In an effort to prepare for the arrival of COVID-19 in the YK Delta, during a global shortage of personal protective equipment (PPE), staff in YKHC’s dental clinic used sterile wrap (a material used to wrap sterile instruments) to sew masks that can be used by our providers in patient-care environments. Above: Dental Assistants Chelsea Hoover and Rebecca Flynn. Left: Dental Assistant Kara Stevens, Dental Health Aide Therapist Katherine Levi, and Dental Assistant Chasity Jones.

If you are concerned about new onset of any one of the following symptoms, do not go to your village clinic or the Emergency Room in Bethel. Instead, call your local clinic or, in Bethel, call 543-6949.
Symptoms include: cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, chills, diminished sense of taste or smell, diarrhea, fatigue, fever, headache, muscle/joint aches, nausea, runny nose, sore throat, or sputum production.
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 907-543-6039. E-mail: publicrelations@ykhc.org

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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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Leadership Update

Furlough & Layoff Announcement

In early April, I reported to YKHC staff the low customer census due to the COVID-19 pandemic. YKHC experienced over a 70 percent decline in daily census at the hospital for the first week of April. This included a 60 percent decrease in outpatient visits and a 70 percent decrease in Emergency Department visits.

Compounding this situation was the State of Alaska’s cancellation of non-urgent Medicaid travel from our 50 villages to the sub-regional clinics or the Bethel hospital. Also, the region’s largest airline, RAVN, went out of business and may or may not restructure.

Although YKHC received several weeks’ worth of CARES Act funds designated for the Indian Health Service and community health center facilities, those funds are strictly for COVID-19 expenses and we are unable to use them for anything else.

We also expect to receive additional CARES Act funds. While we expect Governor Mike Dunleavy to announce that non-urgent Medicaid travel will resume soon, we do not expect customer census to return to what it was before COVID-19 until a vaccine is available. The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated our monthly financials.

YKHC has experienced a slight increase in our outpatient customer census, but our hospital daily census is still down approximately 50 percent and our village visits are also down 20 percent. This is approximately a $5-8 million loss per month to YKHC. Compared to other rural health systems with over a $200 million annual budget, YKHC is in a strong financial position, but we cannot sustain large monthly losses over a long period of time. YKHC is similar to many other businesses—we are dependent on having customers to serve.

I am disappointed to announce, based on our low customer census and financial projections, that YKHC is forced to furlough and reduce our workforce by 300 employees.

Notifications of affected employees began on Wednesday, April 29, and were completed by Friday, May 8. This will largely affect non-providers because we need to maintain a strong provider workforce in the event we encounter a surge of COVID-19 cases.

This furlough will be in effect for four weeks. If YKHC’s customer census increases during that time, we may be able to bring some furloughed employees back into active employment but the remainder will be laid off after four weeks. We will continue to monitor our customer census over the next several months, and if our census continues to remain low, we will have additional layoffs.

I know this is devastating news, but I want to be transparent about the difficult decisions YKHC has made and will be making in the coming weeks. Many other Alaska hospitals and clinics are experiencing the same financial difficulties due to COVID-19, and several have already furloughed and reduced staff for the same reasons.

According to Becker’s Hospital Review in late April, more than 200 hospitals across the nation have announced major furloughs and layoffs in the last couple of months. These numbers continue to climb.

YKHC will advocate for the Congressional delegation to extend unemployment insurance benefits to all affected workers for the entire duration of COVID-19.

Quyana to all YKHC employees for your hard work and tireless service. I am proud of the team YKHC has become. I assure you that YKHC will get through this difficult time and we will rebuild again in the future.

Sincerely,

Dan Winkelman, President & CEO
SAFETY TIP: Family Emergency Plan

The National Safety Council recommends every family have an emergency plan in place in the event of a natural disaster or another catastrophic event. Spring is a great time to review that plan with family members.

Have home, car and boat emergency kits that include—

- one gallon of water per day for each person
- at least a three-day supply of food
- fire starter kit and candles
- flashlight
- batteries
- first aid kit
- filtered masks
- plastic sheeting
- duct tape
- medicines

Have communications plan to outline how your family members will contact one another and where to meet if it’s safe to go outside. Also, a shelter-in-place plan if outside air is contaminated and a getaway plan including various routes and destinations in different directions.

It’s also a good idea to keep family and emergency phone numbers, including your auto insurance provider and a towing company, in your phone.

