



# REPORT TO THE PEOPLE 2021



Yukon-Kuskokwim  
HEALTH CORPORATION





COVER PHOTO: Connor Berlin, son of Health Aide Rhonda Jackson, in front of the Kwethluk River during spring break up.

**Mission**

Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health

**Vision**

Through Native Self-Determination and Culturally Relevant Health Systems, We Strive to be The Healthiest People.

**Values**

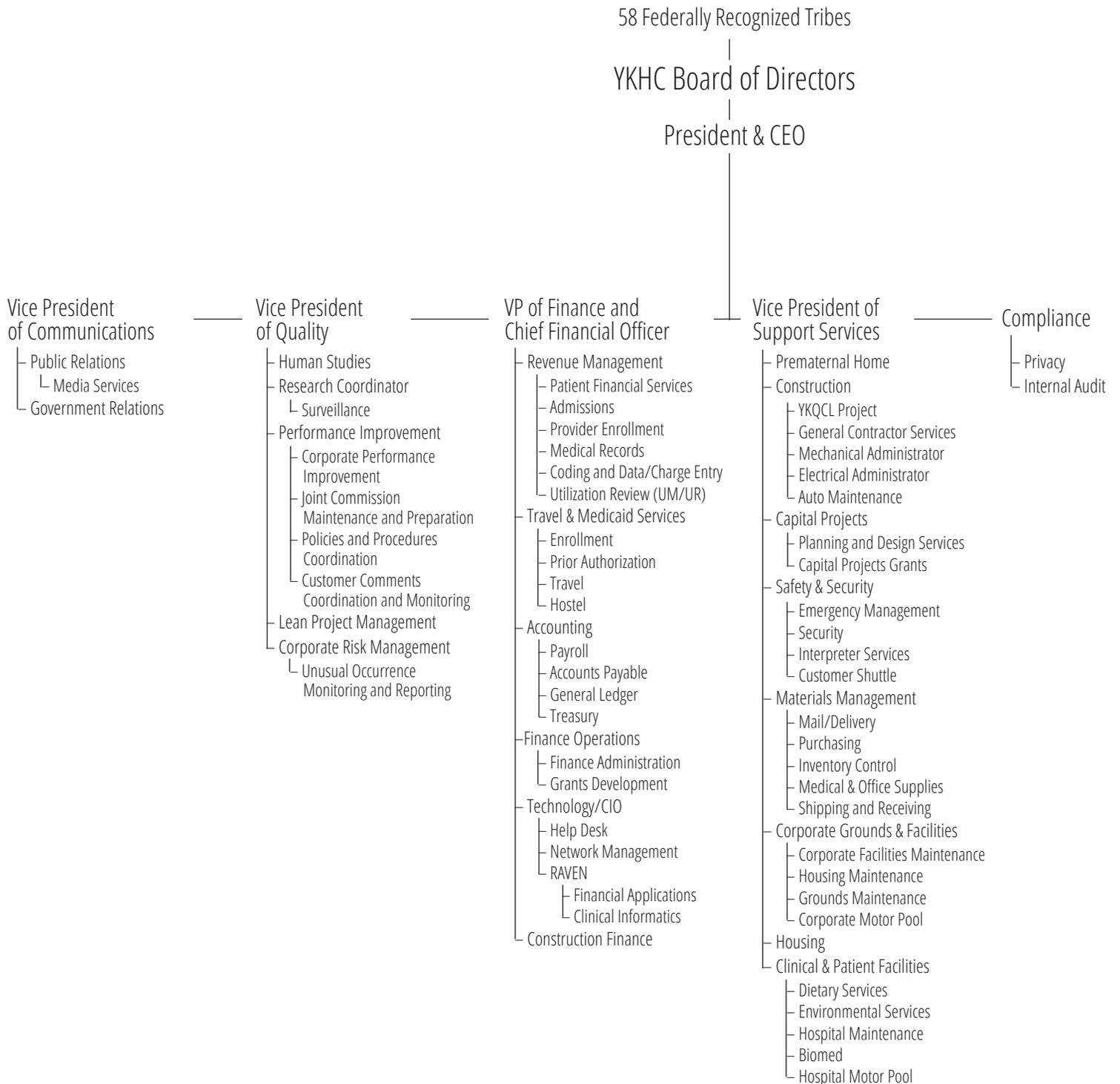
Optimism ~ Compassion ~ Pursuit of Excellence ~ Personal Growth Importance of Family ~ Trust Elder Knowledge

