

the Messenger

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION



Volume XXII No. 3 • March 2017



YKHC President & CEO Dan Winkelman recently stopped in to talk with Bethel students about science, architecture, and the Paul John Calricaraq Project with Bettisworth North Architect Brittany Rozier. The visit was coordinated with College and Career Readiness guide Colin Stewart. Dan is pictured here speaking with Jen Coggins' junior high science class.

INSIDE

| | |
|--|----|
| CEO Message..... | 2 |
| Board of Directors..... | 3 |
| Healthy Living..... | 4 |
| Patient Safety Week..... | 5 |
| Tobacco Free Campus | 5 |
| A Closer Look: Eye Care | 6 |
| Staff Profile: | |
| Dr. Thomas Kalistook..... | 7 |
| Opioid Addiction Treatment..... | 8 |
| PJCP Update | 9 |
| Nurse Triage Line | 10 |
| Community Activity & Garden Grants | 10 |
| Health Aide of the Month..... | 10 |
| Health Aides can become PAs. | 11 |
| Through with Chew | 12 |
| Tribal Unity Gathering XXIV | 12 |

FYI: A New Resource to Help Tobacco Users Quit

Do you have a cell phone? We thought so...

The Truth Initiative and YKHC have partnered to develop a text messaging program to help tobacco users quit called This is Quitting.

This free program helps you to set a quit date and stay tobacco free by sending you customized text messages to support you in your journey.

Using the program, you can receive feedback from others on the same journey, and receive customized messages of support when you are having relapses or cravings.

- To get started, text QUITNOW to 907-891-7140.
- For extra support with cravings, text COPE to 907-891-7140.
- If you slip up, text SLIP to 907-891-7140 for help getting back on track.
- If you need help within the service, text HELP to 907-891-7140.
- To stop receiving messages, text STOP to 907-891-7140.

RESOURCES

YKHC main switchboard 543-6000
 Toll Free 1-800-478-3321

APPOINTMENTS

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

SUBREGIONAL CLINICS

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

SERVICES

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

ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

Administration 543-6020
 Human Resources 543-6060
 Public Relations 543-6013
 Travel Management 543-6360
 Facilities & Maintenance 543-6203

BETHEL & REGIONAL RESOURCES

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

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.

© 2017, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation.

Message from the President/CEO

Paul John Calricaraq Project is a GO!

I have great news to share with you. In February the Alaska Municipal Bond Bank approved YKHC's application for a \$102.5 million bond for the Paul John Calricaraq Project. This completes our \$300 million finance package and the project is a "GO"!



Dan Winkelman,
President/CEO

If you will recall, I reported to you last year that we got a head start on the project and finished most of the piling foundation. The next major milestone will be after breakup when the structural steel arrives via barge.

My staff and I recently returned from Washington DC after working with the Indian Health Service (IHS) to assist in preparing their request to Congress for additional clinical staffing for the project. We had many productive meetings with the IHS, Senators Murkowski and Sullivan and Congressman Young's staff.

We continue to meet with our employees, customers, architects, engineers and others on finishing the project's design. Lastly, for those of you interested in project employment opportunities please go to our website, www.ykhc.org.

Stay tuned to the Messenger, Facebook and our website for additional updates.

Quyana,



YKHC President/CEO Dan Winkelman in Washington DC with Senator Lisa Murkowski, YKHC Communications VP Tiffany Zulkosky and CFO Tommy Tompkins.



Design team at work.