Source: National Safety Council

NATIONAL NURSES WEEK PRAISES NURSES—ESPECIALLY THIS YEAR

by Peter W. Roth, DNP, Chief Nurse Executive

National Nurses Week begins each year on May 6 and ends on May 12, Florence Nightingale’s birthday. These permanent dates enhance planning and position National Nurses Week as an established recognition event.

As of 1998, May 8 was designated as National Student Nurses Day, to be celebrated annually. And as of 2003, National School Nurse Day is celebrated on the Wednesday within National Nurses Week (May 6-12) each year.

This year the nursing leadership has decided to celebrate National Nurses Week once the COVID-19 crisis is over. This decision was not easy to make, but it was the right decision. So many lives have been affected by this horrible virus, including many healthcare providers and nurses. YKHC has ordered small tokens of appreciation and as soon as they arrive they will be presented to our nurses.

I am extremely proud of all of the nurses that have remained focused on and dedicated to the mission of YKHC and have continued to give it “their all” while providing services and care to our customers.

The national shortage of supplies and equipment have played an integral role in outcomes for many patients throughout our country. However, because of the stringent steps we have taken here in southwest Alaska and the teamwork our nurses have displayed to beat the odds, we continue to provide superb care.

To all our nurses, thank you for all that you do!
ALASKANS MUST UNITE AND DEMAND A NATIONALLY COORDINATED COVID-19 RESPONSE

by Dan Winkelman, President & CEO

This column was first published in Anchorage Daily News, April 16, 2020, and later edited.

After surviving the 1900 influenza and 1904 diphtheria epidemics that decimated his Doogh Hit’an people in Dishkaket, Alaska, a 14 year old boy named Charlie Cikal walked and paddled a canoe down the Innoko river over 300 river miles to a family that took him in. That is Alaska resolve.

Even though the Doogh Hit’an and Deg Hit’an people of the Innoko River were some of the last groups of Alaska Natives to make contact with non-natives, major disease outbreaks still occurred, even in these very isolated villages. Like American miners and Russian traders, Doogh Hit’an, were also great travelers and traders with other tribal peoples. Today, as in earlier times, all Alaskans are more interconnected than we think.

We Alaskans like to think that we are independent and have the steadfast resolve and ability to unite as Alaskans to accomplish any challenge that lies before us. Its been over 70 years since Alaskans were forced to unite as Americans to defeat an enemy that wanted to kill us and displace our democracy with an authoritarian dictatorship. Indeed, President Franklin Roosevelt wrote of this resolve and unity in our fourth year of WWII. In his last message to the American people, he eloquently wrote,

Let me assure you that my hand is the steadier for the work that is to be done, that I move more firmly into the task, knowing that you—millions and millions of you—are joined with me in the resolve to make this work endure.

Most Americans agree that a President’s greatest responsibility is to protect and unite them. On January 22, President Donald Trump said, “We have it under control, it’s ah, going to be just fine.” On February 10, he said, “Looks like by April, you know in theory when it gets a little warmer it miraculously goes away.” On February 28, he said “Within a couple of days it’s going to be down close to zero.” On a March 16 conference call with Governors, he said, “Respirators, ventilators, all of the equipment—try getting it yourselves.”

If he wants to be a wartime President, as he indicated, then he must act like a wartime President. He must lead a coordinated national response to kill today’s enemy, the coronavirus. He must use the Defense Production Act to the fullest extent to force not only GM and 3M, but an entire garment industry that no longer needs to produce yesterday’s fashions, to instead produce today’s fashions—personal protective equipment. PPE like N95 masks, gowns, shields and gloves for healthcare workers who have become our soldiers on the front lines.

We are thankful for Governor Mike Dunleavy’s nonessential travel ban, activation of the National Guard and numerous isolation and mitigation tactics his team has implemented to protect all Alaskans. As a national discussion begins about reopening society, let there be no mistake that we will need to continue and substantially strengthen our existing strategies and develop new ones as we learn more about this novel virus.

Most medical experts agree, reopening is dependent upon the coronavirus itself. Implementing pervasive and aggressive public health strategies are crucial as seen by the initial successes of Hong Kong and Singapore. Wide spread, rapid testing will need to become available for Alaskans and for all travelers to Alaska. Since we cannot test everyone, scaled health screenings of all moderate and high risk individuals will also be needed. Additionally, we must continue aggressive contact tracing and isolation for symptomatic/positive patients and all known contacts; continue social distancing; and continue good personal hygiene, including universal masking. Asian countries have been using widespread, rapid testing and cell phone tracing with success, both of which are not available here.

