YKHC Board Member Michael Hunt, Sr. of Kotlik says hello to long-time friends in Shageluk during introductions at the Cultural Open House for the Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project May 13 (see pages 12–13). He encouraged residents to be involved and provide feedback during the day’s discussions, highlighting the importance of cultural influence in the project’s feel and design. Architects from the project’s design team pay heed: JohnPaul Jones (Jones & Jones), Mark Elliot (ZGF), and Brittany Jackson (Bettisworth North).
Message from the President/CEO

Improving the Customer Experience

Wqaa! This month’s Messenger is about the services we offer at the Bethel hospital. Over the last couple of years, YKHC has made it a priority to dramatically improve financial performance, and increase visibility and engagement with our internal and external customers.

While financial performance is still a priority, we are renewing our efforts to improve our customers’ experience. YKHC is actively pursuing two initiatives to improve our quality and increase access to health care throughout the entire region: the implementation of Lean production and the construction of the Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project (PJCP).

Lean production will improve quality and safety over time, while the PJCP will provide increased access to appointment availability and achieve many other performance targets. These two initiatives will significantly advance the efforts of our employees to work together with our customers to achieve excellent health.

To that end, YKHC would like to thank all of our employees for helping to maintain Joint Commission accreditation at the Bethel Hospital, Behavioral Health clinic and Elder Home. The Joint Commission is an independent, national agency that has been accrediting health care organizations for more than 50 years. It is recognized nationwide as a symbol of excellence and commitment to meeting quality and performance standards.

Because accreditation reviews are unannounced, and our facilities must receive accreditation every three years, we must always be prepared. Quyana to all our employees for your continued hard work and dedication to YKHC and its customers.

Sincerely,

Dan Winkelman,
President/CEO.
**YKHC Board of Directors**

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**Board Opposes Donlin Mine**

During the Full Board of Directors meeting on April 22, the YKHC Board unanimously adopted Board Resolution 16-04-04 in opposition to the Donlin Gold Mine Project.

The proposed mine would be located about 150 miles northeast of Bethel and 10 miles north of Crooked Creek. The open pit mine would be two miles long and one mile wide. In order to extract the gold, mine operators would crush and grind rock into a fine powder and eventually mix the pulverized rock with a cyanide solution. Naturally occurring mercury has been found in the rock of the area, posing a risk of exposure during the mining process.

Citing concerns about contamination to the Kuskokwim River, which serves as a food and water supply for many villages, the resolution said, “Studies are being done, but none can predict the effects of mercury, cyanide and other disruptions in the Yukon-Kuskokwim ecosystem in 100 years.”

The Board further expressed concern about environmental disasters and unexpected failures of safety measures, saying, “A failure of the safety measures planned for the Donlin Gold Mine could cause catastrophic damage to the ecosystem of the YK Delta and would obliterate the subsistence way of life for the people served by (YKHC).”

The resolution concluded, “(The Board) opposes the development and operation of the Donlin Creek Gold Mine due to the extreme hazards and excessive risks it would pose to the health and welfare of the people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region.”

A copy of the resolution was submitted the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as comment to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
Practice Safe Boating
by the YKHC Injury Prevention Program

Summer is here! That means fishing, lots of sunshine, fish camp, and boating. It’s time to practice safe boating! Here are a few tips to help you be safe this boating season:

• If you are coming up to another boat, slow down and be sure they see you passing.
• Unmarked fishing nets, sunken boats or cars can be hazardous to boaters of different skill levels.
• If you find or discover hazardous situations, please inform your local search and rescue so they can mark off the area and alert the public.

Creating a Float Plan
Preparation before every trip can be the difference between a fun-filled time or a preventable tragedy. Before you begin your trip, be sure to discuss your float plan with a responsible person. If you end up delayed or missing, he/she can get help.