YKHC Board of Directors

Unit 1

Mary Ayunerak
AlakanukMichael Hunt, Sr.
Kotlik

Unit 2

Geraldine Beans
St. Mary'sJames C. Landlord
Mtn. Village

Unit 3

Billy Jean Stewart
KalskagBetty Turner
Lower Kalskag

Unit 4

Phillip K. Peter, Sr.
AkiachakMildred Evan
Akiachak

Unit 5

Stan Hoffman, Sr.
BethelGloria Simeon
BethelHugh Snyder
BethelChris Larson
Napaskiak

Unit 6

Esai Twitchell, Jr.
KasiglukAdolph Lewis
Kwigillingok

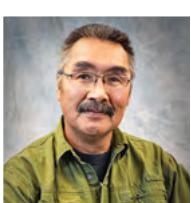
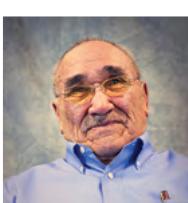
Unit 7



Vacant

James Sipary
Toksook Bay

Unit 9

Patrick Tall
ChevakJohn Uttereyuk
Scammon BayJoshua Cleveland
QuinhagakMarvin Deacon
Grayling

Honorary Board Member

James Charlie, Sr.
Toksook Bay

Nursing Grads choose YKHC

Two of the recent RN program graduates have started working at YKHC.



New Nurses: Rebecca Martins and Deanna Pavil.

Please welcome Rebecca Martins and Deanna Pavil. It is truly wonderful to see our local graduates work in the region and contribute to the healthcare for our communities.

—Deb White, HR Director

Congratulations to Doreen O'Brien on her retirement!

Doreen O'Brien tirelessly served the women and children of the YK Delta for 26 years at the Prematernal Home. In recent years she saw generations of pregnant ladies whose mothers



Doreen O'Brien and staff.

had stayed at the Prematernal Home. She believed very much in YKHC's mission, vision, and values, and the service that the Prematernal Home provided to those who came to stay there.

"I thank each of you for what you have contributed to my life here," Doreen said. "For all the new arrivals I wish for you what was given to me."

Doreen worked for years to see the dream of a new Prematernal Home facility become reality in 2014. Best of luck to you, Doreen, you have been an inspiration and great friend to the many women and children who have known you.

Doreen's last day was February 3. She is retiring to Northern Idaho.

—Deanna Latham, Interim Support Services VP

Put Your Best Fork Forward

You have the tools to make healthy choices

What does making small changes over time look like for you? This month can serve as a reminder that long term health goals can be achieved if they are broken down into small, attainable goals. If you don't do these already, think about some of these small changes for the month of March. "Put your best fork forward" by:

Decreasing the amount of sugar in your coffee or tea. Sugar in your drinks can raise blood sugar and make it harder to lose weight!

Drinking water with meals. This will help you get the recommended 8–10 cups of water daily, feel fuller at meals, and avoid excess calories from sweetened drinks.

Walking to work once or twice a week. Getting the recommended 30 minutes of physical activity a day can seem overwhelming. Try breaking it down into 10 minute segments, three times/day.

Standing while talking on the phone or when watching TV. Breaking up periods of sedentary behavior with standing every 30 minutes helps increase activity and helps blood sugar management.

Checking your vitamin D levels. Vitamin D deficiency is very common in areas that don't get enough sun. Vitamin D is essential for mineral metabolism and hormone production. Get your levels checked to see if you need to supplement.

Giving yourself a compliment. It's hard to care for others if you don't care for yourself. Practice self-care by thinking positively about yourself and your health.

Putting electronics away an hour before bedtime. Getting enough sleep is an important part of stress management and has been shown to influence diabetes. The light of electronics has been shown to disrupt healthy sleep.

Call the Diabetes Prevention & Control Department at 907-543-6133 to schedule your diabetes appointment today.

Join us for a National Nutrition Month® celebration!

**March 25 from 11 a.m.–2 p.m.
AC Grocery on 135 Ridgecrest Drive in Bethel**

Stop by between 11 and 2 for a free A1c screening, games, prizes and more!

Additional National Nutrition Month® happenings:

"Ask an RD" —YK Dietitians will help answer your questions about healthy living. Booths in the hospital main lobby each Tuesday in March.