During the epidemics over 100 years ago and during WWII more than 70 years ago, Alaskans and all other Americans resolved to unite in order to defeat the enemy.

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lines, our healthcare workers. We also must unite to support
the governor and Congressional delegation to pressure the
President to coordinate a plan for large medical laboratories.
Any large laboratory that is currently not developing a coro-
navirus vaccine, must immediately join with others to de-
velop wide spread, rapid tests to detect the virus and its anti-
bodies on a scale never seen before.

Instead of a coordinated national approach with defined
strategies and goal oriented tactics that are clearly commu-
nicated to the American people, we have a piecemeal ap-
proach amongst the 50 States. Four months after coronavi-
rus first arrived in the US, there is still no wide spread, rapid
testing.

The Bethel hospital, in a region of 50 villages with 30,000
people, recently obtained four rapid testers with four more
being shipped from the national stockpile. Each rapid tester
comes with only 24 to 48 testing cartridges. Public and pri-
ivate vendors cannot tell us when more testing cartridges will
become available.

No one at the White House has been able to communicate
when wide spread, rapid testing will become available for
millions of Americans, nor when it will start, who will con-
duct it, or pay for it. A nationally coordinated effort could
shave months off of nonessential travel bans, reduce the
size of second and possibly third waves that medical experts
agree accompanied all known past pandemics and therefore,
save lives without overwhelming our medical capacity. That
would allow us to get back to work sooner rather than later.

Lastly, we the people must lead.
Our Alaska resolve and interconnectedness existed long be-
fore any of us here today. It was evident during WWII when
in the Aleutian Campaign my Grandpa Aden Winkelman and
others united regardless of party and defeated the enemy. It
was evident in the early 1900’s when influenza and diphthe-
ria ran rampant throughout Alaska and wiped out my rel-
atives in Dishkaket. Although it forced my other Grandpa
Charlie Cikal to walk and paddle a canoe alone from his deci-
mated village, Charlie Cikal-Dementi found a new home and
a new last name from his adopted family, the Dementi’s. Cri-
sis demands leadership, crisis demands unity and crisis de-
mands resolve—now.

For the first time since WWII, we Alaskans must unite, re-
gardless of party affiliation, with a steadfast resolve to de-
mand our President to lead a coordinated national response
using every power available and to the fullest extent possible.
To my Republican, Democrat and independent friends who
privately complain to me about whether the travel bans are
necessary, how it is destroying our economy, infringing on
our liberties and ending our jobs. Act now. All of us Alaskans
should email or call our elected leaders to let them know that
we wholeheartedly support them to pressure the President to
lead. Most importantly, the President must coordinate a na-
tional response to produce hundreds of millions of PPE; and
implement hundreds of millions of wide spread, rapid tests
for the virus and its antibodies by using the full powers of
the Defense Production Act.

Protect Yourself and Others From COVID-19

Know How it Spreads
• The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus
• The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person
• Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet)

Clean Your Hands Often
• Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
• If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry

Avoid Close Contact
• Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
• Put distance between yourself and other people if COVID-19 is spreading in your community. This is especially important for people who are at higher risk of getting very sick.
May 2020

DR. PAUL JOHN CALRICARQAQ PROJECT

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

DESIGN

The Bettisworth North Architects and Planners/ZGF Design Team has completed the 35% Schematic Design for the new Emergency Department entrance. The team is also working on the concept design for the West Wing relocation and code update.

PJCP CONSTRUCTION

Work in the connector link between the Clinic and the Hospital continues. The connector area includes the Gathering House, Gift Shop, Patient Financial/Travel and Phase 2 of the Outpatient Pharmacy.

Drywall installation continues at a few remaining walls. Painting of walls started in early March. Above-ceiling work continues for the fire alarm, building HVAC automation system wiring, plumbing and ductwork insulation, and final firestopping treatments. Sprinkler trim is occurring as ceiling areas are completed. Ceiling grid systems outside of the Gathering House will begin in March.

HOSPITAL RENOVATION

The new Emergency Department and Behavioral Health Decision Unit renovation continues. Ceiling grid installation that began in February allowed for architect and engineer (A/E) above-ceiling inspections. Contractors are correcting punchlist items with plans to set ceiling tiles prior to flooring installation. Painting of walls and door frames is substantially complete at these areas.

