MEET RUBY OKITKUN, EMMONAK’S NEWEST DHAT

Ruby Okitkun was raised in Kotlik. She started her career in the dental field as a Primary Dental Health Aide and has since advanced her dental education to receive her Associate’s Degree in Dental Therapy. She is now practicing in Emmonak as a certified Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) and will provide dental care to the communities of Emmonak, Alakanuk, Kotlik and Nunam Iqua.

SAVE THE DATE

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION

“Working Together To Achieve Excellent Health”

Volume XXV No. 2 · February 2020

INSIDE

Numbers to Call................................. 2
Board of Directors............................. 2
PRESIDENT & CEO MESSAGE:
   Tribal Unity Gathering....................... 3
Rapid Response Teams......................... 4
SAFETY TIP: Preventing Slips and Falls....................................................... 4
PJCP Update....................................... 5
HEALTHY LIVING—
   February Heart Month....................... 6
Recipe of the Month........................... 6
Ways to Quit...................................... 7
E-cigs Don’t Help................................ 7
Baby Bottle Tooth Decay.................... 8
2020 Census..................................... 9
CHAP News........................................ 10
Dental Care Closer to Home............. 10
Employees of the Quarter............... 11
Tobacco Youth Advisory Group....... 11
Hospitality Services Dept.............. 11
Village Travel Schedule............... 12

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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 Refill Line ............................ 543-6988
Toll Free ........................................ 877-543-6988
Physical Therapy ................................ 543-6342
Women’s Health ................................. 543-6296
Irnivik Birthing Center .......................... 543-6346
Behavioral Health Services ................. 543-6100

BH CRISIS RESPONSE LINE................. 543-6499
Substance Abuse Treatment .................. 543-6730
Sobering Center ................................. 543-6830
Developmental Disabilities ................... 543-2762
Emergency Room .............................. 543-6395
Office of Environmental Health & Engineering, Injury Contro & EMS ... 543-6420

ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

Administration ................................... 543-6020
Human Resources ............................... 543-6060
Public Relations ................................. 543-6013
Travel Management ......................... 543-6360

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.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ATTENTION: If you speak Yup’ik, free translations services are available to you. Call 907-543-6603.

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YKHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Alakanuk
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Kotlik

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St. Mary’s
Wassilie ‘Wesley’ Pitka
Marshall

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Bonnie Persson
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Bethel
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Bethel
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Mekoryuk
James Sipary
Toksook Bay

Unit 9

Patrick Tall
Chevak
Seat Vacant
Unit 9

Unit 10

Darren Cleveland
Quinhagak

Unit 11

Marvin Deacon
Grayling

Honorary Board

Member

James Charlie, Sr.
Toksook Bay
On April 1-2, 2020 we will have our annual Tribal Unity Gathering where our 58 member tribes participate in two days of listening and learning sessions that culminate in the development of health care priorities for the region.

Last year’s top three priorities were:

1. Improve travel between villages, Bethel and the Alaska Native Medical Center.
2. Hire more health aides
3. Improve communication with referrals.

We formed teams last year that strategized and implemented improvements on all three of these top priorities. This spring we will report on each of these priorities in greater detail when we revisit them at this year’s Tribal Gathering.

Tribal members who are interested in attending the Tribal Gathering should contact their local Tribal Council. Councils will select two representatives from their tribe to attend the two day event in Bethel.

Join us so we can partner in developing your region’s health care priorities.

Quyana!
RAPID RESPONSE TEAMS ALWAYS READY AT YKDRH

The new hospital is providing new opportunities for improving patient care—in emergency situations as well as clinical treatment.

If a patient is having a serious heart problem or a breathing problem and needs immediate attention, a Rapid Response Team can swing into action. The teams’ procedures and equipment have all been optimized to function quickly and efficiently in the new facility.

We have made sure that the carts that contain the necessary equipment for resuscitation are standardized so that no matter where or how the team needs to respond, they have exactly what they need.

We have also changed the way we notify everyone about a patient’s need for assistance, using a communication system called Tiger Connect to communicate with all the team members that might be needed in a particular situation.