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# ORGANIZATION

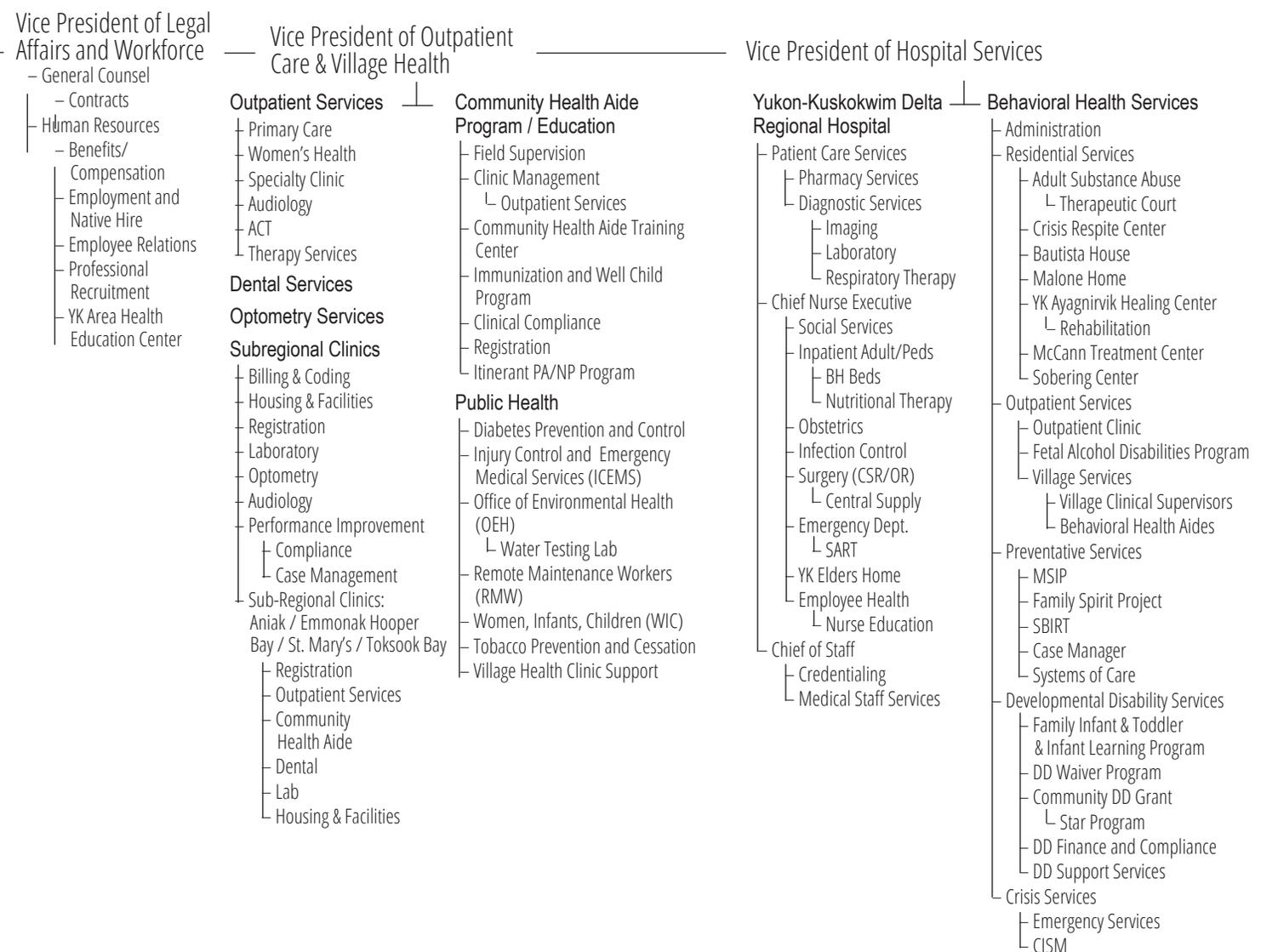


# YKHC administers a comprehensive health care delivery system for 50 rural communities in southwest Alaska.

The system includes community clinics, sub-regional clinics, a regional hospital, dental services, behavioral health services including substance abuse counseling and treatment, health promotion and disease prevention programs, and environmental health services.

YKHC is a Tribal Organization authorized by each of the 58 federally recognized Tribal councils in its service area to negotiate with the Federal Indian Health Service to provide health care services under Title V of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975.

YKHC, along with 22 other Tribal Organizations, is a co-signer to the Alaska Tribal Health Compact, a consortium which secures annual funding agreements with the federal government to provide health care services to Alaska Natives and Native Americans throughout the state.



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Elected by the Tribal Councils of each of the 58 federally recognized Tribes in the YKHC service area, the Board of Directors is the chief policy-making body of the corporation, exercising overall control, management and supervision.



**Honorary Board Member**  
James Charlie, Sr., Toksook Bay

## Executive Board

Walter Jim .....Chairperson  
 Darren Cleveland ..... 1st Vice Chair  
 John Uttereyuk .....2nd Vice Chair  
 Geraldine Beans .....Secretary  
 Bonnie Persson ..... Treasurer  
 Moses Owen ..... Sergeant-at-Arms  
 Chris Larson .....1st Additional Member  
 Patrick Tall ..... 2nd Additional Member  
 Dan Winkelman ..... Ex-Officio

## Hospital Governing Body

James Nicori .....Chair  
 Vacant .....Vice-Chair  
 Adolph Lewis .....Secretary  
 Alton Alexie ..... Treasurer  
 Stanley L. Hoffman, Jr. .... Sergeant-at-Arms  
 Mary Ayunerak ..... (MSAPC)  
 Marvin Deacon ..... (MSAPC)  
 Abraham David           Michael Hunt  
 Gloria George           Sam N. Tinker, Sr  
 James Sipary  
 Geraldine Beans .....Exec. Board Rep.

## Board Standing Committees

### By-Law Committee

James Sipary  
 James Nicori  
 Geraldine Beans  
 Chris Larson  
 Sam Tinker Abraham David  
 Walter Jim, Ex-Officio  
 Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

### Finance Committee

Bonnie Persson  
 Stanley L. Hoffman, Jr.  
 Sam Tinker  
 Moses Owen  
 Abraham David  
 Michael Hunt  
 Darren Cleveland  
 Walter Jim, Ex-Officio  
 Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

### Unit 1



Mary Ayunerak  
Alakanuk



Michael Hunt, Sr.  
Kotlik

### Unit 2



Geraldine Beans  
St. Mary's



Gloria George  
Mtn. Village

### Unit 3



Bonnie Persson  
Upper Kalskag



Mary Willis  
Stony River

### Unit 4



Moses Owen  
Akiak



James Nicori  
Kwethluk

### Unit 5



Stanley Hoffman, Jr.  
Bethel



Alton Alexie  
Bethel



Walter Jim  
Bethel



Chris Larson  
Napaskiak

### Unit 6



Sam Tinker, Sr.  
Kasigluk



Adolph Lewis  
Kwigillingok

### Unit 8



Abraham David  
Mekoryuk



James Sipary  
Toksook Bay

### Unit 9



Patrick Tall  
Chevak

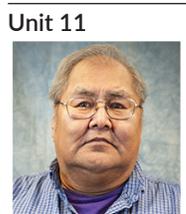


John Uttereyuk  
Scammon Bay

### Unit 10



Darren Cleveland  
Quinhagak



Marvin Deacon  
Grayling

# 2021

## Policy Committee

Patrick Tall  
 Bonnie Persson  
 Stanley L. Hoffman, Jr.  
 Moses Owen  
 Adolph Lewis  
 John Uttereyuk  
 Walter Jim, Ex-Officio  
 Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Human Studies