Preparation of the concrete floors continued with flooring installation. Fire alarm wiring and devices are being installed; other low voltage cabling is being pulled and terminated.

In the Surgery and Central Sterile areas, wall framing is nearly complete. Selective minor demolition continues. Plumbing, mechanical, electrical and insulation continues in above-ceiling spaces. Medical gas and electrical rough in continues at surgery recovery rooms. Drywall installation has started in parts of this area. Demolition of part of the hospital boiler room is finishing up. This area will become the dining area for the cafeteria and connect directly to the Gathering House.

The demolition of air handling and electrical equipment in an existing roof top penthouse is done and ready for the start of plumbing for medical air, vacuum, and instrument air compressors and piping.

YKHC’s Construction and Capital Projects team have coordinated the temporary relocation of all of the departments vacating the West Wing and currently WIC and the Nursing Education departments have completed their moves.

INSPECTIONS

A/E team members were on-site in early March for site observations and above-ceiling inspections of the Emergency Department and Behavioral Health Decision Unit. Medical gas piping is ongoing at the operating and recovery rooms, with rough-in observations made by YKHC and overseen by a third-party medical gas certification contractor. YKHC is providing final above-ceiling inspections for fire stopping and fireproofing throughout the Hospital renovations and the Clinic, and full inspections for architectural, electrical and mechanical as needed when the A/E is not available for small areas.

Full moon rises above PJCP Clinic and Hospital.

Installation of “Yup’ik Eye of Awareness” sculpture in clinic entrance.
Please note: In-home telehealth is new at YKHC. While we have worked out as many problems as possible, there still may be small hiccups as we roll out this new way of providing care. Thank you for your patience as we improve this process to ensure you have access to the care you need!

Medical Appointments Available via Telehealth

What is Telehealth?
Customers can receive medical care in the privacy of their homes via a secure video platform or a one-on-one phone call with a physician or other medical provider.

Almost all YKHC outpatient medical appointments are available, including:
- Family planning appointments (birth control)
- Refills for chronic medications
- Visits for shoulder, back and knee pain
- Visits for common cold symptoms
- Prenatal appointments (where no sonogram is needed)

How to Make a Telehealth Appointment

1. Contact YKHC Outpatient Scheduling at 543-6442 to schedule your appointment.
2. Next, our technology team will contact you and do a “Tech Check” with you to ensure you have everything you need for your appointment.
3. On the day of your appointment, YKHC Registration will call you to register you in our system for your appointment.
4. Your provider will then contact you through your appointment method — either phone or video — and see you for your medical issue.

For more information, visit: [www.ykhc.org/telehealth](http://www.ykhc.org/telehealth)
BEHAVIORAL TELEHEALTH BRINGS SERVICES INTO YOUR HOME

In addition to our outpatient clinics, Behavioral Health has also expanded its video and telehealth services to ensure individuals in our region are able to access care. This means that you are now able to receive services in your own home.

If you or someone you know is interested in meeting with a behavioral health provider, we are here to assist you.

Behavioral Health is using a system called Doxy.me to provide services directly to individuals in their own home without needing to go to a clinic. This system allows providers to make video calls to individuals who have access to a phone that has a Wi-Fi connection or 3G capability.

Do not worry if you do not have a phone that can utilize this new video application. Behavioral Health can make other accommodations to assist you if needed.

To utilize this new expansion of services, appointments continue to be made in same fashion as they always have. To schedule a telehealth appointment with YKHC Behavioral Health, call 543-6100.

When you contact Behavioral Health simply let them know you are interested in the telehealth option and your visit will be set up to utilize this service. When you schedule your appointment, please let the scheduler know if you have a phone that has Wi-Fi or 3G capability.

Once an appointment is made, there are a few things that you can expect to happen prior to, and on the day of your scheduled appointment. The day before your appointment, you will get a reminder call, text, or email, stating you have an appointment at a specific time.

On the day of your appointment, a provider will contact you and create a link for you to be able to log in and connect with them via video connection.

If at any time before, during, or after your appointment you need additional help or cannot connect with your provider, please contact 543-6100 and they will be able to get you in touch with your provider.

If you or anyone you know just needs some emotional support, we have an emotional support line that is available Monday – Friday 8am to 5pm. To connect with the emotional support line, please call 543-6272.

If you or anyone you know is experiencing suicidal ideation, psychiatric decompensation, or any other psychiatric emergency please contact our Emergency Services team 543-6499.