Now that Dental, Optometry and Behavioral Health as well as outpatient and inpatient departments are all together in the same building, we can work to ensure that everyone has been trained in the use of these teams and how to get help if they have a patient who needs immediate (critical?) care.

Although our emergency department is in a temporary location at this time, the care provided to patients with serious medical conditions has not changed. We look forward to moving into permanent space when the renovation phase of the PJCP is completed.

FEBRUARY SAFETY TIP — Preventing Slips and Falls on the Ice

• Wear boots or slip-resistant shoes when you plan to walk on ice or slippery areas.
• Wear ice cleats.
• Use your arms to keep yourself stable while walking on ice.
• Be mindful of where you park and be careful getting in and out of your vehicle.
• Use handrails whenever possible and watch for wet areas when you enter buildings.
• Use a walking stick or cane, with a slip-resistant bottom, to help keep you balanced on the ice.
February 2020

**DR. PAUL JOHN CALRICARAQ PROJECT**

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

**PJCP CONSTRUCTION**

After a two-week project shutdown for the holidays, ASKW- Davis continued metal stud wall framing in the connector link between the Clinic and the Hospital, including the high ceiling soffit in the Gathering House. Fire stopping, electrical, plumbing and mechanical rough-in continued in the same areas. Drywall installation has begun at the high walls.

At the second floor, finishing touches, punch-list and warranty items were corrected after Dental, Nicotine Therapy, Physical Therapy, Diabetes/Wellness, Ultrasound and Behavioral Health departments moved into the clinic. X-ray and mammography equipment installation were certified in December and the Radiology department is now in full operation.

**HOSPITAL RENOVATION**

Demolition of the old hospital lab was completed and the space will be renovated for the new Central Sterile and Surgery departments. Mechanical, electrical and sprinkler rough-in is ongoing as well as completing wall framing in a few rooms.

The new Emergency Department and Behavioral Health renovation build-out continues with mechanical, electrical, sprinkler and communication trades all working. Drywall installation and paint prep continues. Installation of medical gas piping is on-going with rough-in inspections performed by YKHC. Ceiling grid systems started in late January.

The pneumatic tube system contractor completed the tubing rough-in through the interstitial space below the main floor, to install new stations in the Emergency Department and Surgery areas. This system will tie into the Clinic’s pneumatic tube delivery system.

In the hospital, a new electrical room is being built in the existing pharmacy space. A temporary dining area, and waiting area for Diagnostic Imaging will also use part of the pharmacy space no longer needed since the outpatient pharmacy has been relocated to the new Clinic.

**INSPECTIONS**

The welding inspector was on-site in early December to review structural upgrade cross-brace connections in the interstitial space below the hospital and at the first floor surgery renovation. Architect and Engineering team and the Commissioning Agent will continue a periodic presence on-site in January. YKHC is providing final above-ceiling inspections for fire stopping and fire proofing throughout the Hospital renovations and the Clinic.

For more information about PJCP, visit our website: [www.calricaraq.org](http://www.calricaraq.org)
February is American Heart Month, a great time to think about what it takes to keep your heart healthy!

Heart disease is preventable and Diabetes Prevention and Control (DP&C) would like to help you take the steps needed to prevent it. This includes eating healthy, exercising, and managing your stress.

To help raise awareness about American Heart Month, DP&C invites you to stop by our new space every Friday during the month of February from 11 a.m.–1 p.m. We will be offering samples of our heart healthy recipes and will have exercise classes that we encourage you to participate in. Please stop by if you are in Bethel and check out what we have to offer! We can be found on the second floor of the new facility in the Wellness Center.

If you are interested in more ways to help keep your heart healthy, or want to know more about our American Heart Month events, please give Diabetes Prevention and Control a call at 907-543-6133.