Bonnie Persson  
 Alton Alexie  
 Mary Ayunerak, Traveler  
 James Nicori, Traveler  
 Chris Larson  
 John Uttereyuk  
 Gloria George  
 Marvin Deacon  
 Walter Jim, Ex-Officio  
 J. Klejka S. Nelson  
 J. Dobson C. Desnoyers  
 H. Salisbury

## Compensation Committee

Adolph Lewis  
 Sam Tinker  
 Gloria George  
 Abraham David  
 Geraldine Beans  
 Walter Jim, Ex-Officio  
 Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Corporate Compliance/ Quality Assurance

Adolph Lewis  
 Stanley L. Hoffman, Jr.  
 Mary Willis  
 Moses Owen  
 Mary Ayunerak  
 Walter Jim, Ex-Officio  
 Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Board Appointments

**ANHB:** Darren Cleveland  
 Moses Owen—Alternate  
**ANTHC:** Walter Jim  
 1st John Uttereyuk  
 2nd Alton Alexie—Alternate  
**LifeMed:** Patrick Tall  
 James Nicori  
 Dan Winkelman

### Napartet Strategy 2021 TACTICS

As described by our late honorary board member Dr. Paul John, "Napartet" is the mast of a boat that led he and his father out to traditional fishing waters. At YKHC, we have used Dr. John's story to inspire our strategic plan to move our region's health priorities forward.

- Healthy Community**
  - Extend and sustain water and sewer projects
  - Advocate for public funding and new projects
- Healthy People**
  - Improve our children's oral health
  - Reduce drownings, unintentional injuries
  - Reduce suicides
  - Increase cancer screening
- Care Delivery**
  - Successfully complete the Paul John Calricaraq Project
  - Strengthen village health programs
  - Focus on quality
  - Improve patient experience
- Corporate Capability and Culture**
  - Improve recruitment and staffing processes
  - Shape culture to support high reliability
  - Develop a strong Alaska Native workforce
  - Continue to improve cash flow
- COVID-19 Response**
  - Prepare community
  - Deploy testing
  - Support public health
  - Increase public information and communication
  - Restructure facility operations
  - Manage administrative overhead and support
  - Deploy vaccination

### Protected our communities

- Preventing unnecessary hospitalizations and deaths
- Keeping healthcare system from being overwhelmed

### Vaccines & tests

Nearly **20,000** customers vaccinated

**180,000+** COVID-19 tests administered

### Helped keep safe and open:

- Businesses
- Schools & extra curriculars

### Education

**30,000** customers informed on preventing infection

**14,000+** COVID-19 patients received health guidance

### Cared for more than:

**144** hospitalized COVID-19 patients

**130** in-region, and **39** out-of-region, medevac patients

### YKHC is open for business

If you've put off routine care, come see us again.

The health and safety of our people has been top priority—not just in fighting the pandemic, but in continuing to provide the quality of health care you expect and deserve. From the village clinics to our new state-of-the-art Bethel hospital, YKHC is there for you and your family.

# LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

As you know, this was our second year responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. We had a two large waves of sub variants, named Delta and Omicron with the former subsiding before Christmas of 2021 and the latter subsiding over the last two months.

**Together, in one of the remotest regions of the United States, we:**

- helped almost 20,000 customers get vaccinated with a safe and effective, life-saving vaccine;
- educated the region’s 30,000 customers on how to mitigate the chances of infection;
- educated how to reduce transmission when either infected or when a village experienced widespread community transmission;
- administered over 180,000 COVID-19 tests;
- educated school leaders and communities on how to keep schools, sports and other vital extracurricular activities safe and open;
- helped to keep businesses safe and open;
- provided healthcare guidance to almost 16,000 individuals and families with COVID-19;
- provided healthcare to 148 inpatients who were hospitalized due to COVID-19;
- provided over 130 individuals with in-region medevacs;
- provided 40 individuals with out of region medevacs;
- provided healthcare to 50 individuals who died from COVID-19 and consoled their families;
- helped to end COVID-19 waves sooner rather than later, and thereby helped to keep our health system from becoming overwhelmed in an effort to reduce unnecessary hospitalizations and deaths.

We could not have accomplished this without our 1,400 employees working together as a team, nor without your vital engagement, participation and help. Quyana.

This is our seventh year in a row of a multi-million dollar capital improvement plan that replaces old equipment with new equipment. Over the last two years, we spent more than \$15 million on new equipment that improved our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and



Dan Winkelman,  
President and CEO.



Walter Jim, Chair of the  
Board of Directors.

also improved the delivery of healthcare throughout the entire Yukon-Kuskokwim region. This year, we are purchasing over \$2.5 million of new equipment to continue modernizing our healthcare system for your benefit. YKHC’s finances have never been stronger. We continue to deliver quality healthcare while paying off our debt for the new hospital, while keeping our wages competitive and modernizing our infrastructure.

We announced in the *Messenger* a few months ago that we are building a new 109-room customer lodging facility. It will be on the hospital campus and within walking distance of the hospital. It will be a high quality and safe facility for all customers.

The location is near the existing hostel. Site preparation will quickly ramp up this spring. It will be completed over the next two years. We are all looking forward to a nice, new facility that is large enough to handle all customer volumes, regardless of season.

Occasionally when the winter weather deteriorates, village customers are unable to make it home until the weather improves. Sometimes there are no rooms available at our current 24 room hostel or elsewhere in Bethel. We all look forward to the day when customers no longer have to sleep on cots because no rooms are available in Bethel. That day is coming two years from now, and will be a joyous occasion for all!

Quyana to all 1,400 YKHC employees for all that you do each and every day! Quyana to all our customers! Please do not put off your health care. Get your annual physicals, preventative screenings and medical advice. YKHC is here for you and your family.

Sincerely,

Walter Jim  
Chair of the Board of Directors

Dan Winkelman  
President & CEO

# ...we strive to be the healthiest people



## Suicide Prevention

YKHC's Behavioral Health Preventative Services offers *Calricaraq* to educate the public about suicide awareness and prevention.

Suicide is a complicated issue and there are no easy answers. But with awareness and understanding all people can help prevent suicide in their communities.

*CALRICARAQ* is an ancient Yup'ik word that translates to "how not to be ill." The word conveys the idea of living a balanced life, through adherence to a set of ancestral principles.