PHARMACY: Automated Refill Lines and Prescriptions by Mail

While we continue to combat the current COVID-19 outbreak, pharmacy would like to remind all that automated refill lines are available. Here is how that process works:

When a patient calls, they can request a refill by entering the prescription number from a prescription label. The prescription number is a 7 digit number located in the bottom left corner of the label, just below the name of the medication.

When callers type in the prescription number, the system will be able to provide immediate feedback about whether the prescription can be filled. If the prescription has refills and is ok to fill, the system will let callers know that the prescription is refillable and that the pharmacy staff will get it ready. If a prescription is too soon to fill, the system will let the caller know how many days they should wait before requesting it again. If a prescription doesn’t have any more refills, or is expired, the system will let the caller know that the pharmacy will contact their provider to get additional refills authorized.

After entering the prescription number and receiving information about whether it can be filled or not, the caller has the ability to say whether they want to pick the prescription up at the pharmacy, or if they want to have it mailed. This process can be completed over the phone with an operator, or through the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system.

Under the current circumstances, we heavily recommend patients having their medication mailed to them, whether or not they live in a village or Bethel.
WHAT IS STRESS?

To manage stress you should know what stress is.

Stress is when you’re in a hurry for lunch but the line is very long at the store, a worrisome illness, an argument with your partner, a job turning sour. It’s the need to care for your ailing parent and a pile of unpaid bills.

Stress has many faces; it creeps into our lives from different directions. No matter what causes it, stress puts the body and mind on edge. It floods the body with stress hormones. The heart pounds, muscles tense, breathing quickens and the stomach churns.

The body’s response to stress was instilled in our prehistory. Known as the “fight-or-flight” response, it has helped humans survive threats like animal attacks, fires, floods, and conflict with other humans. Today, those kinds of dangers aren’t the primary things that trigger the stress response. Any situation you perceive as threatening, or which requires you to adjust to change, can set it off. And that may spell trouble.

Chronic stress can lead to high blood pressure and heart disease. It can weaken the immune system, increasing susceptibility to colds and other infections. It can contribute to asthma, digestive disorders, cancer, and other health problems. New research even supports the notion that high levels of stress somehow speed up the aging process. (studies done by Harvard.)

Though stress is inevitable, you can control your body’s response to it. Exercise, meditation, triggering the relaxation response, and mindfulness are great stress relievers.

Distress can make you feel overwhelmed because your resources (physical, mental, emotional) are inadequate to meet the demands you’re facing.

Positive Stress or Eustress

What is eustress? If the idea of positive stress is new to you, you’re not alone. Most of us think all stress is related to negative experiences and is not a positive thing. But Eustress is just that – positive stress. Exciting or stressful events cause a chemical response in the body.

Eustress is usually a product of nerves, which can be brought on when faced with fun challenges. This is important because, without eustress, our well-being can suffer.

Eustress helps us stay motivated, work towards goals, and feel good about life.

Working and living outside our comfort zone is a good thing. It’s when we feel overwhelmed that stress can turn negative. That’s what makes eustress such an important part of our overall health.
EXERCISE AT HOME TO STAY FIT DURING ISOLATION

Regular exercise has the ability to improve our entire body, both mentally and physically.

By Miles Rice

Research has shown that not only will exercise help you lose weight, gain muscle, and decrease blood pressure, but it can also decrease depression, anxiety and improve heart health.

With unpredictable weather outside and the CDC’s recommendation to stay inside due to COVID-19, it might seem hard to stay active. Luckily there are ways to maintain a good level of fitness while indoors.

Here is a two times a week workout that can be repeated for an entire month! Included are simple exercises and stretches that can be done while waiting for the next episode of Stranger Things to load.

If you are looking for a more challenging plan, feel free to email me and I’ll be happy to send it to you.
miles_rice@ykhc.org.

WARMUP

**Overhead Triceps Stretch**

Hold the stretch for 15 seconds. Start with one arm, reach up in the air, then try to touch you opposite shoulder. Then place the other arm on the elbow and gently pull down.

**Hamstring Stretch**

Place both feet together and reach down to touch your toes. It is ok if you cannot reach, we just want to feel a nice stretch in the back of the legs.

**Quad Stretch**

While bracing on a wall or chair, stand on leg and pull your ankle to bottom.

**Side Bends**

Stand with your arms by your side and gently bend to one side. Breathe during the bend in order to get a deeper stretch. When done, gently come back to the standing position and repeat to the other side.