**RECIPE OF THE MONTH: SALMON CHOWDER**

*Adapted from Foods We Alaskans Enjoy by Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium*

**Ingredients:**
- 1 Onion, diced
- 4 Carrots, peeled and chopped
- 2 Medium Potatoes, chopped
- 4 Stalks of celery, thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 2 Pint Jars canned salmon - do not drain
- 1 can low sodium corn - do not drain; OR 1 c. corn + 1 c. water
- 4 c milk; OR 4 c. reconstituted dry milk*
- Salt & Pepper to taste
- Optional: 1 Tbsp. fresh dill, chopped; OR 1 tsp dried dill

*If lactose intolerant, use unsweetened rice, almond, or soy milk.

**Instructions**
1. Over medium heat, add 2 tablespoons oil to soup kettle.
2. Once oil is heated, add vegetables to the pan in this order: onions, celery, potatoes, carrots. Sauté for one minute after each addition; after adding carrots, sauté for another 2-3 minutes.
3. Place cover over kettle and “sweat” vegetables for 2 minutes.
4. Add enough water to cover vegetables; bring to a boil, and then simmer until vegetables are fork tender.
5. Add corn and milk; stir well.
6. Add salmon and heat through.
7. Add dill, salt, and pepper to taste.
8. Garnish with additional dill, if desired.
WAYS TO QUIT

Sigfrid Kaufman, from Kongiganak, has been tobacco free for seven years, and this is how he did it.

Sigfrid first entered the YKHC Tobacco Cessation program in 2005 when he began stringing together consecutive tobacco-free months. On his first quit attempt he was able to remain tobacco-free for eight months and recalls going back to smoking as a way to help him cope with anger.

Four years later, in 2009, Sigrid re-joined the program and experienced a similar situation. However, this time he stopped smoking for 12 months before he relapsed.

Over the next four years Sigrid grew increasingly frustrated over the high cost of tobacco. Even more concerning was how he felt—exhausted all the time. He knew that quitting tobacco had always made him feel better in the past, so for the third time, he joined YKHC’s Tobacco Cessation program.

It was this third time, starting January 2013, that Sigrid quit and stayed quit—seven years now. All three times he used Nicotine Replacement therapy (patches) to reduce nicotine cravings, and says the medication was very helpful. However, this last quit time he did something new; he focused on learning and practicing coping strategies for stress management. He said “stuff happens” and smoking was never going to change the event, but it would cost him money and hurt is health.

All his previous practice at living tobacco-free was finally paying off. Reasons why he wanted to live tobacco-free were more important than why he wanted to smoke. Reasons like feeling healthier and cleaner (house and body), and saving money. He proudly says that he purchased a four-wheeler from the money he saved in one year of not smoking. He also now has internet and satellite service, both things he couldn’t previously afford because of smoking.

Sigfrid quit tips: “Don’t give up!” Keep trying until you get the results you want. Focus on stress management strategies and use nicotine replacement therapy to reduce physical cravings.

SURGEON GENERAL REPORT: e-cigs don’t help you quit

The surgeon general’s report on tobacco cessation released on January 23, 2020, underscores the urgent need to help the 34 million Americans who smoke and the millions of teens using tobacco products, primarily e-cigarettes, to quit with evidence-based methods.

The report makes clear that there is inadequate evidence to conclude that e-cigarettes help smokers quit. Instead, a new generation of young e-cigarette users, most of whom were not smokers in the first place, is driving the rate of youth tobacco use to its highest level in decades, putting their current and future health at risk.

As the surgeon general stated, we know more about the science of quitting than ever before and must focus attention on the proven cessation methods that can, and will, help the adults and youth who want to quit. It’s the single most important thing we can do to improve the health of our nation.

YKHC’s Tobacco Prevention and Cessation program is committed to providing the best possible patient care utilizing effective quit methods proven to help people become tobacco-free.

For the full report please visit https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/tobacco/index.html
Keep Your Baby’s Teeth Healthy
We can stop Baby Bottle Tooth Decay

THIS SERIOUS DENTAL DISEASE CAN AFFECT YOUR CHILD’S TEETH AND ORAL HEALTH

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?
Babies are put down for a nap or at bedtime with a bottle containing ANYTHING but water!
Children are allowed to walk around and drink all day long from sippy cups containing ANYTHING but water!