Healthy living is practicing these beliefs, values, teachings and traditions. It is *Yuuluaqauciq* when we apply these throughout our daily lives.

Our Y/Cup'ik traditional system is taught to people for healthy lifestyle skills. It is our cycle of life.

*QARUYUN* is a tool that embodies love, compassion, generosity, respect, identity, self worth, sharing, caring... to calm the mind, heart, and spirit.

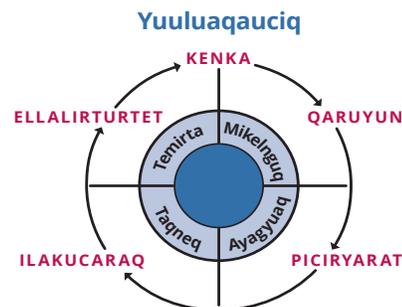
- Hardship and loss affects every person in a negative way mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Always remember that you are not alone.
- Our thoughts and feelings are a normal reaction to experiences that result in hurt. These can include sadness, confusion, anger, sleeplessness, hopelessness.
- Process the experience. It is very important to unload or unpack.
- Good self-care is necessary. Rest, good nutrition, lots of water, being busy, being around people, getting involved in activities in the community, helping others, taking care of others, and being around children are some of our best methods of self-care when we are hurting.

**THE WELLNESS WHEEL.** The mind, body, heart, and the spirit are four parts of a whole person. Understanding the interconnectedness between these four quadrants, and learning how to take care of each, can contribute to a healthy balance in our lives.

### Workshops

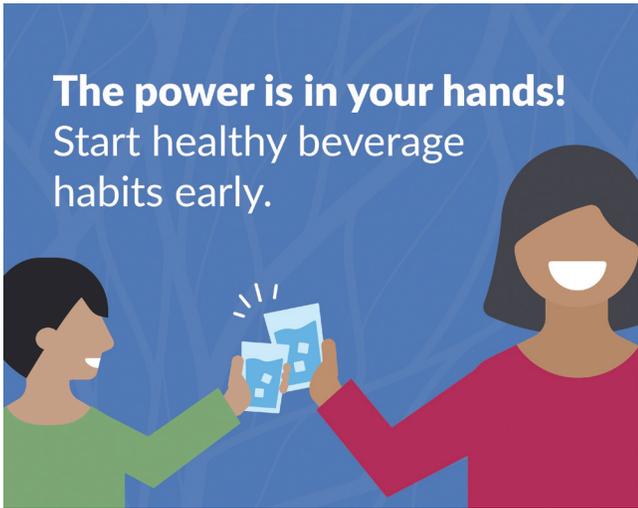
Throughout the year, Preventative Services provided a series of two-day *calricaraq* training sessions. Participants gained understanding in the philosophy of *calricaraq* by exploring issues within Native communities and utilizing original interventions developed by Native Yup'ik professionals.

The trainings described how Native values and teachings from elders is applied to issues such as depression, substance abuse, domestic violence, and suicide.



*Our culture has many tools that can help us survive, stay healthy, and be OK. For any and all Behavioral Health crises, from suicidal ideations to concerns regarding how a person is acting, 907-543-6499 is the number to call.*

## Improve Our Children’s Oral Health



Parents can model healthy behavior by keeping sugary beverages out of the house and choosing options like water, tea and flavored seltzer instead. Research shows that healthy habits in childhood have lifelong impacts that help prevent health issues such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and more.

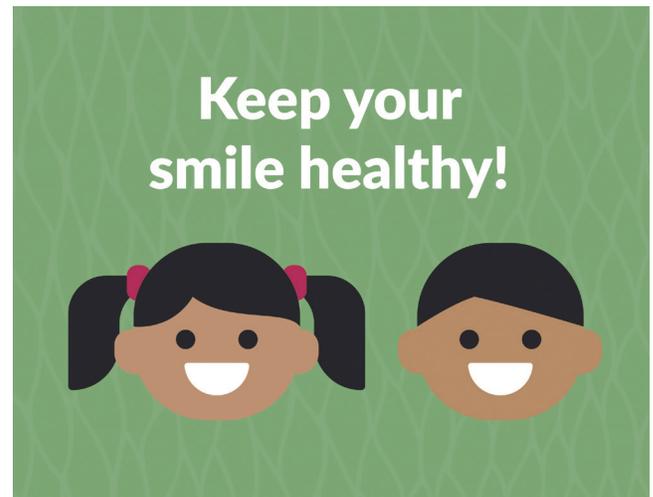
Sugary drinks are the number one source of added sugar in the American diet<sup>1</sup> and the consumption of these beverages increases risk for developing diet-related health conditions such as diabetes, obesity, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, and cancer<sup>2</sup>.

Drinking just one additional serving of a sugary drink each day increases your risk for developing type II diabetes by 13-18%<sup>3</sup>. In an effort to combat these negative health impacts, YKHC launched an educational campaign to encourage folks to drink fewer sugary drinks.

The ads were published in the YKHC Messenger and on the YKHC facebook page. Additional information has been published to encourage reduction in sugary drinks and improve the health of your families.



There’s no way to leave it all on the court when sugary sports drinks are slowing you down! Get game-ready by drinking water.



Sugar in soda and sweetened drinks promotes tooth decay. Seven out ten children in the YK Delta undergo invasive dental procedures due to tooth decay—this is far greater than many other places in the country.