Grocery Store Tour – Join us at AC Grocery for Diabetes Support Group and a Grocery Store Tour. Tour to take place at 12 p.m. on March 9. Meet near the electronics section.

Wellness Wednesdays on KYUK. Topic: National Nutrition Month®—Tune in Wednesday, March 8 to talk with YK Dietitians and for a chance to win a pool pass.

Recipe of the Month

Oven Roasted Garlic Cabbage

Ingredients

- 1 large green cabbage, cut into 1 inch thick slices
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 5 large garlic cloves, minced; or garlic 1-2tsp garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste



Preparation

1. Preheat oven to 400F
2. Brush both sides of each cabbage slice with olive oil
3. Spread garlic evenly on each side of cabbage slices and season them to taste with salt and pepper
4. Roast in oven for 20 minutes; then turn the slices over and roast them again for another 20 minutes or until edges are crispy

Recipe and image adapted from paleoleap.com

National Patient Safety Awareness Week March 12–18

by Jaye Marcus-Ledford, Chair of the Patient Safety Committee

Patient Safety Awareness Week is celebrated annually during the second week in March. This year's theme is *United in Safety*.

Patient Safety Awareness Week was initiated in 2002 and is an annual education and awareness campaign for healthcare safety, led by the National Patient Safety Foundation (NPSF). Each year, healthcare organizations and communities worldwide take part in the event by prominently displaying the NPSF campaign logo and promotional materials, creating awareness in the community, and deploying educational resources to health care staff and patients. The website address for Patient Safety Awareness Week is www.npsf.org/psaw

Patient Safety Awareness Week is a campaign for improving patient safety at the local level. Educational activities are centered on educating patients on how to become involved in their own health care, and reinforcing patient safety within the organization's staff.

YKHC has participated with Patient Safety Awareness Week annually by having an information table in the hospital lobby and the CHSB lobby, during the noon hours, Monday through Friday. At these tables we will be offering information sheets on how patients can become more involved in their own health care, providing medication wallet cards, pill organizers, medications syringes for infants, etc.



We also encourage patient care departments to come up with their own patient safety awareness activities, like reinforcing discussions with the staff to be evaluating for patient safety risk areas in their departments, and promoting the 2017 National Patient Safety Goals.

During this week also, we will have the annual employee Survey on Patient Safety Culture. The goal is to use the results of the survey to improve our culture of patient safety in our organization. Please help us to have a valid survey by taking the survey!

Thank you in advance for your participation with patient safety activities!

Why is YKHC Becoming a Tobacco Free Healthcare Facility?

YKHC's mission, vision and values call us to improve the health of the individuals and communities we serve. This February, the Board of Directors announced that YKHC will transition to a fully tobacco-free healthcare campus over the course of the coming year, **becoming final February 5, 2018**.

An employee survey conducted in August 2016 indicated that more than 90 percent of those who responded support going tobacco-free.

Overview

- All forms of tobacco use will be prohibited for all patients, staff and visitors on all YKHC owned and leased properties.
- Smoke shacks will be removed.
- Patients and visitors found using tobacco will be asked to stop and will be given contact information for tobacco cessation counseling.
- Tobacco use in all YKHC vehicles will be prohibited.
- Tobacco use in private vehicles while on YKHC property will be prohibited.

CARE for you
for others
.....
YKHC IS GOING TOBACCO-FREE

- Employees found using tobacco will be subject to disciplinary action.
- Employees are prohibited from displaying tobacco products on YKHC property and from reporting to work smelling of second hand smoke, due to the health risk it constitutes to patients.
- The policy covers all YKHC locations including housing and residential facilities.

Eye Care

YKHC's Optometry Clinic recommends that *everyone* get an eye exam every 1–2 years, even if you don't wear glasses or contacts. During an eye exam, you are not only evaluated for the need to wear glasses or contacts, but also to make sure your eyes are healthy. Permanent vision loss can occur from many systemic diseases, such as uncontrolled diabetes and hypertension.