JUICE
Babies and children do NOT need to drink juice to be healthy.
Juice, milk, formula, soda and other sweetened drinks all can contain sugar. The sugar coats the teeth and the inside of the mouth, allowing bacteria to grow and rot the teeth.

BABY BOTTLE TOOTH DECAY CAN CAUSE:
• Pain and Swelling
• Trouble Eating
• Crooked/Crowded Teeth
• Speech Problems
• Hard Time Concentrating in School

CARE
Bring your child to see a DHAT or dentist as soon as their first tooth comes in.

Dental Providers are currently stationed full time in Aniak, Bethel, Emmonak, St. Mary’s, Mountain Village, Hooper Bay and Toksook Bay.

WHEN USING A BOTTLE
• Use only milk, water or formula
• Clean teeth after baby is done eating

AT 1 YEAR OF AGE
• Wean baby off the bottle
• Use open top cups for milk at mealtime
• Only put water in sippy cups
CENSUS 101: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The 2020 Census is closer than you think!
Here’s a quick refresher of what it is and why it’s essential that everyone is counted.

Everyone counts.
The census counts every person living in the United States once, only once, and in the right place.

It’s about fair representation.
Every 10 years, the results of the census are used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets.

It’s in the Constitution.
The U.S. Constitution mandates that everyone in the country be counted every 10 years. The first census was in 1790.

It’s about $675 billion.
The distribution of more than $675 billion in federal funds, grants, and support to states, counties, and communities is based on census data.

It’s about redistricting.
After each decade’s census, state officials redraw the boundaries of the congressional and state legislative districts in their states to account for population shifts.

Taking part is your civic duty.
Completing the census is mandatory: it’s a way to participate in our democracy and say “I COUNT!”
DECEMBER 2019 HEALTH AIDE OF THE MONTH:
Lena Bell-Joe, CHP, Hooper Bay

Lena Bell-Joe has been serving her community as a Health Aide for more than 20 years. She currently works at the Hooper Bay Sub-Regional Clinic, which also serves the nearby villages of Scammon Bay and Chevak. Hooper Bay is the largest YK Delta community outside of Bethel.

Lena’s dedication as a primary care provider has helped transform the sub-regional clinic into a true primary care home setting. Patients often seek Lena out as their caregiver due to her dedication, loving spirit and her tenacity to get the job done.

She has been instrumental in training and mentoring the five other Health Aides who work at the Hooper Bay Sub-Regional Clinic.

Congratulations, Lena, on a job well done!

CARE CLOSER TO HOME: On the “Road” with Dr. Sean Davis
by Tucker Burnett, DMD, Dental Director

We at the YKHC Dental Department want you to have the most beautiful smile possible, and we’re continually looking for ways to improve our methods, develop our staff, and expand our outreach to allow you better access to oral health care.

A huge part of our focus is delivering high level dental care in our unique and beautiful villages. It takes a huge amount of physical and emotional investment to bring a dental clinic to remote villages, and the logistic barriers that present themselves on village trips make dentistry even more difficult.

The ever-changing challenges of village travel demand mental toughness, flexibility, and a sacrifice of comfort.

Over the last year, Dr. Sean Davis completed more than 70 days of village travel, providing care to patients all across the YK Delta.

Dr. Davis has received many patient compliments during that period for bringing a positive attitude and caring demeanor to each and every appointment.

Dr. Davis has made significant personal sacrifices in order to bring dentistry to our villages and for that we owe him a great deal of thanks.

Dr. Davis, thank you for your dedication to helping your patients improve their oral health and their lives. Thank you for putting your community first and going above and beyond the requirements in order to make a difference. Your work ethic and approach to life in general is an inspiration to those around you.
INTRODUCING HOSPITALITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT

A new department is being created to provide special services for patients. Due to the size of the new facility and the distance between one department and another, as well as the implementation of an integrated model of care, the need for a Hospitality Services Department became apparent.

Hospitality Services will employ Greeters to meet and escort patients to their appointments and help them find their way around. Department personnel will also be doing specimen transport for the lab, patient transport, patient observation as needed, and other services that previously were part of several different departments.