Here are a few suggestions on what to include in your float plan:

• How many people are going and their names.
• Where you plan to go and any possible alternative routes if river conditions change.
• When you expect to arrive at your destination and when you expect to return.
• What you are carrying for survival gear (how much food, type of tent or shelter, first aid equipment and/or signaling devices).
• A description of your boat, the name of the boat if there is a name, and the registered number.
• And remember, if you change your plans at the last minute before leaving the dock, inform your reliable person.

For more information about water safety or where to buy a PFD, call YKHC Injury Prevention at 1-800-478-6599 or visit The Injury Prevention Shop in the first floor of the YKHC admin building. The shop provides free shipping to villages in the YK Delta. A website where you can find excellent information on water safety is www.watersafety.org.

Float Coats, PFDs, Helmets and More at the IP Store!

The Injury Prevention Store and Coffee Shop has summertime outdoor gear in stock. Check out the store for all of your PFD, float coat, and other summer safety needs.

With a wide variety of styles and sizes, there is sure to be something for every member of the family!

We also carry ATV helmets, gun cabinets, and of course, delicious Kaladi Brothers Coffee! The Injury Prevention Store is conveniently located on the first floor of the CHSB building (“New YK”) and can be reached at 543-6556 or 1-800-478-6599.

All injury prevention gear ships FREE to YK Delta villages.
Diabetes Health Tip

Take Care of Yourself

You wake up, make breakfast and pack lunches. Between house chores, you chauffeur family to school and work. At work you don’t have time for meals, so you snack on bars throughout the day. Back at home, you babysit for friends and family, make dinner, help with homework, and then get everyone ready for bed. You clean the house, finish an extra project from work, and before you know it, it’s midnight! The whole cycle starts again in six hours.

How many times have we heard, “You can only give to others what you give yourself first”? Just like the airline attendant tells you to put on your own oxygen mask in an emergency before helping someone else with theirs, you must take care of your basic needs before you can attend to the needs of others. Most of us know this but have trouble putting it into action. Here are some guidelines to help!

Keep up your physical health with enough sleep (7-9 hours/night), regular exercise, and a wide variety of healthy foods.

Schedule fun activities on a regular basis. That “work hard, play hard” adage remains true!

Take care of your emotional needs. This includes:
• taking time for yourself
• positive thinking
• surrounding yourself with a support system
• scheduling time with friends and family
• laughing on a regular basis

Learn to say “No.” You can only do so many things well at once. Know your abilities!

If need be, kill two birds with one stone. Exercise and valuable time with the family can be accomplished at the same time. Teach your family how to walk, stretch, pick berries, or chop wood.

Need more time in your day to eat well? Invest in a slow cooker. With very little prep, you’ll have a delicious meal ready by evening.

If you have diabetes, take one minute a day to check your feet. This important step in self care prevents wounds, infections, and even amputations. Remember to always wear protective footwear inside and outside—especially at fish camp.

Make sure you’re up to date with your appointments, screenings, and immunizations. You only get one set of adult teeth, eyes, bones, and organs. Take care of them! Your friends and family will learn from your example.

Recipe of the Month

Slow Cooker Apple Pie Oatmeal

Never skip breakfast again with this heart healthy recipe!

Ingredients:
1 cup steel-cut oats (not quick-cooking)
2 large apples, peeled, cored and chopped
1½ cups milk or milk substitute
2½ cups water
2 tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp salt
2 Tbs oil for coating
1 tsp vanilla extract
2 Tbs good quality maple syrup

For serving: Milk, Chopped pecans, Raisins, Ground Cinnamon, Maple syrup or brown sugar

Instructions:
Grease slow cooker with oil to prevent sticking. Add all the ingredients to the slow cooker. Give everything a quick stir, cover, and cook on low for 7 hours. Give the oatmeal a good stir, spoon into bowls and serve warm with toppings of your choice.

Enjoy breakfast!

This recipe can be refrigerated or frozen for later use.
Recipe contributed by Alessandra Chung, Bethel, AK
Adapted from domesticate-me.com

Want to quit tobacco? Try the Quitline

Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line is a free service that provides Alaska adults ages 18 and over with confidential support services to help them quit tobacco. Those thinking about or trying to quit can call the Quit Line as often as they like and are eligible to receive four support calls from a quit coach.

Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line also offers free nicotine replacement therapy to all eligible Alaskans who enroll in the program.

Enrollment is easy and can be done over the phone at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (784-8669) or online at www.alaskaquitline.com.
Hospital Starts Airport Shuttle Service

YKHC is trying out a shuttle service to take eligible patients between the hospital and the airport. As we get the program started, we’ll be asking for your comments and feedback to determine how best to meet your needs in getting to your appointments and back home after your appointments.

Eligible patients are those on approved Medicaid travel and YKHC paid travel.

How do you use the Shuttle Service?

Hospital to Airport

- Report to the Customer Service desk in the Hospital prior to the departure time listed in the schedule below.
- Patients will need to show their approved travel documentation to security and the shuttle driver for review.
- Security personnel will make a list of riders for each route departure.

Airport to Hospital

- Travelers need to be ready and waiting at the air carrier before the shuttle arrives.
- Have approved travel documentation ready to show the shuttle driver.

What is important to remember?

There are only five seats available in the shuttle and they will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Please plan ahead and determine which shuttle you will need to take in order to board your flight or make your appointment on time.

Schedule: Monday – Friday, except holidays

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Bring your Tribal or CIB cards to YKHC appointments

As we finalize the contracts for design, construction and financing of the Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project (PJCP), we can also look forward to the groundbreaking and beginning of construction later this year. The process has been long and completion still seems far away. However, we have to plan ahead to make good things happen and ensure the project stays on time.

The funding from the Indian Health Service (IHS) that makes the PJCP possible will not be received until the middle of 2019. But YKHC must request that funding in April 2017, less than a year from now. The funding amount that will be requested in April 2017 will be based on the number of qualified Alaska Native beneficiaries in the YKHC service area this year (as of September 30, 2016).

Because of this, YKHC needs to have all Alaska Native beneficiaries furnish proper documentation and information before they receive health care services at our facilities. We must have updated copies of Tribal or CIB (Certificate of Indian Blood) cards and current local addresses of our patients. To help update our files, we will be contacting anyone in our system with missing or outdated information.

see CIB CARDS, p. 15
Patient Travel Policies

Patient Travel handles the travel requests for patients traveling on Medicaid, private insurance, self-pay, and YK-Pay.

When we look at travel needs, we first check to see if the patient has active Medicaid. If the patient has active Medicaid, Xerox is contacted to obtain a prior authorization (PA) number. Medicaid will advise the travel dates, lodging and meals if necessary, and taxis that are authorized. It is the responsibility of the patient then to call the State Travel Office to set up the actual travel itinerary.

Medicaid will only authorize escorts with a medical reason and medical letter of necessity.

Medicaid does not cover travel-related expenses in conjunction with patient self-referral. For example, if the patient has traveled on their own (boat, ATV, snow machine, etc.) and paid their own way for air travel without being referred by the village clinic, Medicaid will not cover related expenses for lodging, meals, and taxis and return travel.

If a patient does not have active Medicaid, IHS Beneficiaries with other types of private insurance are responsible to purchase their air tickets and submit to their insurance company for reimbursement. They are considered to be self-pay.

A last resort for IHS beneficiaries with financial hardship would be YK-Pay. There are specific diagnoses and situations that are pre-authorized. Special authorizations, on a case-by-case basis, would require Hospital administrative approval.

When travel is authorized as YK-Pay, the travel will be set up one-way. When the patient is done with the appointment and ready to return, the patient must apply for Medicaid. Once the application for Medicaid is complete, the return travel will be set up.

Lodging and meals are not applicable for YK-Pay. The Hostel does offer repayment agreements for patients from villages needing lodging with proof of appointments.

Any questions regarding patient travel can be directed to the Patient Travel office at 907-543-6360.

Automated Messaging Appointment Reminders

What?!! You can receive a text as an appointment reminder? Yes…this is coming soon!