Optometry Clinic

HOURS

8 a.m. – 5 p.m., Monday – Friday
After hours: Go to the Emergency Department, OD on call will be paged

SERVICES

- Comprehensive eye exams
- Contact lens fitting and evaluation
- Purchase frames, lenses, sunglasses, contact lenses, and solution
- Diagnosing, treating, and managing ocular conditions

Common conditions we see and treat

Nearsightedness, also known as myopia, means you can see objects up close but objects in the distance are blurry. Farsightedness is the opposite of nearsightedness. This means you can see objects far away but objects up close are blurry. Glasses will be prescribed to correct both of these conditions and help you see better.

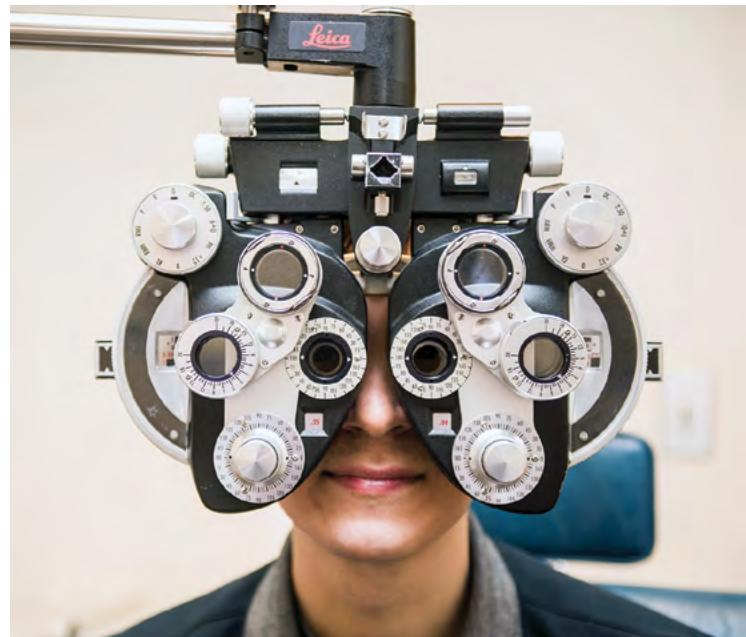
Glaucoma is when the nerve connecting the eye to the brain is damaged and causes vision loss. This usually occurs from high eye pressure. Most people will not notice any vision loss until it is very significant. Vision loss and tissue damage from glaucoma is irreversible, but it can be slowed by taking glaucoma drops.

Conjunctivitis, or pink eye, is an irritation or inflammation of the conjunctiva, which covers the white part of the eyeball. This can be from a virus, bacteria, or allergies. Common symptoms include redness, pain, watery eyes, discharge, and itch. If it is viral, conjunctivitis will resolve on its own in one to two weeks. If it is bacterial or allergic, drops can be prescribed to speed up the healing process.

Iritis is inflammation inside of the eye, usually in the iris. This can be from trauma or inflammatory diseases such as arthritis. Common symptoms include redness, pain, light sensitivity, and blur. Steroid drops will be prescribed to help quiet the inflammation.

Cataracts occur when the lens of the eye becomes cloudy. Common symptoms include blur, decreased vision, and halo around lights. Cataract surgery removes the cloudy natural lens and replaces it with a clear synthetic lens.

Strabismus, or an eye turn, is when one or both eyes are not aligned straight. Common symptoms include double vision



or blur. Glasses can be prescribed to help align the eyes. In extreme cases, surgery is needed to help with realignment.

Amblyopia is uncorrectable vision loss, usually due to an eye turn or uncorrected nearsightedness or farsightedness. Common symptoms include blur and vision loss. Glasses can be prescribed to help correct the vision loss. However, if it is not caught in time vision loss can be permanent and uncorrectable, no matter what glasses are prescribed.