1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Agriculture. 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. 8th Edition. December 2015. Available at: [https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/2015-2020\\_Dietary\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://health.gov/dietaryguidelines/2015/resources/2015-2020_Dietary_Guidelines.pdf)

2. Muth ND, Dietz WH, Magge SN, Johnson RK; American Academy of Pediatrics, Section on Obesity, Committee on Nutrition; American Heart Association. Public policies to reduce sugary drink consumption in children and adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 2019;143:e20190282. Doi: 10.1542/peds.2019-0282

3. Imamura F, O’Connor L, Ye Z, Mursu J, Hayashino Y, Bhupathiraju SN, Forouhi NG. Consumption of sugary-sweetened beverages, artificially sweetened beverages, and fruit juice and incidence of Type 2 diabetes: systematic review, meta-analysis, and estimation of population attributable fraction. *BMJ*. 2015; 351. Doi: 10.1136/bmj.h3576

# Increase Cancer Screening

Colorectal cancer rates are high in the YK Delta. **Prevention is possible through screening.** Here are a few of the ways YKHC has been working to improve screening rates:

- **New Test.** Cologuard is a test that checks for cancer DNA in stool samples. It has been used successfully in the Lower 48 as part of routine screening for colorectal cancer. Patients who get a Cologuard test and it is negative do not need to be screened again for three years. A positive result may be a sign they have pre-cancerous or cancerous cells or another issue. They are fast-tracked to get a colonoscopy.
- **New position.** A grant-funded full-time Patient Navigator assists patients with their screening decisions and appointments.
- **New position.** A second full-time case manager assists in the surgery department for dental surgeries, endoscopies and colonoscopies.
- **New position.** A fulltime endoscopy/colonoscopy scheduler will help with patient scheduling. This position will be paid by grant funding for six months, then will be a regular part of YKHC staff.

In addition to new positions, ANTHC and YKHC are collaborating for a fuller understanding of our patients' colorectal health through key interviews and focus groups. The following three structured activities will provide leadership with important feedback that can help guide future improvement.

- **Provider Interviews.** We are asking health care providers what we can do to improve. Health Aides have been invited to interviews on what makes it hard or easy to get patients their life-saving screening.
- **Patient Experience Survey.** We are asking patients what they choose for screening and why.
- **Patient focus groups.** We will do patient focus groups to get more feedback from patients on what improvements can be made.

## Cologuard project by the numbers:

- 1510 patients reviewed (Goal review 4315 total) 35% accomplished.
- 91 patients have requested colonoscopy.
- 270 patients have requested Cologuard test.
- 42 patients have declined.

YKHC's surgery department is also working to reach out to patients to schedule colonoscopies. Providers are referring patients for colonoscopies and ordering an iFOB test when needed (Immunological Fecal Occult Blood Test). This is a stool sample test that helps a provider determine if a colonoscopy is needed. It is also used as a diagnostic tool for other medical issues.

Building capacity at YKHC is a goal of the Research department. Over the last year our staff has attended focus group training, increasing and improving skills of staff who live and serve in the YK Delta.

## CANCER SCREENING WITH COLOGUARD



A Cologuard kit is sent to patients who choose to use it.



Instructions will be the first thing the patient sees when they open the box.

A pre-paid express mail shipping label is provided to patients so their kit returns to Anchorage within 72 hours of their sample collection.



To use Cologuard we set up a lab station at the Alaska Public Health Laboratory to preprocess samples.



Stool samples are processed in the Biohazard Safety Cabinet.



The sample is processed in the Sample Mixer and data is entered in software.



The sample is homogenized in the Sample Mixer, then the coordinator pipets stool into tubes.



The processed patient samples are transported from the State lab to ANTHC where they are stored in a -80C freezer



The samples are packed in dry ice and sent to Madison, WI, for final processing.

# CARE DELIVERY: Successfully complete the Paul John Calricaraq Project



Entrance to the expanded and renovated Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital.

## PROJECT COMPLETION

The PJCP received its Certificate of Substantial Completion on March 23, 2021, meeting the goal of being on time and within budget. The Indian Health Services conducted their final inspection and acceptance on April 6, 2021, signing the last amendment to the Joint Venture Agreement for Phase 3.

The new south entrance to the hospital opened to the public, providing direct access to the Emergency Department. The new south parking lot opened up availability of much-needed parking space. The new entry also provides access to the main security desk and offices, and access to the West Wing building connection.

The new staff lounge, conference room, training room, staff restrooms/locker rooms, and workshop for medical equipment maintenance and repair were all turned over from the contractor at the end of March.



Bronze sculptures on the hospital grounds.



The Gathering House at dawn.



Emergency Room entrance.



Hanging sculpture in the lobby.



Patient lounge area.



Servery entrance.

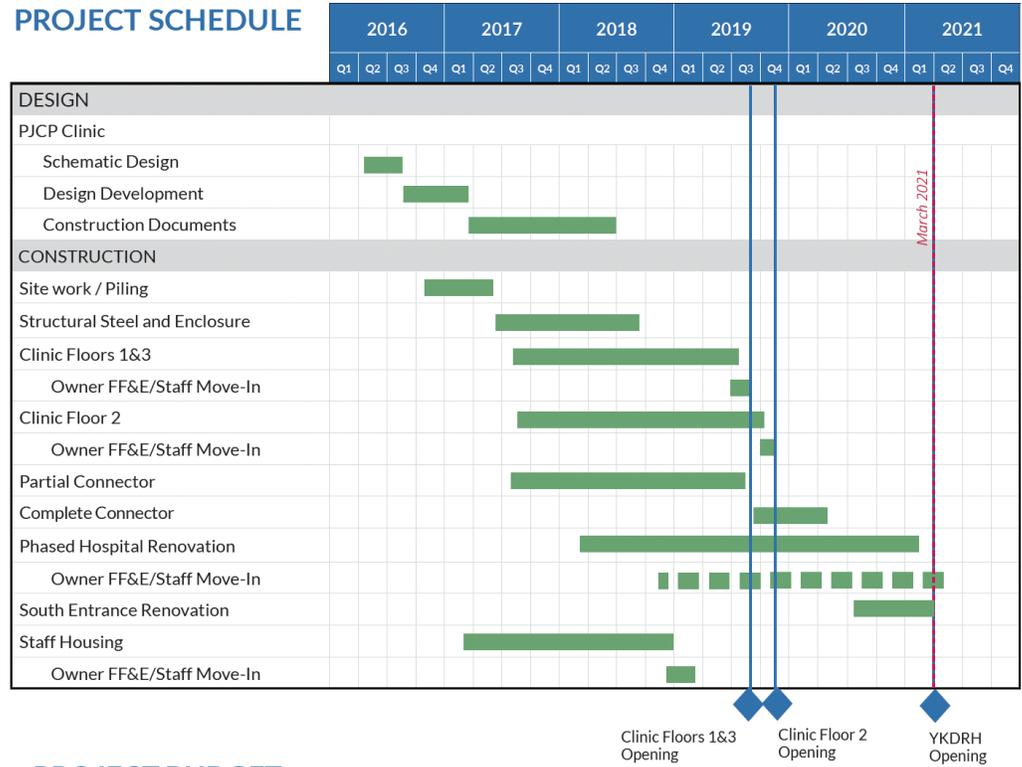
The PJCP has been a Joint Venture Construction Program offered by the Indian Health Service to acquire, construct, or renovate a health care facility and lease it to the IHS, at no cost, for a period of 20 years. The IHS funds the staff, operations, and maintenance of the facility.

