, wives, sisters, aunts and maybe even a few gentlemen (men can get breast cancer too!) to schedule an appointment and get screened if they are age 40 or older and/or have a family history of breast cancer.

Please call scheduling at 543-6442 or the Radiology Department at 543-6998 for more information or for answers to questions you may have about early detection and screening for cancer.

— Story by Donna Bach, Director, Public Relations & Intergovernmental Affairs

WIC hosts ‘Baby Crawl’ for Breastfeeding Week

YKHC’s WIC Program celebrated Alaska Breastfeeding Week in August in a different way this year. Our Breastfeeding Coordinator Zhi Tai organized a “Baby Crawling Contest.”

The contest consisted of four rounds with a break for participants to answer some fun breastfeeding questions. Eighteen babies showed off their crawling skills as excited parents coached from the sidelines.

Eight-month-old Zendaya Pavila was the grand champion, winning the largest prize.

— Story by Khadija Alharbi, WIC Director
YKHC changes Dental appointment process

YKHC Dental has recently updated its service model to improve access to dental care as a result of the dentist shortage.

What does this mean?
The dental department is implementing a Walk-In/Same Day appointment schedule similar to the model widely used at the Alaska Native Medical Center and Southcentral Foundation.

How it works
Sign up in the YKHC Dental Department at 8:00 a.m. The first patients are seated at 8:20 a.m. Once the same-day appointment slots are filled, patients who are unable to receive an appointment will have to try for a same-day appointment on a different day or wait to be seen as a stand-by patient. Not all stand by patients may be seen for appointments.

How will walk-in/same day appointments work for village-based patients?
The Dental Department is implementing this new model to accommodate village-based patients as well as Bethel patients. Dental will schedule a limited number of appointments to accommodate village-based patients who may be traveling to Bethel for routine check-ups, appointments or other health care services. Same-day village appointments should be requested by calling Dental at 543-6229 after 10 a.m. each morning or 1-800-478-3321 ext. 6229 to obtain slots available.

Bethel and village-based patients
What if I don’t show up for my same-day appointment? It will be considered a broken appointment, noted in your chart and you will be unable to schedule a same-day walk for anything but emergency dental services for 6 months.

Alternatives
If you are not in pain and would like to schedule a same-day appointment instead of waiting up to several hours to be seen at the Emergency Walk-In Clinic, please let the staff at the front desk know.

An appointment is a good option for the following situations

- A broken tooth that is not painful
- A tooth that needs a filling
- An exam
- A cleaning

**Bethel number: 543-6229 or Toll-Free 1-800-478-3321 ext. 6229**

We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

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Prematernal Home Ground Breaking

YKHC broke ground Wednesday, Sept. 19, to mark the start of construction for the $12.6 million Prematernal Home, located on Chief Eddie Hoffman Highway in Bethel. The facility will be a place for the region’s expectant mothers to stay during the last month of their pregnancies.

Funding was included in the governor’s 2011 Capital Projects budget, largely a result of the diligent work of Bethel’s Senator Lyman Hoffman and Representative Bob Herron. Bethel will soon see a new replacement for the existing Prematernal Home, which has been in dire need of replacement for nearly 20 years.

Leading the groundbreaking were YKHC President/CEO Gene Peltola, and Prematernal Home director of 22 years, Doreen O’Brien. The new facility will provide space for up to 30 expectant mothers.

The concept of the prematernal home model first began in the late 60’s when a young pregnant woman from an area village was found sleeping under an overturned boat near the old Bethel hospital because she had no place to stay prior to her delivery. A local task force responded to the need so no other area women were turned away for lack of resources and to ensure a safe and healthy delivery in Bethel.

The expected completion of the new Prematernal Home will be early winter, 2014.

— Story by Donna Bach, YKHC Public Relations
2012 Health Aides of the Month

July—Melody Deacon-Kruger: Anvik, Grayling, Shageluk

Melody’s performance in exceeding her Well Child exam goals every month has gone above and beyond. She has also consistently proven to be an excellent role model and a valued YKHC employee. Melody is competent, caring, dedicated, responsible and an effective CHP and highly motivated when it comes to Well Child exams. She has been doing them not only in Anvik but in Grayling and Shageluk as well.