The Automated Messaging is an exciting improvement for our scheduling team and YKHC patients. When a patient calls to make an appointment the scheduling team will be asking the following:

Do you want a reminder for this appointment? (All patients have the option to opt out by answering No.)

Alt Phone: the patient would receive an automated call to their mobile phone
Email: just a simple reminder from a DONOTREPLY@ykhc.org email address
Home Phone: would be the patients land line or main contact
SMS Text: would be the exciting Text Message reminder, as shown below:

Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation <Patient First Name> - apt reminder for <Date and Time >. Q? Call (YKHC) (location of appointment ie: Kusko clinic) Txt YES to confirm. Txt NO to cancel. Txt Help 4 help.

When giving your phone number you are giving a verbal consent for YKHC to call or text to remind you of your scheduled appointment.

This project started in January of this year, involving Scheduling, Registration, Compliance, and RAVEN departments, then grew as Dawn Hackney, Director of Outpatient Services, thought that this would not only benefit the outpatient team but would also benefit all of YK.

We will be rolling it out for the appointments made for our outpatient Group 1–3. Once perfected, the remaining locations will also start participating:—Specialty Clinic, Subregional Clinics, Centering, Impact, Audiology, Diabetes, Radiology, Lab, Optometry, PT, Respiratory, Behavioral Health, and Surgery.

We will be testing through June. Test patients with employees’ phone numbers and emails will be compiled and scheduled as live patients. We are hoping to test calls all over the YK Delta to make sure all patients can receive the calls, emails, and texts. Our goal is to have this out there for our patients as soon as we can, hopefully in June.

“As an employee and patient I am excited about this project,” said Laura Karr, YKHC Business Analyst, “This gives me an option to confirm my appointment via text, a text message that will sit in my inbox until I’m available to respond back.”
Emergency Waiting Room Triage Display

In an effort to improve customer satisfaction, the emergency room has installed an emergency waiting room triage board to give ER patients more information about when they will be seen.

**Step 1:** The patient comes to the Emergency Room and checks in with the clerk. You will be asked to describe your symptoms at this time.

**Step 2:** In the order of medical seriousness, you will be assessed by a registered nurse. This will not always be the same order in which you arrive. The registered nurse will use the Emergency Nurses Association Emergency Severity Index (ESI) to determine the severity of your condition.

**Step 3:** You will be seen in the order of seriousness based on the ESI score assigned to you. Critically Ill patients are always seen before patients with less serious problems.

**Step 4:** You will be called back into the emergency room department and seen by either by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner.

**Step 5:** Admission or discharge, as discussed with you by your emergency room provider.

The triage board will identify patients according to their FIN number, which is located on the patient identification band. The other information a patient will note on the board is their identified Emergency Severity Index (ESI) Score, time since check-in and the time they checked in at the emergency room desk. The ESI scores:

1. **Immediate Resuscitation**  
   **Examples:** Heart Attack, major car accident.

2. **Emergency**  
   **Examples:** Severe blood loss, overdose.

3. **Urgent**  
   **Examples:** Head injury (conscious), low oxygen levels.

4. **Semi-urgent**  
   **Examples:** Sprained ankle with possible fracture, ear infection.

5. **Non-Urgent**  
   **Examples:** Rash, medication refill, common cold.

The board is expected to be fully functional in June. The waiting room will have education tools posted to guide patients in the interpretation of the information available to them on the board.

**PROFILE**

**Tania Thomas, Certified Nurse Midwife**

Tania Thomas first moved to Bethel in 1999 and worked as an RN in the Emergency Department and then as the pediatric case manager. Following her passion to work with women in childbirth Tania worked in OB as a labor and delivery nurse, eventually becoming the nurse manager. “Since I wasn’t getting any younger and could really see the value of a midwife here in Bethel, I went back to school to get my Masters degree in Midwifery.” She states, “It has always been important to me to affirm the power and strength of women. I feel that women’s health and well-being are important to their families and also to their communities.” Midwives’ can offer health care for a woman and her family that acknowledges her life experiences and her personal knowledge. Midwives utilize the therapeutic method of human presence and skillful communication. They honor the normalcy of women’s lifecycle events. Midwives believe in watchful waiting and non-intervention in normal processes. “I do use interventions and technology for current or potential health problems,” Tania says. She also relies on and uses the excellent support system of YK physicians for collaboration and referral as needed to provide optimal health care.
Opioid Addiction in Region and Pathways to Treatment

By YKHC Public Relations

In recent years, public health officials have warned of the dramatic rise in opioid addiction and heroin use in Alaska.