YKHC's application was submitted in November 2014, accepted in January 2015 and signed in March 2016. Five years later, in March 2021, the new hospital and renovation was complete.

The expansion increased outpatient clinics from three to seven, automated the Lab and Pharmacy, brought Dental, Optometry and Behavioral Health together in the same facility, and upgraded Inpatient, OB, and infusion services.

These were the principles that guided the project throughout: Represent the YK Delta's culture and identity, promote customer centered care, preserve affordable cost and sustainable operations.

### PROJECT SCHEDULE



### PROJECT BUDGET

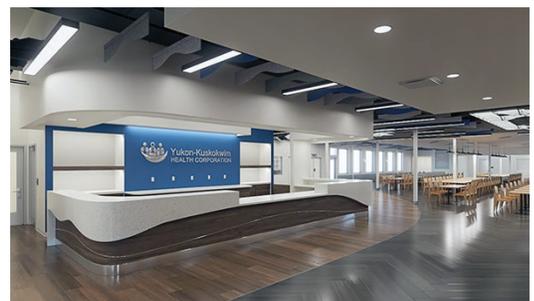
COST CODE DESCRIPTION	CURRENT BUDGET	CURRENT COMMITMENTS	FORECASTS	SPENT (As of 8/31/2021)
CONSTRUCTION COST	\$219,182,419	\$219,182,419	\$0	\$217,498,651
DESIGN SERVICE FEE	\$18,622,552	\$18,622,552	\$0	\$18,793,589
FURNITURE, FIXTURES & EQUIPMENT	\$22,076,004	\$18,816,295	\$224,998	\$18,595,300
OTHER PROJECT COST	\$58,519,025	\$52,255,526	\$1,344,847	\$48,905,618
HOUSING	\$17,500,000	\$17,500,000	\$0	\$15,497,228
<b>PJCP Total</b>	<b>\$335,900,000</b>	<b>\$326,376,792</b>	<b>\$1,569,845</b>	<b>\$319,290,386</b>

In response to customer requests for a place to stay while visiting the Bethel hospital, YKHC will be building a new 109-room customer lodging facility.

The facility will be large enough to accommodate all of our current and future customer needs. It is also being built with future expansion in mind.

Many people have asked that YKHC build a new lodging facility because our current 24 room facility, built in 1999, was too small and could not accommodate the daily need, especially when the weather turned poor and village flights were cancelled. The common complaint was, "I want to use the Bethel hospital for my health care but I have no place to stay because the current hostel is always full." We listened.

We are all very excited to bring this vital project to those in our 50 member villages who need a place to stay that is safe, high quality and on our Bethel campus.



## Improve Patient Experience

### New Hospital – New Equipment

YKHC purchased more than \$20 million of new state-of-the-art equipment for our new hospital.

In our laboratory, we added a Roche COBAS 6800 batch molecular analyzer. This enhances our ability to analyze COVID-19 samples quickly and on-site. Prior to obtaining this equipment, samples had to be sent to ANMC, the State, or private laboratories, resulting in a delay of several days to two weeks. In addition, the analyzer is capable of processing a variety of other samples, many of which we previously had to send out for testing.



COBAS 6800 batch molecular analyzer

In our Diagnostic Imaging department, we purchased a new CT scanner, allowing a remarkable improvement to our service compared to the old scanner. It scans faster and has better image quality while using 30% less radiation. Additionally, we have added new services, such as bone density testing and 3D reconstruction—and the scanner’s capability has room to grow.

The Outpatient Surgery department opened for business. We have expanded the number of beds in the preoperative admission and postoperative recovery bays. In addition to two new operating rooms, we now have a dedicated procedure room for endoscopy services. We have also purchased brand-new endoscopy equipment, bedside monitors, laparoscopic surgery equipment, and anesthesia machines to replace older equipment.



Siemens Somatom Perspective CT scanner.

With the opening of an inpatient unit for psychiatric care, the Diagnostic, Evaluation, and Treatment unit (DET) will help and treat people experiencing severe psychiatric issues, such as psychosis and suicidal ideation. This will reduce the number of people who have to be transported out of area and increase prompt treatment.



Sarah Carter was the first baby born at the Bethel Hospital in 2021. She arrived on January 1 at 2:27 a.m., weighing in at 7 lbs 4 oz. Congratulations to new mom Amanda Carter. We wish you and your daughter a long, happy and healthy life.

### Powerchart Maternity

Powerchart Maternity is a new Cerner solution that is part of RAVEN, our Electronic Health Record (EHR) that will be in use in 2023.

This new program will allow us to more easily track the health information for our moms and babies throughout the pregnancy to provide the best possible care. The program has built-in parameters to assist our health care workers in providing the best evidence-based medical care for our pregnant moms before the baby is born and will link to the hospital care they receive once the baby is delivered.

This also will provide information to our health care workers who are taking care of newborns so that they can easily access the health information of the birth mother—which is important to know when taking care of our youngest patients.

The project to build out this new program will kick off June 2022 and we expect to have this in use for appointments by early next year. Our patients shouldn’t notice any difference in the excellent care they receive while pregnant, but our health care workers should notice a big difference in the ease with which they can review and access the information needed to safely care for our pregnant moms and babies.

## Strengthen Village Health Programs

### Community Health Aide Program

*“Despite a challenging year dealing with COVID-19 effects in the YK Delta, I would like to recognize the response of all CHAP staff with resiliency and commitment to patients and the communities we serve.”*

*– Asela Calhoun, MA, PhD, CHAP Director*



Groundbreaking for the new Quinhagak health clinic.