The functions of the new Hospitality Services department will continue to evolve as the hospital renovation continues. The department is expected to be fully staffed this month and staff training will continue through the Spring.

NOT BUYING IT ADVISORY GROUP

The State of Alaska’s Tobacco Prevention and Control Program is pleased to announce a youth media and development campaign for high school-aged students who are interested in learning about media arts, public communications and are concerned about public health.

The Not Buying It youth advisory group was created to prevent youth from using nicotine and to educate Alaska youth on the harms of all tobacco products (cigarettes, chew, iqik and e-cigarettes).

They began meeting last month via a webinar and call-in line and will meet regularly through June 2020.

There may be travel opportunities. Willing youth, with parent permission, could be filmed or photographed for the campaign.

For more information, contact Aiden Keller at YKHC’s Tobacco Prevention and Cessation program, TobaccoControlDeptMailList@ykhc.org or 907-543-6312.

EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER

Each quarter, Division VPs select and honor outstanding employees who have shown special dedication to the mission and values of YKHC. A recognition luncheon was held January 28. From left: Sahmi Pellumbi, Construction; Kris Blake, Construction; Krystle Penaflor, Optometry; Raymond King, Construction; Irvin Brink, Finance; Pat Harris, Construction; Johnny Tran, Construction; Valerie Joe, Finance; (back row) Kristina Asicksik, Construction; Alice Peter, Finance; Nick Thompson, Ambulatory Services; John Afcan, Construction. NOT PICTURED: Mark Blake, Construction; Vigan Djelli, Construction; Daryl Hoelscher, Construction; Bao Tran, Construction; Rudy Kairaiuak, Construction; William Hoffman, Construction; Shasta Anderson, Health Services/Laboratory.
WHO’S COMING TO A CLINIC NEAR YOU?

The following providers will be bringing healthcare services closer to your home in the coming months. To schedule an appointment time, contact your village health clinic.

Dates are subject to change dependent on weather or other scheduling issues.