Retinal Detachment happens when the layers in the back of the eye detach from the rest of the eye. Common symptoms include flashes of light, floaters, a black curtain coming down in your vision, and vision loss. This needs to be treated right away with surgery.

Meet Dr. Thomas Kalistook, hometown eye doctor

"My first real job was in here," Dr. Thomas Kalistook said, sitting in the lab room of YKHC's optometry clinic. "I worked here for on-the-job training in high school, working on lenses and helping with other things."

Kalistook, a 2008 Bethel Regional High School graduate, does much more now than lab work for YKHC's optometry clinic in Bethel. He graduated from Pacific University in 2016 with a Doctor of Optometry degree and returned home to Bethel to practice optometry with YKHC.

When he returned to Bethel in August 2016, Dr. Kalistook became the first optometrist from the area to work for the corporation.

The Bethel optometry clinic, which serves all YKHC villages, presents unique challenges, Kalistook says. YKHC's clinic handles all of the regular eye appointments for evaluating patients' eyes and prescribing lenses in addition to diagnosing and treating various eye diseases and conditions.

"Most of my classmates are working in regular optical shops," Kalistook said. "I have all that with cases of eye disease here and there."

Kalistook enjoys the opportunity to work in his hometown.

"A lot of people knew me as a kid," Kalistook said. "But now I can introduce myself as Dr. Kalistook."

One of the more rewarding aspects of his work, according to



Dr Thomas Kalistook.

Kalistook, is the instant help he can provide to many of his patients.

"I can help many of my patients see better pretty quickly with a new pair of glasses or contacts," Kalistook said. "I get to help people I know."

Thomas is the oldest son of Rita and Isaac Kalistook. His mother, Rita, has been an instructor in YKHC's Community Health Aide Program for 26 years. He is the older brother to Clarence and Zach and has an older half-brother, Larry.

Contact Lens Wear

Since contact lenses are considered a medical device, the doctor makes sure your eyes are healthy enough to wear them. The abuse of contact lenses can lead to eye infections, irreversible and uncorrectable vision loss, and even enucleation (removal of the actual eye).

Rules for contact lens wearers

- Only wear contacts that have been prescribed to YOU
- DO NOT sleep in them
- DO NOT share them
- DO NOT use water to store them
- Replace your contact lenses and contact case regularly
- Always wash your hands before handling contacts

- If your eye is red or painful, discontinue use and come to the optometry clinic.

How often should I be seen?

You should be seen every one to two years to detect and identify general health conditions manifested in the eye.

Anyone with systemic conditions should get checked every year (people with hypertension, diabetes, high cholesterol, etc), or more frequently depending on ocular manifestations.

Your infant's first eye exam should happen around six months of age, then around 2–3 years old, then before first grade, and every one to two years after that.

To schedule an appointment, call 543-6336

YKHC is now treating heroin and opioid addiction

Opioid and heroin abuse is a growing problem in our state and country. Between 2009 and 2015, the number of heroin-related deaths in Alaska quadrupled. Because substance abuse does not know boundaries, heroin has made its way to the YK Delta. As a result, community and regional leaders have seen an increase in use and associated crimes.

In response to the increased presence of heroin in our region, in November 2016 YKHC launched a new program to help those struggling with opioid addiction. The new program combines traditional substance abuse treatment options with medications, providing what is known as medication-assisted therapy. People seeking treatment begin by getting an assessment from behavioral health team members (for substance use problems). Using a team-based approach to care, the behavioral health team will then refer an individual to a medical provider (for physical health and medication).

If it is determined that medication-assisted therapy is what would work best for the individual seeking treatment, the medication prescribed by the care team is Suboxone. This is a combination of two medications, buprenorphine and naloxone. This combination of medications prevents the painful withdrawal symptoms while providing a “ceiling” effect for the heroin “high.” The medication is prescribed by doctors with special training and credentials, and is closely monitored by the medical providers, pharmacy, and the behavioral health team.