On July 14, 2015, the Department of Health and Social Services issued a report about the “Health Impacts of Heroin Use in Alaska.” The report included some staggering statistics about heroin use in the Last Frontier:

- Between 2008 and 2013, the number of heroin-related deaths in Alaska more than tripled.
- In 2012, the rate of heroin-related deaths was 42 percent higher than the national average.
- Between 2008 and 2012, the rate of hospitalizations for heroin poisoning nearly doubled.

As providers throughout the state assess how to respond to Alaska’s opioid epidemic, local leaders have begun to ask about heroin use in the YK Delta and what resources are available for those seeking pathways to treatment.

YKHC is developing a drug treatment program specific to heroin addiction and currently offers general treatment options and referrals to Anchorage-based programs.

In a recent presentation to the YKHC Full Board of Directors, Dr. Ellen Hodges (Chief of Staff), said it is hard to know exactly how many heroin users are in Bethel. However, using a CDC formula based on the number of overdose deaths, there are an estimated 200–300 active heroin users in Bethel alone. This does not include an estimated 500 individuals in Bethel who consider themselves “recreational” heroin users. Heroin is believed to be the cause of increased property crimes in the community.

“We don’t know how many users we have in villages, because we don’t have overdose deaths to review,” said Hodges. “When someone dies in a village, often alcohol is assumed to be the case.”

What resources exist for opioid addicts seeking treatment?

Medication-assisted therapy is considered the best treatment for heroin users seeking sobriety. Medication options include Methadone, Suboxone, and Naltrexone.

Methadone
Methadone treatment requires patients to receive a daily dose of the medication from the clinic providing treatment. Methadone is a long-acting opioid used for replacement therapy. Although patients are still “addicted” to opioids, this treatment option reduces death from overdose and overall crime rates.

Suboxone
This treatment option requires a patient to receive two medications—buprenorphine and naloxone. The combination prevents patients from getting high, and should they use heroin while using the medications, they would not get high from the heroin. The medication does not reduce “addiction,” but it reduces overdose deaths and overall crime rates.

This medication option works best within a comprehensive treatment plan that promotes sobriety and eventual abstinence.

Naltrexone
Naltrexone reverses the action of opioids. However, patients must be free of drugs and alcohol for 7–10 days or they will experience withdrawal. The medication is currently offered at YKHC, but is used mostly to treat alcohol dependence. Adherence and compliance to this treatment plan can be poor.
The Importance of Taking Your Medications Correctly

To get maximum benefit from your medications, it is important to take them exactly as prescribed by your doctor. In fact, your chance of a better health outcome improves when you take your medications as directed.

But four out of 10 older people who take more than one drug still do not take one or more of their prescriptions according to their doctor’s instructions. Could you be one of them?

**Talk to your health care professional**

Make sure you understand the following points before you start taking any medication
- Why you need the drug.
- How and when to take the drug.
- How to store the drug.
- What might happen if you don’t take the drug as prescribed.

Don’t hesitate to ask your provider and pharmacist to write down any medication instructions.

**Other tips**

When it comes to taking your medications, it’s essential to follow your provider and pharmacist’s instructions. Make sure you never:
- Use your medication for any symptom of illness other than the one for which it was prescribed.
- Take someone else’s medication or give your medication to someone else.
- Take more or less of a medication, unless directed by your provider and pharmacist.

