



# YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION

*"Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health"*

## OPPOSITION TO THE ISSUANCE OF LIQUOR LICENSES

Resolution No.: 15-04-01

*A Resolution of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation Full Board  
Opposing the issuance of licenses for the sale of alcoholic beverages within the City of Bethel, Alaska*

- WHEREAS:** The Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation's (YKHC) mission is "Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health", and YKHC is fully committed to the development of culturally relevant programs for primary care, prevention, and health promotion in a setting that fosters Native self-determination in the control and management of health care delivery; and
- WHEREAS:** YKHC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation established to provide health care services under a Title III Compact with the Indian Health Service to 58 Federally-Recognized Tribes on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in Alaska by authorization of these tribal governing bodies; and
- WHEREAS:** Alcohol abuse is the leading disruption of lives in our area which is evidenced by alarmingly high rates of social disorder, including domestic violence, child neglect/abuse, criminal activity, and accidental deaths, including alcohol-related suicides; and
- WHEREAS:** Sobriety in our villages is a self-determination, health and well-being issue of the greatest importance; and
- WHEREAS:** The Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation operates the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital in Bethel, the Phillips Ayagnirvik substance abuse treatment facility, and a variety of other inpatient and outpatient programs in Bethel which serve individuals with alcohol and other substance abuse issues; and
- WHEREAS:** Since a majority of voters in Bethel have approved withdrawal of the City of Bethel from "Local Option" the State of Alaska Alcoholic Beverages Control Board may now grant licenses for the sale of alcohol in Bethel to lawful applicants; and
- WHEREAS:** The Bethel Native Corporation and the Alaska Commercial Company have applied for a liquor license which would allow them to open a liquor store in Bethel and sell liquor by the bottle to lawful Bethel residents; and
- WHEREAS:** Any sales of alcohol in the City of Bethel will likely substantially increase the workload of the City of Bethel's personnel that conducts search and rescue operations, police, jail and fire protection and health care providers, to the extent to be not in the best interests of the City of Bethel or YKHC as the local health care provider; and

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**WHEREAS:** According to a 1994 comprehensive study on the North Slope Borough by a Fellow with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, when measures are in place to limit access to alcoholic beverages, “[a] reduction was also evident in the number of alcohol-related calls received by the North Slope borough Public Safety Office and in the number of alcohol-related visits reported by the Barrow hospital”<sup>1</sup>; and

**WHEREAS:** According to a 1997 comprehensive study in the Journal of the American Medical Association (hereinafter, “JAMA Study”) “in remote Alaska, where injuries are the leading cause of death, residence in a wet village, which had no local restrictions on alcohol availability, was associated with higher rates of both total injury death and alcohol-related injury death among Alaska Natives”<sup>2</sup>; and

**WHEREAS:** According to the JAMA Study, “[t]he strength of the association was greatest for deaths due to motor vehicle injury, homicide, and hypothermia.”<sup>3</sup>; and

**WHEREAS:** The JAMA Study concluded that, “[t]hese findings indicate that measures limiting access to alcoholic beverages in this region may decrease alcohol-related injury deaths.”<sup>4</sup>

**WHEREAS:** Such sales of alcohol in the City of Bethel would likely increase alcohol-related accidents, traumas and fatalities within the City of Bethel and the surrounding region; and

**WHEREAS:** The YKHC Full Board of Directors does not believe it to be in the best interest of the Corporation that any license applications be approved by the State of Alaska Alcoholic Beverages Control Board for the sale of alcohol in Bethel based on long corporate experience in promoting sobriety, and operating a variety of programs in substance abuse treatment and counseling; and

**WHEREAS:** If the State of Alaska Alcoholic Beverages Control Board approves any license application in the City of Bethel, such sales of alcohol will negatively affect out members and all Villages on the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and therefore, approval of the application will not be in the best interests of the people of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta or the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Full Board of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation hereby asserts that it opposes the issuance of any alcoholic beverage sales or dispensary licenses in the City of Bethel, Alaska; and

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<sup>1</sup> Michael P. Keiffer, ALCOHOL LEGISLATION AND ITS EFFECT ON SEVERE INJURIES ON THE NORTH SLOPE BOROUGH, [WWW.IHS.GOV/MEDICALPROGRAMS/INJURYPREVENTION/DOCUMENTS/KEIFFER.PDF](http://WWW.IHS.GOV/MEDICALPROGRAMS/INJURYPREVENTION/DOCUMENTS/KEIFFER.PDF), 129 (1994).

<sup>2</sup> Michael G. Landen, et al., ALCOHOL-RELATED INJURY DEATH AND ALCOHOL AVAILABILITY IN REMOTE ALASKA, Jour. Of the American Medical Assoc., Vol 278, No. 21, p. 1757 (1997).

<sup>3</sup> Landen at 1757.


<sup>4</sup> *Id.* at 1755.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** upon notice of any license applications to the State of Alaska Alcoholic Beverage Control Board for licensure in the City of Bethel, the YKHC Full Board directs President and Chief Executive Officer, Dan Winkelman and his staff to prepare testimony for the license application record in opposition to such applications based on this Resolution, and that a copy of this Resolution shall be included in all such testimony.

**Certification**

Passed and approved at a regular meeting of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation Full Board of Directors, a quorum being present, on this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of April, 2015, by a vote of 17 in favor, 0 opposed, 2 abstaining, and 0 members absent.

Signed:   
Esai Twitchell, Jr., Chair  
YKHC Full Board of Directors

Signed:   
Patrick Tall, Secretary  
YKHC Full Board of Directors