A shout of recognition goes to the CHA/Ps who practiced in their home villages as well as the float CHA/Ps who traveled to cover the clinics with high outbreaks of COVID-19 cases—doing testing, vaccinations, and patient treatment. New BP/SPO2 machines were deployed to clinics to expedite patient care.

Field Supervisors focused on recruiting new Health Aides and re-entry Health Aides to rebuild clinic staffing. As part of these efforts, YKHC Leadership introduced a new \$5,000 sign-on bonus for newly recruited CHAs and a pilot to mentor new applicants to pass the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) required for entry into the CHA program. The Training Center staff continued to train CHAs, even with reduced cohorts for safety, supporting the Health Aides in their professional growth.

The CHAP Itinerant Program PA/NPs Advanced Practice Providers (APP) continued to be a first line of response during the pandemic, as new variants appeared and outbreaks intensified. The program provided rotations to villages with the highest rates of COVID-19 cases.

The program also focused on recruiting more providers to increase clinic coverage. Seven additional providers were added to the program. This growth is an amazing achievement considering the staffing challenges across the country. The additional providers will increase YKHC’s capacity to care for patients close to home in coming years, while giving support and relief to Health Aides for needed breaks. Collectively, the providers made 164 village visits and completed more than 6,000 patient visits.

The Immunizations department successfully rolled out the full range of COVID-19 vaccines in the YK Delta, achieving the second highest rate of immunization in the State of Alaska for patients five and older. The department provided twice as many vaccines in 2021 than the previous year. The CHAP registration staff managed to complete thousands of Quick Registrations done at clinics during mass testing and COVID-19 vaccinations.

Kudos to all for outstanding teamwork and positive attitudes, filled with kindness toward each other.

### Health Aide of the Year: Bobby Heckman, CHP

Bobby was selected by CHAP as Health Aide of the Year for 2021, in recognition for his work at Pilot Station Clinic. He has been a Certified Community Health Practitioner (CHP) for many years.



Bobby Heckman and his son Joshua.

Bobby has served his community with a compassionate and caring heart that shines through all he does. His work reflects a deep commitment to the mission and values of YKHC and a personal commitment to treating every patient with respect, dignity, and value. He is a role model for the Health Aide profession.

Bobby is well loved in his community and even the children know who he is and what he does as a Health Aide.

Here is a poignant story of his exemplary patient care—after caring for a very ill patient who was on weather hold for a medevac for a long time, he sat with the patient giving comfort tirelessly.

As Bobby did all he could medically, he also sang Russian Orthodox songs that brought soothing comfort to the patient until he passed. We are grateful for his caring heart in giving what he had to offer, not only in this instance, but in continuing to give for all of his patients.

Thank you, Bobby, for your service. You are appreciated. Quyana!

## COVID-19 Response

In 2021, the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, people of the YK Delta came together to reduce the spread of the virus. Everybody played a part.

Individuals got vaccinated, encouraged their friends to get vaccinated, got tested, wore masks, practiced social distancing, reduced travel, avoided large gatherings and postponed events. Village and tribal leaders provided guidance, implemented lockdowns and worked tirelessly to protect their communities.

YKHC providers and health aides gave COVID-19 shots to children as young as five years old and boosters to eligible residents. They answered questions about the vaccine and cared for people who were ill with the virus. YKHC shared reliable, accurate information about COVID-19 and the vaccines through virtual townhalls, on our website and on social media.

While each person has a story to tell about their own experiences with COVID-19, we all shared some significant milestones in the fight against the virus.



### January

- COVID-19 vaccines are available to all YK Delta residents ages 16 and older.
- YKHC Project TOGO visits every village in the Delta to distribute COVID-19 vaccines.

### February

- New cases of COVID-19 in the YK Delta decline more than 75% from January, starting a downward trend in new positive COVID cases that lasts until June.

### May

- COVID-19 vaccines are approved for children ages 12-15 years old.
- New positive cases in the Delta drop to their lowest point in 2021.



### June

- The Delta variant arrives and quickly becomes the dominant strain in the region. New positive cases start to climb.

### August

- Students return to school safely with universal masking, social distancing, regular surveillance testing and other “layers” of protection. Vaccinations are strongly encouraged for all eligible students.

### September–October

- Booster shots are approved for eligible individuals who received their second dose of vaccine at least six months before.
- As cases in the region, state and country rise, YKHC activates COVID-19 clinical guidelines and asks residents to take extra care.

### November

- COVID-19 vaccinations are approved for children ages 5-11 years old. YKHC partners with schools and parents to distribute vaccines to children in this age group.

### December

- The omicron variant started spreading quickly through the U.S. and the world. YKHC leadership started planning to ensure we could continue to care for our patients when the omicron variant arrived in the YK Delta in early January.



Melissa Tefft, LPN, shows a vial of the Johnson & Johnson one-dose vaccine. Melissa has managed COVID-19 supplies during the pandemic.



Paul Clark (left) and his brother Richard Larson in Napaskiak. They found out many years later as adults that they were brothers—as they had both been adopted. They were excited to get their vaccines together.



Older people are at higher risk for infection and severity of COVID-19. James and Ina Nicholai of Atmautluak got the shot.



The challenge of testing and vaccinating was met in various ways in YK Delta communities.



Kayla Bavilla of Eek. Teens became eligible for vaccination in May.



Kids of Kong. When the vaccine was approved for children age 5–11 in November, these youngsters lined up for the shot. The approval made in-person learning safer, though masking and distancing still applied. Miley, Kaia, Kaynor and Peter John.



Karl McIntyre of Eek. The COVID-19 vaccination teams made house calls in villages to give the vaccine to elders who had difficulty getting to the local clinic.



Operation Togo teams made multiple trips to YK Delta communities to administer the vaccine.

# CORPORATE CAPABILITY AND CULTURE: Improve Recruitment and Staffing Processes. Develop a Strong Alaska Native Workforce.