Behavioral health provides a continuum of care based on the initial clinical assessment. This can include a six-week residential treatment, followed by intensive outpatient services and Level I outpatient services.

Residential Treatment

If it is determined that an individual needs residential treatment, they will stay at the new YK Ayagnirvik Healing Center for six weeks. During this time, the individual seeking treatment will take their medication, attend group and receive individual therapy each day. A protective environment can offer stability and space to adjust to being “clean and sober.”

Intensive Outpatient Treatment

Intensive outpatient treatment consists of at least nine hours of treatment each week. An individual receiving this level of care would attend group therapy three nights per week and receive individual therapy as needed. This new service component uses Matrix Model treatment – an effective, behavioral-based treatment specifically developed for drug treatment. Intensive outpatient treatment is required for at least 16 weeks. Upon successful completion, Level I Outpatient Treatment is recommended.

Level I Outpatient Treatment

This includes at least one group therapy session per week, plus additional individual counseling as needed. The treatment uses Moral Recognition Therapy and lasts at least 12 sessions. Upon completion, individuals participate in an “alumni group.” The alumni group allows an individual seeking sobriety to stay in touch with their medical and

behavioral health providers.

The treatment program’s medical team includes Dr. Elizabeth Roll and Dr. Nicholas Flickinger. Both providers have received special training and are certified to prescribe Suboxone. The program’s Behavioral Health team includes Andre Taylor, Clinician; Kathleen David, Counselor; and R. Thor Williams, Case Manager.

For information, referrals or to make an appointment for screening and assessment contact 543-6772 or 543-6977.

*Umyuarpeggun cakviuquvet qayaagaurluten
ikayuastekavnek*

Call for help if you're having a tough time

543-6499
or toll-free 844-543-6499

YKHC BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

March, 2017

Dr. Paul John Calricaraq Project

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



Final Funding Piece Falls Into Place

YKHC President/CEO Dan Winkelman wrote in a memo to employees, "I want to share some great news with you."

On February 9, 2017, around 3 p.m., the Alaska Municipal Bond Bank approved YKHC's application for a \$102.5 million loan to fund the Paul John Calricaraq Project (PJCP). The Bond Bank's chairman commented that this is the largest and most complicated project of its type in the history of the bank.

This completes YKHC's financing for our \$300+ million project, which means the project is now a "go." The next big milestone will be the arrival of structural steel for the new building in the summer of 2017.

The other major funding piece is a \$165 million loan from the US Dept. of Agriculture, which was approved last year, enabling the project to get started with pile driving this winter.

PJCP Design

Bettisworth North Architects and Planners (BNAP) is completing the Design Development documents for the PJCP Clinic and Hospital. Design Development Workshop #4 was held in Bethel on February 6-10.

The YKHC Board of Directors is reviewing exterior color choices for the new clinic. BNAP is refining details on the structural steel package, as fabrication is set to begin in March. BNAP met with the local fire chief to review fire service for project hydrants and utility connections.

The Facility User Manual is under further development and will be submitted to YKHC in March.

YKHC is in the process of selecting design and planning services for non-medical equipment and furnishings. An RFP for a commissioning agent has been issued as well.

YKHC is reviewing a revised proposal from Stantec for low voltage planning and design services. BNAP held a meeting with YKHC's Technology Dept. to review access control and security door hardware.

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

YKHC Staff Housing

Bethel Services Inc. (BSI) completed the 100 percent design documents for the 54-unit staff housing project and YKHC is reviewing the design. Final permits are being obtained from the City of Bethel. An equipment rental agreement is in progress.

Over 150 contractor submittals have been received and processed by the YKHC team. Module construction was scheduled to begin in early February. YKHC is working to develop an RFP for housing furniture/housewares.

Paul John Calricaraq Project website

YKHC has launched a new website for the Paul John Calricaraq Project at www.calricaraq.org.