From September, 2011 to July, 2012, Melody has consistently exceeded her goal every month. Her rate is currently at 224 percent and because of her dedication, Anvik’s immunization rate is also at 100 percent. Immunizations Coordinator Kathy Stanton says, “while floating to surrounding villages, Melody has always called the EPSDT (Well Child) program to get an accurate number of EPSDT/Immunization due list and have us send her vaccines so she can get everyone caught up on their immunizations as well. Melody has a great passion for her work and truly cares about the people, not only in her village but surrounding villages as well, especially the children and teens.”

Everyone in Anvik, Grayling and Shageluk are fortunate to have Melody as an EPSDT provider for they will have longer, brighter and healthier lives. “Thank you, Melody,” said Supervisor Instructor Balassa Larson, who nominated Melody, “on behalf of YKHC, I commend you for your hard and effective work and I encourage you to keep up the wonderful work.”

August—Alvina Murphy, Kotlik

Alvina Murphy was nominated Health Aide of the Month for August for her untiring service to her community as a health care provider.

She was on call for long periods of time until another Health Aide in the clinic reached the level that she was able to help out. Alvina took calls one-after-the-other after hours and had to activate medevacs three different times in one night alone for patients who had life-threatening problems.

According to her co-workers, she comes into the clinic every day with energy and a smile on her face, ready for another day and never complains.

The community of Kotlik relies on Alvina for her professionalism, reliability and dependability for the service she delivers.

September—Linda Davis, Mekoryuk

Mekoryuk’s Linda Davis, CHP, was nominated for consistent and accurate job performance. She is on time all the time, whether it’s reporting to work, completing Well Child exams, finishing Health Stream assignments, or holding weekly clinic meetings.

She communicates well with her supervisor and works with other resources that her patients need, doing what she can to make sure her patients are well taken care of.

Linda is also dedicated to completing her appointments each day, even with a standby list. Several times she has even stayed overnight at the clinic observing patients and waiting for medevacs with hardly any complaint that she’s tired. Her co-workers have commented that she works hard in the clinic, she’s fit to be a Health Aide, and that she and the other Health Aide have good teamwork managing the clinic.

These are great examples of an employee following YKHC’s Mission: “Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health.” YKHC and Mekoryuk are lucky to have Linda as a CHP. Good job, Linda, keep up the good work!

October—Alexandra Tikiun, Atmautluak

Alexandra Tikiun, CHA III, in Atmautluak has been nominated and chosen Health Aide of the Month for October.

Alexandra Tikiun has been on-call for several weeks at a time and she has been to work on time every day. She goes to work with a positive attitude and still completes patient visits even after work hours.

Well Child & Immunization Coordinator Kathy Stanton says, “Alexandra is trained to do Well Child exams and has been able to meet or exceed her goal each month. She is good at keeping us informed if she thinks she might not meet her goal. In the past, when she has called me I would tell her to do what she could and we will see at the end of the month. It seems that every time I would tell her that she would meet or exceed her goal.

“Alexandra truly cares about her community and understands the importance of completing Immunizations and Well Child exams.”

Her co-workers report that she comes to work ready to see patients that are already scheduled during the day in addition to the standby patients that are waiting to be seen.

Since she’s the only Health Aide in Atmautluak that can take patient visits, she has been teaching her co-worker, a pre-session trainee, by demonstrating her hard work.

YKHC and the community of Atmautluak are fortunate to have a Health Aide like Alexandra for the caring, dependable, reliable and professional work-ethic she provides every day.
RAVEN, from page 2

- How will RAVEN improve care for patients?
  - Prevent potential medical errors before they happen.
  - Increase privacy of medical records through electronic security.
  - Improve prescription safety and reduce duplication of medical tests.
  - Provide alerts and reminders about allergies, necessary health screenings and immunizations.
  - Improve staff response time to questions about prescriptions, previous visits, and more.

How will RAVEN affect YKHC employees?

- At first, learning the RAVEN system will require a lot of time, attention and detail.
- YKHC leadership is implementing a “no time off, vacation or travel” policy for all staff from Jan. 14 to March 1, 2013 in preparation for this important initiative.
- Comprehensive corporate-wide training will start in November 2012, allowing nearly 900 staff to learn the new system.

Please be patient with our staff, especially your local village providers and Health Aides, as we learn RAVEN.