**Get organized**

The following steps are designed to make it easier for you to organize your medications and related information.
- List all medications that you take, which include prescriptions, over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, and supplements.
- Jot down questions you want to ask your provider and pharmacist.
- Write down your medical information. This includes emergency contact, primary physician, and allergies. Keep it in your wallet along with your insurance information.
- Review the tips and information on this site to understand the importance of taking your medications correctly.

**How do you fare?**

Read the following statements. If any of these apply to you, you may not be getting the full benefit of your medications.

**Remembering**
- I sometimes forget/put off having my medication refilled.
- I sometimes forget to take my medication.
- I sometimes take my medication at the wrong times.
- I take many different medications and sometimes it’s hard to keep them straight.

“Playing Doctor”
- I sometimes stop taking medication once I feel better.
- I sometimes take more or less of my medication than my doctor prescribed.
- I sometimes stop taking my medication because I think it is not working.

**Other**
- I don’t understand when I am supposed to take my medication.
- I don’t ask my provider and pharmacist questions about my medication because I am shy or embarrassed.

We encourage you to talk to your health care professional about taking your medications correctly.
Diabetes Essay Contest Winners

Last month, Rahnia Boyer, Ray Petersen, and Miranda Johansson were joined by Richie Diehl and Pete Kaiser to announce the winners of the Diabetes Prevention & Control Dept. Essay Contest, “What Does Living a Healthy Life Mean to Me?” at the Auntie Mary Nicoli Elementary School in Aniak.

The award for the contest is a two-day adventure with a professional musher from our region. Emma Morgan, Jena Boelens, and Thomas Lee submitted the top three essays. Emma and Jena claimed the first day of their two-day adventure last weekend with Richie and Pete and will be able to join the mushers again for another day this upcoming winter. Thomas will be joining Mike Williams Jr. this winter once conditions are ideal to take the team out on the trail.

Diabetes Programs and Services

The YKHC Diabetes Prevention and Control Department offers several services and programs throughout the YK Delta.

**Diabetes Specialty Clinics:** An appointment to complete your diabetes-related needs in one visit. This appointment will involve a screening, foot care, medication management, nutrition education, and a provider visit. Schedule yours today.

**Diabetes Self-Management Program:** The Diabetes Department is applying to be recognized as a Diabetes Self-Management Program. The program offers six classes that teach participants the tools they need to manage diabetes. Classes include topics:

- Techniques to deal with symptoms of diabetes,
- Exercise,
- Healthy eating,
- Appropriate use of medications, and
- Working with your health care team

**Diabetes Support Group:** Diabetes can seem to be an overwhelming disease because it impacts so many areas of daily life. It’s important to have support from family, friends, and from other people with diabetes. Every second Thursday of the month comes meet others affected by diabetes and learn more about your diagnosis. The location of Support Group changes, so be sure to call us for more information at 543-6133.

**Healthy Living:** The Diabetes Department aims to publish a monthly health tip and recipe in the Healthy Living section of The Messenger. Interested in having your healthy traditional recipe published? Call us or email Diabetes_Program@ykhc.org to get involved!

Do you have or know someone with diabetes? Call us at 543-6133 to utilize our services!

**NEWS NOTES**

**The Journeyman!**

Congratulations to Gabe Martin for earning his Journeyman Plumber License!

Gabe is originally from Kasigluk and has completed his apprenticeship program under the mentorship of our YKHC Construction department’s Mechanical Administrator Mark Vrooman. YKHC Construction has been in partnership with Yuut Elitnaurviat since 2004 to mentor apprentices in the construction trades so that they may obtain their Journeyman licenses to support local workforce development. YKHC Construction has successfully mentored numerous electrician and plumber apprentices throughout the years and continues to support those that are interested in the construction trades. For more information please contact Kris Manke 543-6054 or Yuut Elitnaurviat (www.yuut.org) on how you can sign up for this wonderful opportunity.

see NEWS NOTES, p 15
Schematic design workshops render project vision

The second round of schematic design workshops for the Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project were held May 9–13 in Bethel. During schematic design, the architects work with key stakeholders to fix the arrangement, size, and character of the new facilities. Members of YKHC’s staff, senior leadership and Board of Directors provided input on what would improve customer experience, work flows, and general layout in the various departments of the new building and a remodeled hospital.