The site includes background on the project, monthly updates for the past year, photos, links to job openings related to the project and more. Design work for the hospital expansion and new clinic construction is still underway and it's not too late to provide input on various aspects of the project.

An expanded facility is only part of the project. Most importantly the project is an opportunity to improve our services with patient-centered care and cultural understanding at the core. Please visit www.calricaraq.org and share your ideas.



A construction site webcam image, taken February 6.

Talking Wall Question of the Month:

What would you like to see included on the PJCP website?

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



Health Aide of the Month, January 2017

Anastasia Jones, CHA II, Tuluksak

by Balassa S. Larson, SI

Anastasia Jones is a CHA II from Tuluksak. Anastasia Jones has a positive attitude at all times when working and treats her coworker and patients in a friendly, courteous and respectful manner. She is dedicated, reliable and a very hard worker when on call. On January 12 Anastasia took care of two urgent patients, a 57-year-old female with elevated blood pressure who was sent to Bethel on a regular flight, and a 53-year-old male with possible heart failure who was medevaced.

Anastasia is a very effective community health aide, providing urgent care to anyone needing urgent care. She never complains of how tired she is, but is always ready to give emergency care to anyone that needs it, anytime day or night.

The people in the community of Tuluksak are fortunate to have Anastasia as a caring, tireless, dedicated and courageous community health care provider. I feel Anastasia has proven to be an excellent role model and valued YKHC employee

Thank you Anastasia on behalf of YKHC I would like to take this opportunity to commend you for all the tireless hard work you do and encourage you to keep up the wonderful work.



Anastasia Jones, CHA II.

Nurse Triage Line provides after-hours support for CHAs

The Nurse Triage Line is a service provided by YKHC to assist residents of YK Delta villages with any medical concerns or questions after clinic hours and on weekends.

The program was launched in April, 2016, as a pilot covering seven village clinics. In October, we added the remaining YK service area villages. Phone coverage begins daily after the clinic closes and extends through the weekends.

Benefits of the program: A nurse is available at all times after clinic closure for any health concerns including urgent and non-urgent situations.

The nurse can answer in-depth questions about prescribed dosage of medications and, most importantly, it decreases

stress for our hard-working Community Health Aides resulting in a higher quality work environment that leads to excellence in patient care.

The Nurse Triage Line answers the regular clinic number after hours. Emergency calls are directed to the Health Aides on-call to respond and treat the patient as appropriate.

In a recent survey, 96 percent of Health Aides responded that the Nurse Triage Line provided stress relief during on-call hours and that the service was effective in supporting patient care. The CHAP department is available to answer any questions you may have about this service.

Invitation to Apply for Community Activity and Garden Grants

In response to the diabetes epidemic among American Indians and Alaska Natives, Congress established the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) grant programs in 1997. YKHC has been a part of this program from the beginning and has been working to slow both the spread and progression of diabetes in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta.

The YKHC Diabetes Prevention & Control Program is currently inviting all communities in the YK Delta to apply for the 2017 Community Activity & Garden Awards. We are en-

couraging city and tribal governments and other non-profit agencies to partner with us to develop long term activity programs that will help prevent diabetes and other chronic health diseases by increasing healthy lifestyle opportunities for people living in our communities.

Please visit www.ykhc.org/diabetes to download the application form. Application deadline is March 27, 2017.

Medex gives CHAs head start on becoming PAs

by Alan R. Shear Clinical Coordinator Community Health Aide Training

YKHC Health Aides, have you ever thought you would like to become a Physician Assistant?

Currently, Health Aides have a unique opportunity to pursue a pathway to become a Physician Assistant through the Medex program in Anchorage, a satellite of the University of Washington's PA program.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) awards 34 college credits for completing all four sessions of Health Aide training. These can be applied towards an Associate of Applied Science (AAS) Degree. Health Aides then need 15 credits of general studies, five more credits of 200-level health courses, and six elective credits to become eligible for their AAS degree.