**Shoulder Shrugs**

While keeping your arms by your side, raise your shoulders as high as they can go. Then gently lower them to their normal resting spots.

**Neck Stretch**

Roll your head in a circular motion, nice and smooth. Five rolls one direction then switch it up.

**Arm Circles**

Small and Large circles. Remember to go both directions.

RESISTANCE

**Chair Squats**

Using a chair, stand and sit without allowing your back to touch the back of the chair.

**Stationary lunges**

While standing, take a large step forward and plant your foot with the toes pointing straight. Slowly lower your upper body towards the floor, stopping before the knee hits the ground. Then raise your body back to the starting position. Next step the lunge foot back to the normal standing position. Only go as low as you can. And if needed brace yourself with a solid object, like a couch or wall.

**Front Shoulder Raises**

Start with your arms by your side and raise them out in front of you. Then lower them back down to your side. For added resistance feel free to grab some cans, pots or pans and use them as weights.

**Wall Push Ups**

Find a solid wall and stand roughly a two arms distance away. Then place your arms on the wall and begin to do push-ups. To increase the difficulty, back up further from the wall or do traditional pushups on the ground. 15 wall pushups or 10 normal pushups.

**Calf Raises**

While standing, raise up your heels. You should feel a tightness in calf then return your heels back to their normal resting position. Can also be done while sitting.

Sources


Mackenzie, B. Static Stretching Exercises; 1998


SMOKERS ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO COVID-19

YKHC Tobacco Prevention and Cessation would like to share information regarding the novel coronavirus, commonly referred to as COVID-19.

What is currently known about this new virus is that it attacks the lungs. An illness that weakens the lungs puts individuals who smoke tobacco, marijuana and e-cigarettes at greater risk for serious infection.

The harmful impact on the lungs from smoking is well-documented. There is conclusive evidence that smoking increases the risk for respiratory infections, weakens the immune system and can cause a number of chronic health conditions, like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart disease and diabetes. In addition, there is a growing body of evidence that e-cigarettes can harm lung health. These factors suggest that individuals who smoke tobacco, marijuana and e-cigarettes are at greater risk when confronted with the coronavirus.

According to Dr. Jerome Adams, the U.S. Surgeon General, among the COVID-19 cases in New York City, “53 percent were young people between the ages of 18 and 49.” It is believed this could be a result of the higher proportion of people who use e-cigarettes, who may now be “more at risk than previously thought.”

While teens or young adults who use e-cigarettes may be unaware of damage caused to their lung tissue, inhaling any kind of substance irritates and inflames lung tissue. This means users may be more likely to suffer from complications of COVID-19 as well as being more susceptible to a myriad of lung diseases.

There has never been a better time for smokers and anyone using any form of tobacco – including e-cigarettes, chewing tobacco and iqmik – to quit. Quitting will help protect the overall health and wellness of the individual.

YKHC is working hard to prevent and reduce the use of all tobacco products, in an effort to create the first tobacco-free generation. Overcoming nicotine addiction is already difficult. New stressors and anxiety may be a trigger, but we have resources to help.

If you are interested in receiving support to stop using tobacco products, or looking for guidance on how to assist someone else, we are here to help. YKHC Tobacco Prevention and Cessation uses FDA approved methods to assist people interested in gaining freedom from nicotine dependence.

Our team serves the YK Delta, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. We can be reached at 907-543-6312 or 1-800-473-3321 extension 6312, or by email at nicotinecontrol@ykhc.org.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Salmon Patties

Ingredients
- Salmon fillet, skin and bones removed
- 1/2 medium sized onion chopped or minced
- 1/4 cup breadcrumbs or chopped toasted bread
- 2 tablespoons mustard
- 1 egg

Preparation
1. Preheat oven to 375°F.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large bowl.
3. Shape salmon mixture into 4 patties.
4. Place patties on greased baking sheet, let cook in the oven for 15-20 minutes.
RESPECT THE RIVER: Breakup Safety Awareness

It’s that time of the year again, the rivers are breaking up here in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta!

And while many are itching to get out on the river after a long winter, the YKHC Injury Prevention program recommends that you do not travel on the river by snowmachine or 4-wheeler during breakup and wait until the river is completely clear before traveling by boat.

May is National Water Safety Month and we want to share some tips on staying safe around the water.