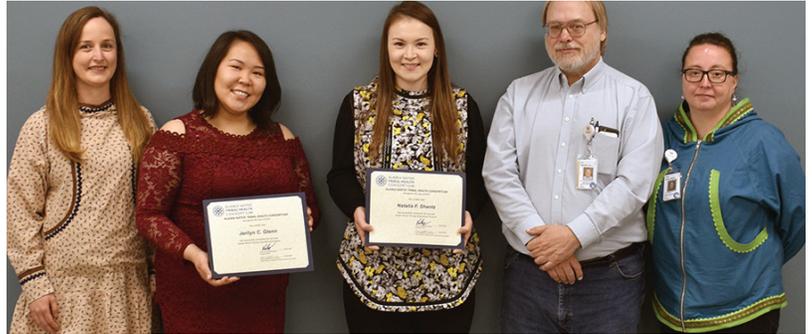
## 2021 DHAT GRADUATES

Natalia Shantz, originally from Hooper Bay, and Jerilyn Glenn, originally from Emmonak, graduated from the Alaska Dental Therapy Education Program June 24.

They applied and were chosen by YKHC for sponsorship in 2019. YKHC agrees to support a certain number of students through school in exchange for successful completion of the program and a commitment to come back and work for YKHC upon graduation.

It is an intense, two-year, seven-semester, full-time training program. We are very excited that Natalia and Jerilyn persevered and joined our team of dental providers in July.

YKHC has been employing Dental Health Aide Therapists since 2004. We started out with two DHATs, and with the graduation of Jerilyn and Natalia, we now have 16 DHATs



Dr. Judith Burks, YKHC Dental Dept.; DHAT grads Jerilyn Glenn and Natalia Shantz; Hospital VP Jim Sweeney; Patient Care Services Administrator Patty Smith.

## Alaska Health Education Center: YK-AHEC 2021

Raising awareness of health careers and supporting students and medical residents through scholarships, internships, residencies, clinical rotations, and placement in health careers are the integral components of YK-AHEC.

In alignment with one of YK-AHEC's goals to expose students to primary care delivery in rural and/or underserved settings, YKHC preceptors provided enormous support to resident physicians and health professions students on clinical rotations throughout 2021. We salute the dedicated and committed YKHC preceptors for aiding in this critical component of learning for healthcare students. Dental, Optometry, and Pharmacy are the most popular specialties.

Scholarships were offered to nine students in 2021.

Orientation and career workshops for KUC nursing students and YUUT certified nursing assistant students were conducted in fall 2021 with the goal to continue to provide and expand these workshops going forward.

YK-AHEC is working closely with Alaska Pacific University (APU), which oversees the LPN program, assisting with the recruitment of YKHC employees for next year and in the placement of current LPN students. The LPN classes are held on the YUUT campus, the result of a YUUT/APU collaboration.

actively practicing in our region. Villages that are lucky enough to be covered by DHATs have had significant increases in access to care.

Villages with a higher number of DHAT treatment days have more patients seeking preventive care, fewer teeth being pulled and fewer children needing to be treated in the operating room for full mouth rehab.

YK-AHEC also worked with YKHC's Behavioral Health Services to offer presentations on substance abuse disorders to local high school and college students. There will be more in 2022.

Working in collaboration with South Central AHEC, the healthcare apprenticeship program began in fall 2021 with six YKHC employee apprentices. These employees were able to "learn at lunch" and earn certifications and skills without having to take time off work.

YK-AHEC supported a mini health camp for high school students organized by the Lower Kuskokwim School District in December. Through travel funding, guest speakers and hospital/lab tours, YK-AHEC worked with APU and YUUT to provide students with health career related activities.

In the last quarter of 2021, AHEC worked closely with CHAP and our partners YUUT and AVCP to increase the number of candidates in the Community Health Aide Trainee program. It is encouraging to see the positive impact that has resulted due to these partnerships.

YK-AHEC is grateful for the support of YKHC's HR/Workforce Development Division and our academic and community partners in our efforts to develop a strong Alaska healthcare workforce.

## Continue to Improve Cash Flow

As COVID-19 continued to affect patients and staff, FY21 looked a little different than many others in the past.

We saw a decline in net patient revenue due to patients delaying their care and the additional staff burden of managing the documentation associated with the testing and vaccination efforts. Offsetting the decline in patient revenue was the additional funding from the Indian Health Service for COVID-19 response, as well as additional grant funding for COVID-related projects.

YKHC continued to improve our financial strength through strong cashflow numbers year over year. This financial strength is what allows YKHC to continue to grow and develop additional patient-centered projects such as the highly anticipated new patient hotel in Bethel. This cashflow also allowed YKHC to complete the grant funding match for two new clinics in Akiachak and Quinhagak as well as the renovation of the former West Wing into a new home for both WIC and the Calricalraq program.

YKHC funded its eighth year in a row of new capital expenditures with items that improve patients care such as new office furniture and exam tables in all of the village clinics. Village clinics received new ATVs with trailers for transportation. The sub-regional clinics received several building upgrades

including renovated and improved Dental suites, new patient transport vehicles as well as new office furniture.

During the past two years YKHC has invested over \$15 million in capital back into the organization for the benefit of our patients and employees. Some of the highlights are listed below:

- All village clinics received new anti-microbial office furniture.
- Qavartarvik Hostel received all new furniture for the rooms including new sleeping chairs and TVs.
- Roche Cobas 360 testing machine that allows YKHC to process COVID-19 and other tests inhouse so we are not reliant on outside processing.
- Water and sewer hook-ups for the Kongiginak and Tuluksak Clinics.
- All village clinics and SRCs received new computers to facilitate a better experience with virtual patient visits.
- All village clinics and SRCs have new vaccine refrigerators with freezers that allow them to store vaccine and tests safely in more locations.
- Rooms in our SRCs were renovated to operate on negative pressure. This allows patients with contagious respiratory illnesses to be managed safely at these locations.
- All of the Bethel residential facilities as well as the hospital now have UV air purifying systems.
- Patients are now able to securely text with their providers over TigerTouch.
- Village clinics will be receiving ATV emergency vehicles for transportation.
- Four new buses were purchased for patient transportation from the Bethel airport to YKDRH.
- A new air handling system for the Elder's Home that allows air conditioning in the summer.

*These are just few of the significant improvements that YKHC has done in order to respond to this pandemic while taking care of our communities.*