Most of the required credits may be obtained on-line through distance learning at UAF's affiliate in Bethel. Once Health Aides have obtained the 60 credits for the necessary AAS degree they are eligible to apply to Medex for the PA program.

Health Aides are well suited for the PA program with the hands-on skills and clinical skills that they have learned while being a Health Aide.

We know of four former Heath Aides from the YK Delta who have taken advantage of this opportunity and we know there are more out there who are eligible and could—but they need to hurry. In 2020 the door will close on this opportunity as the Medex program will be going to a Master's degree program and will require a Bachelor's degree to apply.

Any questions can be directed to Linda Curda, the UAF affiliate for the Health Aide Program. lcurda@alaska.edu

Developmental Disabilities Services

**Family, Infant, Toddler
Program (FIT)**

***Does your
child sit,
walk, talk
or play
like other
children?***

If you have
concerns or
want to have
your newborn
to 3-year-old
child assessed,
call the YKHC FIT
Program at

543-3690

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION



Photo by Dendra Chavez Photography

Through With Chew Week aims to combat misperceptions about smokeless tobacco

YKHC Celebrated Through with Chew week February 6–10 with events in Bethel and Aniak. Through With Chew Week provides an opportunity to educate Alaskans about the harms of smokeless tobacco

Feb. 6: the Tobacco Prevention Department hosted an information table on tobacco and cancer for hospital visitors.

Feb. 7: They visited YKCC to share health information about tobacco with inmates.

Feb. 8: Rahnia Boyer, Matt Scott and Elin McWilliams co-hosted a radio show spotlighting YKHC's Tobacco Free Healthcare Campus Policy.

Feb. 9–10: Elin traveled to Aniak and joined Eva Wilson in hosting a dance contest to demonstrate healthy lungs, and a workshop for local youth to create Valentines offering their loved ones support to quit tobacco.

YKHC will also celebrated the Great American Spit Out on February 23, with activities at the Bethel Teen Center, and a health education event for Chuathbaluk youth on February 24.

According to the International Agency for Research on Cancer,



Elin McWilliams with kids at the hospital information table.



Making valentines in Aniak.

smokeless tobacco contains at least 28 cancer-causing chemicals. Chewing tobacco can be an irritant to gums and lead to gum recession. Smokeless tobacco can also cause cancer of the esophagus and pancreas, can increase risks for early delivery and stillbirth when used during pregnancy, and can cause nicotine poisoning in children.

While quitting is hard, you don't have to do it alone. YKHC's Tobacco Prevention Department offers free counseling in Yup'ik and English, and the option to request medication to help you quit, if desired. If you would like to enroll, please call 907-534-6312 or 1-800-478-3321, or if you are in Bethel you are welcome to walk in to our office, next to the Pharmacy in the main hospital Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line also encourages you to make the step toward a tobacco-free life with its free support services. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW or visit Alaskaquitline.com

Tribal Unity Gathering XXIV

Elluarillerkamtenun Calirrlainarluta
Continually Working to Improve Healthcare

Yupiit Piciryarait Cultural Center
April 5–6, 2017 ★ Bethel, Alaska

Join us April 5–6 for the 24th Tribal Unity Gathering.

For nearly 25 years, we have come together to address ways to improve our health care services and access to care for patients in the YK Delta. Because of the direction our tribes have given during our Tribal Gathering conferences over the years, YKHC's services have grown and improved.

Registration is open now to all online at www.ykhc.org/tribal-gathering. The DEADLINE to register is March 15, 2017.



This year's theme is *Elluarillerkamtenun Calirrlainarluta*—Continually Working to Improve Healthcare. The theme encompasses YKHC's growth as we have opened many new facilities in recent years as well finalization of the financing for the Paul John Calricaraq Project (PJCP).

The gathering will last two days this year. Tribal attendees will have the opportunity to help establish health care priorities for 2017/2018 as well as participate in the dedication ceremony for the PJCP.