Two more schematic design workshops will be held this summer. Following schematic design, YKHC will begin work on the design development phase.

Design team visits Shageluk for cultural insight

On Friday, May 13, following the schematic design sessions, members of YKHC’s senior leadership, Board of Directors, and the PJCP’s team of architects traveled to the interior village of Shageluk, nestled at the shores of the Innoko river, for a Cultural Open House. The intent of the open house was to learn about cultural values, images, and practices important to interior communities that can be incorporated into the PJCP. Similar open houses were held in Kalskag, Toksook Bay, Bethel and Kwigillingok.

Board member Marvin Deacon (Grayling) provided brief welcoming remarks, followed by introductions, a presentation on High Reliability by President/CEO Dan Winkelman, and an overview of the project and design process by Tracy Vannairsdale (Bettisworth North) and JohnPaul Jones (Jones & Jones). The majority of time was spent in men and women’s talking circles. YKHC’s representatives sought community input on unique cultural items residents want in the new facility, how the new facility could connect the region and what activities might be suggested for the grand opening ceremony.

Several original log structures still stand in Shageluk. The open house was held in the community’s kashim. Here, VP of Village Health Rahnia Boyer welcomes residents to the Cultural Open House.

Photos by Tiffany Zulkosky.

Talking Wall Question of the Month:

What activities are important this time of year?

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

The Design Team for the Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project went to Shageluk in search of Interior region cultural insight.

Top: 1. Shageluk lies along the shore of the beautiful Innoko River. 2. Raymond Dutchman, a Shageluk resident and uncle of President/CEO Dan Winkelman, turned 91 on May 13 (the day of the community visit). Here he is joined by Dan and his daughter, YKHC Health Aide Betty Howard, after the visitors and residents sang Happy Birthday. Middle: 1. Chevie and Ryder Roach participate in the men’s talking circle. 2. Men’s talking circle in the village Kashim community hall. 3. Tracy Vanairsdale of Bettisworth North Architects explains the design concept adopted by the YKHC Board. Bottom: Community Elders listen to brief presentations before breaking up into talking circles. 2. Beautiful log structures stand throughout Shageluk and provided inspiration for the visiting architects. (photos by Tiffany Zulkosky)
Health Aide of the Month

April 2016: Connie Walker, CHP, Holy Cross

Connie Walker has been working as the only Health Aide at the Holy Cross clinic for eight years. She enjoys working and providing to her community. She is also involved in City Council in her village and is a part of the RAVEN Application Sub-team committee at YKHC, which focuses on improvements with the workflows in RAVEN, YKHC’s electronic health record system.

Connie is a reliable and dedicated Health Aide who not only volunteers to be on-call for Holy Cross, but for surrounding villages as well by telephone. Even though some nights she gets a lot of phone calls that keep her awake during the night, she never complains.

Connie says she likes being a health aide because when she helps sick patients and elders, it’s such a rewarding feeling. In some villages where they don’t have an Office Assistant, she doesn’t mind arranging travel for that village.

She is an advocate for the CHAP program and tells people if they are interested in the health field to get involved now. YKHC and her community are very fortunate to have Connie as Health Aide. Thank you Connie for all that you do for Holy Cross and the surrounding villages. Keep up the great work!

Congratulations Janette Ulak

Janette was chosen this year to be sponsored by YKHC for the Dental Health Aide Therapy Program. She is originally from Scammon Bay and worked there as a Primary Dental Health Aide (PDHA) from 2006–2008.

Following her time as a PDHA, she worked as a dental assistant for the United States Air Force from 2008 to present. She received an Associates of Applied Science for dental assisting in 2014.

Her acceptance into the DHAT program means that she will start the two-year training program this summer. We are excited to have her as part of our team and wish her the best of luck with her studies!