Unfortunately, drowning from water related activities causes a high number of Alaskan deaths each year, and it is a leading cause of death in our region. While waiting for the river to breakup you can begin to plan your safe summer trips.

When on, in, or around water, it is recommended that everyone wear a personal flotation device (PFD). Good supervision and wearing a correctly fitted PFD when near rivers or lakes are a great way to prevent drowning for all ages. In Alaska, all children under the age of 13 must wear a PFD while in a boat. Accidents can happen at any time and being prepared with a PFD can help a simple spill from becoming fatal.

Preparation before every river trip can be the difference between a fun-filled time or a preventable tragedy. Here are some ways to make sure you are prepared for your river trips:

- Check weather reports and search and rescue river warnings. Reschedule your travel if conditions are not safe
- Pack extra warm clothes in a dry bag, extra food, and first aid gear in case of an unforeseen delay or accident
- Double-check that you have all needed equipment and that it is secured in the boat
- Share your itinerary with a responsible family member or friend so they can alert search and rescue if you do not return on time

If you’d like to learn more to help prepare for this summer’s trips or purchase a PFD, contact the YKHC Injury Prevention Program at 1-800-478-6599.

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2020 CENSUS: YOUR RESPONSE MATTERS. BE COUNTED!

Health clinics, fire departments, schools, even roads and highways—the census can shape many different aspects of your community.

Census results help determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year.

It’s mandated by the U.S. Constitution in Article 1, Section 2. The U.S. has counted its population every 10 years since 1790.

The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Billions of dollars in federal funding for all kinds of services and resources are based on census data.
FEBRUARY 2020 HEALTH AIDES OF THE MONTH:
Clarissa Gilila, CHP and Sherileen Frank, CHA III

Both Clarissa and Sherileen are health aides from the village of Tuntutuliak. Health aides work tirelessly day and night to take care of people in their communities, as well as closer communities that are in need.

From small to big emergencies, the health aides are the first responders that the community turns to. We want to thank them for responding to an emergency that occurred near the village of Tuntutuliak.

Not knowing the circumstance of the emergency, or what was ahead of them, they got ready and did their part as health care providers. Thank you for caring for your communities and for the people in the YK Delta! You both are amazing Healthcare Providers!

SMILE! MAY IS ORAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH!
by Dr. Sean Davis, YKHC Dental

It’s easy to keep your smile healthy and clean. Brushing and flossing are especially important during social distancing, because it might be hard to get in to see your dentist. Brushing and flossing are essential for a healthy mouth and it’s easy to do at home. Fluoride toothpaste is best, but even if you don’t have any at home or in the store you can brush your teeth without them to help your teeth stay squeaky clean. Need a toothbrush? Ask your Health Aide!

Here are a couple of fun ways to keep your mouth healthy

Make Brushing or Flossing TikTok or Snapchat Vids
Share videos with your friends of you brushing. Pick your favorite song and dance along while you brush. It takes about two to three minutes to brush your teeth well, so brushing for the entire song will give you time to hit all those spots you might otherwise miss. See if you can get a streak going with your friends and see how many days in a row you can keep it up.

Start a tooth brushing calendar
If you don’t have a calendar at home, you can draw one or use an app. Every day, after you brush your teeth, put a sticker or draw a smiley face on the calendar. Everyone in the family can have their own shape or color. This makes it easy for Mom and Dad to keep track of who’s brushing and lets kids compete for fun. At the end of the week, count up how many times you brushed. Then, try to beat your record the next week! If you do, reward yourself or your kids with a special meal or trip outside (with appropriate social distance). Try to build up to two times every day or 14 times a week. Compete with your friends and family and see who can brush the most!

Keep brushing and flossing and let that smile shine on!

If you have any great ideas to keep your mouth fresh and clean, send them to Sean_Davis@YKHC.org and we’ll try to put them in another article.

EUSTRESS, from page 10

Eustress produces positive feelings of excitement, fulfillment, meaning, satisfaction, and well-being. Eustress is good because you feel confident, adequate, and stimulated by the challenge you experience from the stressor.

Eustress is all about sufficiently challenging yourself without expending all your resources. This type of stress empowers you to grow in three areas:

Emotionally, eustress can result in positive feelings of contentment, inspiration, motivation, and flow. Psychologically, eustress helps to build our self-efficacy, autonomy, and resilience. Physically, eustress helps us build our body (E.G., through completing a challenging workout).
RSV SURVEILLANCE STUDY UPDATE

What is RSV SuNA?