FEBRUARY

**Dental**

**Hooper Bay:** Janette Ulak, DHAT and DA... 1/31-2/1

**Kotlik:** Bonnie Hunt, DHAT and DA... 2/3-7

**Aniak:** Conan Murat, DHAT and DA... 2/3-15

**Mountain Village:** Bernadette Charles, DHAT and DA... 2/3-7

**St. Mary’s:** Renee Cheemuk... 2/3-7

**Toksook Bay:** Allison Ayapan, DHAT and DA... 2/3-14

**St. Mary’s:** Bernadette Charles, DHAT and DA... 2/10-13

**St. Mary’s:** Renee Cheemuk, DHAT and 2 DAs... 2/11-14

**Emmonak:** Bonnie Hunt, DHAT and DA... 2/10-14

**Napaskiak:** Dr. Keith Brannen and 2 Dental assistants... 2/10-20

**Russian Mission:** Carrie Johnson, DHAT and Jared Thorson, DA-I... 2/17-21

**Marshall:** Renee Cheemuk, DHA... 2/17-21

**Mountain Village:** Bernadette Charles, DHAT and DA... 2/18-21

**Toksook Bay:** Allison Ayapan, DHAT and DA... 2/18-21

**Lower Kalskag:** Conan Murat DHAT and Dental Assistant... 2/10-24

**Diabetes**

**Emmonak:** Philip Johnson and Diabetes... 2/10-12

**Family Medicine:**

**Kotlik:** Deborah Coolidge, PA-c... 1/30-2/7

**Cheenak:** Blake Shahlaie PA-C... 1/31/21

**Grayling:** Marsha Dunkley, MD, possibly with a nurse... 2/3-6

**Russian Mission:** Rachael Youngblood and April Mattson... 2/3-6

**Kipnuk:** Blake Shahlaie, PA-C and L. Kat Robbins-Spann, FNP... 2/3-6

**Grayling:** Marsha Dunkley, FNP... 2/3-6

**Napaskiak:** Anne Komulainen, PA-C with nurse... 2/3-5

**Cheenak:** L. Kate Hewett, FNP... 2/4-6

**Tununak:** Matthew Willard, PA... 2/10-13

**Anvik:** Colleen Britt, FNP and April Mattson, CHP... 2/17-19

**Cheenak:** Sandra Beeman, PA-C... 2/18-20

**Upper Kalskag:** Colleen Britt, FNP and Agnes Nicoli, CHP... 2/24-28

**Nightmute:** Dr. Judy with a nurse... 2/24-26

**Cheenak:** Lisa Stout, CNM with nurse... 2/24-27

**Mountain Village:** Denise Tran, FNP... 2/25-27

MARCH

**Dental**

**Grayling:** Carrie Johnson, DHAT and Jared Thorson DA-I... 3/2-6

**Pilot Station:** Bernadette Charles, DHAT and DA... 3/2-6

**Atmautluak:** Dr. Keith Brannen and two dental assistants... 3/3-13

**Anvik:** Conan Murat, DHAT and Dental Assistant... 3/9-13

**Cheenak:** Allison Ayapan, DHAT and 1... 3/9-13

**Shageluk:** Carrie Johnson, DHAT and Jared Thorson, DA-I... 3/16-20

**Newtok:** Shawn Martin, DHAT and 1... 3/16-21

**Upper Kalskag:** Conan Murat DHAT and Dental Assistant... 3/23-27

**Pilot Station:** Renee Cheemuk, DHAT and Kristina Sheldon... 3/23-27

**Pilot Station:** Bernadette Charles, DHAT and Janelle Amos, DA... 3/30-4/3

**Crooked Creek:** Carrie Johnson, DHAT and Jared Thorson, DA-I... 3/30-4/3

**Family Medicine**

**Tululuk:** Kevin Krenek, FNP with Angela Waller, FNP, and one nurse... 3/2-5

**Cheenak:** Linda Hewett, FNP... 3/3-5

**Lower Kalskag:** Colleen Britt, FNP and Shelby Lee Simeon, CHA-II... 3/9-13

**Hooper Bay:** Dr. Wong... 3/9-12

**Napaskiak:** Dr. Robert Tyree... 3/9-12

**Cheenak:** Sandra Beeman, PA-C... 3/10-12

**Pilot Station:** Denise Tran, FNP... 3/10-12

**Shageluk / Anvik:** Rachael Youngblood... 3/16-19

**Cheenak:** Andrea Fahnas, FNP and 1... 3/16-19

**Akiak:** Susan Dunbar, WHNP, with nurse... 3/16-19

**Lower Kalskag:** Colleen Britt, FNP... 3/23-26

**Newtok:** Matthew Willard, PA... 3/23-26

APRIL

**Dental**

**Holy Cross:** Conan Murat DHAT and Dental Assistant... 4/6-10

**Marshall:** Renee Cheemuk, DHAT and Dental Assistant... 4/6-10

**Nightmute:** Shawn Martin, DHAT and 1... 4/6-10

**Sleetmute:** Carrie Johnson, DHAT and Jared Thorson, DA-I... 4/13-17

**Russian Mission:** Carrie Johnson, DHAT and Jared Thorson, DA-I... 4/27-5/1

**Cheenak:** Allison Ayapan, DHAT and 1... 4/27-5/1

**Family Medicine**

**Crooked Creek:** Colleen Britt, FNP and April Mattson, CHP... 4/6-9

**Kipnuk:** Anne Komulainen, PA-C with nurse... 4/6-9

**Pilot Station:** Vicki Lear, PA-C... 4/6-9

**Atmautluak:** Joan Daniels, FNP with nurse... 4/13-16

**Sleetmute:** Colleen Britt, FNP... 4/13-16

**Stony River:** Colleen Britt, FNP... 4/13-16

**Grayling:** Rachael Youngblood... 4/20-23

**Holy Cross:** Rachael Youngblood... 4/20-23

**Tunutuluk:** Tom Miller, FNP, with nurse... 4/20-23

**Upper Kalskag:** Colleen Britt, FNP... 4/27-30

**Cheenak:** Sandra Beeman, PA-C... 4/28-30