– Judith Burks, DDS, Dental Health Aide Therapist Coordinator

Village Clinic On-Call Emergencies

Health Aides do not work after hours for non-emergencies

EMERGENCIES...
...are those conditions that if not treated very soon could result in placing the person’s health at serious risk, serious harm to bodily functions, serious harm to any bodily organ or part.

NON- EMERGENCIES...
...can wait until the next working day.

Please Note:
For your safety and ours, no emergency medical provider is allowed to respond to an unsafe situation which involves alcohol, drugs, weapons or violence.

Their job is the toughest in the Delta. THANK YOUR HEALTH AIDE TODAY!
OPIOIDS, from p. 9
Narcan (naloxone)
Narcan is an over-the-counter medication that reverses the effects of opioids. It is administered to patients who have overdosed and are unconscious or not breathing. It works best when given within seconds to a minute after a patient quits breathing or the breathing slows to a dangerous level. Alaska Senate Bill 23, passed March 16, 2016, allows the medication to be given over-the-counter (including to family members of heroin users).

YKHC currently has Narcan available at the pharmacy with a prescription, but it will soon be available over the counter for anyone who requests it. The medication is not currently in village clinics, although pharmacy is working to make it available.

It is estimated that Alaska needs room for 5,000 individuals to access addiction treatment, but currently there is only room for 200–300 individuals. Currently, there are only four Methadone clinics and 50 Suboxone treatment programs in the state.

YKHC does not presently have an opioid-specific treatment program, but the hospital is developing a Suboxone program which will require a lot of Behavioral Health support.

“The most important thing to remember is that drug treatment programs for opioid addiction have dismal success rates, especially when not supported with intensive behavioral health support. Most users relapse within a few weeks of completing treatment, if they don’t have intensive daily outpatient counseling,” said Dr. Hodges.

“The journey to sobriety is long and difficult. Because some can become addicted after one time of use, the best prevention is to keep people from trying it in the first place.”


CIB CARDS, from p. 6
The Indian Health Service provides approximately $3,250 per beneficiary for YKHC to deliver health care services every year. This means missing information for 2,000 beneficiaries could cost the organization $6.5 million per year in funding that could be used to hire doctors, nurses, and support staff to provide much-needed health care services in the YK Delta.

YKHC wants to ensure we gather the information for the correct number of beneficiaries living in and receiving health care in the YK Delta. It is vital to making sure the necessary funding is made available to make the PJCP possible as well as to continue providing quality health care services in our region.

NEWS NOTES, from p. 11
Welcome Ayanna Galloway
Ayanna Galloway, PA-C, has joined the Aniak SRC. Ayanna provides comprehensive primary care treating children and adults of all ages. She has been practicing medicine for 15 years and has knowledge in well and sick visits, immunizations, preventative health care, chronic disease management, school/sports physicals, minor surgery, procedures and much more.

Ayanna is originally from North Carolina. She loves reading, exploring new places, sewing and baking. She is married to Sean and together they have three kids, Damali, Kosi, & Karonnie. They also have a family dog named Ike.

She will be joining Jeanne Yeagle, PA-C, as a full time provider in Aniak and, between the two of them, will be making scheduled village trips to Anvik, Chuathbaluk, Crooked Creek, Grayling, Holy Cross, Upper Kalskag, Lower Kalskag, Lime Village, Russian Mission, Shageluk, Sleetmute, and Stony River. We are thrilled that Ayanna has joined our Aniak family!

—Robert G. Charles, Operations Manager, Aniak SRC

Marks moves on, Colvin steps in
After seven years with YKHC, James Marks will be leaving the Director of Revenue Management role. During a Board of Directors Finance Committee meeting on May 16, Chairman Esai Twitchell acknowledged all of the contributions James has made to the organization in this role.

Craig Colvin will take over the position. Craig has lived in Bethel for nearly nine years. In that time he has worked at YKHC as a Finance Administrator, Assistant Director of Accounting, and most recently as the Director of Accounting. Welcome to your new role Craig!
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.