The RSV SuNA study is enrolling children and pregnant women hospitalized with respiratory illness at ANMC and YKDRH to test for RSV and other viruses. **We are adding COVID testing.**

So far we have enrolled 164 children and five pregnant women.

**Qyana Cakneg!** Thank you to the patients and parents who have joined the study. We are mailing you the test results.

We started in November, 2019. The graph shows nose swab study test results through 3/2/2020 and respiratory hospitalizations through 4/10/2020.

- The number of respiratory hospitalizations (purple line) peaked in February and has **dramatically decreased since social distancing directives.**
- YK Delta had a severe RSV season. Nearly half of study tests have been positive for RSV.
- Flu peaked in January. Over one-fourth of tests were positive for flu.

How are we responding to COVID?

- CDC has asked us to continue to enroll past the RSV Season and is adding COVID testing!
- We are changing the way we do the study. We will do phone consents and use nose swabs obtained in the ER. This will limit our direct contact with patients/parents. This will also reduce our use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

STAFF MOVES

Ray Watson, 30 years at YKHC

Raymond Watson, long time member of the Bethel community, is the Director of the Behavioral Health Chemical Dependency Treatment Facility at Ayagnirvik Healing Center. Raymond has now worked 30 years for YKHC.

We are grateful for a good friend and supervisor who has been encouraging, correcting, empowering, and firm with his employees, clients and boundaries. Raymond is patient, understanding, he listens, and puts a lot of hard work into what he does to keep and maintain his example of success in the lives of people in recovery.

Raymond takes time to sit and visit/counsel with the clients. He treats them with respect and gets to know them each. Raymond builds relationships with his employees and works along side them giving and receiving respect.

Due to this investment YKHC Celebrates Raymond Watson, CDCS for his 30 years of Service to the Community of Bethel, Alaska and Surrounding Villages.

Diagnostic Imaging Passes American College of Radiology Accreditation

The Diagnostic Imaging Department is thrilled to announce that our new mammography equipment (on the second floor of the PJCP building) has completed and passed the American College of Radiology (ACR) accreditation process.

Both our mammography units are now fully accredited with the ACR. A huge thank you to our mammographer, Karen Schooler, for her continued commitment to the women of the delta and excellence in breast imaging!

—Rebecca Sanders, Manager, Diagnostic Imaging
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.

May

**Dental**

- **Emmonak**: Ruby Okitkun, DHAT + DA... 5/18-22
- **Hooper Bay**: Janette Ulak, DHAT + DA... 5/18-22
- **Marshall**: Bernadette Charles, DHAT + DA... 5/18-22
- **St. Marys**: Renee Cheemuk, DHAT + DA... 5/18-22
- **Toksook Bay**: Allison Ayapan, DHAT + DA... 5/18-22
- **Alakanuk**: Bonnie Hunt DHAT + DA... 5/18-22

**Family Medicine**

- **Chuathbaluk**: Blake Shahlaie, PA-C... 4/23-5/12
- **Crooked Creek**: Farah Sears, FNP... 4/27-5/6
- **Sleetmute**: Colette Whelan, FNP... 5/2-5/6
- **Nightmute**: Katherine Platts, FNP... 5/4-8
- **Chuathbaluk**: L. Kat Robbins-Spann, FNP... 5/4-13
- **Quinhagak**: Dr. Bellville... 5/4-7
- **Crooked Creek**: Colleen Britt... 5/4-7
- **Kwethluk**: Angela Waller, FNP, with nurse... 5/4-7
- **Scammon Bay**: Dr. Tyree with nurse and resident... 5/4-7

**June**

**Dental**

- **Grayling**: Carrie Johnson DHAT & Jared Thorson DA-I... 6/1-5

**Family Medicine**

- **Chevak**: Linda Hewett, FNP... 6/2-4
- **Chuathbaluk**: Rachael Youngblood... 6/8-10
- **Newtok**: Shawn Martin, DHAT + 1... 6/22-26

**July**

**Dental**

- **Nightmute**: Shawn Martin, DHAT + 1... 7/13-17
- **Lime Village**: Conan Murat DHAT & Dental Assistant... 7/20-24

**Family Medicine**

- **Upper Kalskag**: Colleen Britt... 7/13-16
- **Russian Mission**: Colleen Britt, FNP... 7/20-24
- **Chevak**: Sandra Beeman, PA-C... 7/28-30