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Anchorage Native News

Alaska Native People Shaping Health Care

Volume 15 Issue 2 March/April 2014

Rolling out expanded services in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley

By SCF Public Relations

It was recently announced that provisions in the 2014 U.S. Department of Interior budget allow for full funding of the Indian Health Service's Joint Venture Construction Program (JVCP) staffing packages nationwide. This is a significant step forward in the capacity of Tribes and tribal health organizations to provide excellent care to their communities.

Some background: IHS has been contractually obligated, through JVCP agreements, to provide operating funds for facilities like Southcentral Foundation's (SCF) *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center.

For SCF, the issue goes back about five years. In December 2009, SCF received notification that it submitted a successful JVCP application. The organization's leadership then began planning the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center with the Chickaloon Village Traditional Council and the Knik Tribal Council utilizing the IHS planning process.

In 2012, SCF expected IHS to provide funds for 250 staff positions – this was the intent of the program and why SCF committed itself to the construction project. Unfortunately, SCF and other organizations participating in JVCP only received partial funding. As a result, there has been significant space within these facilities, including the Wasilla-based primary care center, not being utilized due to the lack of funding to staff programs. Now, moving forward, SCF will be able to provide the full range of primary care services, behavioral health, dietary, radiology, audiology, pharmacy, optometry, dental, laboratory, and Wellness Center services that it initially planned on providing. Optometry and audiology will be phased in first.

"We have 8,500 customer-owners in the Mat-Su Valley counting on us for these services," said SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb. "We wish to thank Alaska's Congressional delegates, especially U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski who is the top Republican on the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee, for working with us to help resolve this issue and the issue of contract support costs. We are celebrating!"



© Ken Graham Photography.com
For more information and a Q-and-A on the services offered, see page 7.



Strengthening families one warrior at a time

By SCF Public Relations

Norton Sound Health Corporation, Kawerak, and Southcentral Foundation's Family Wellness Warriors Initiative (FWWI) have been working together in an exciting partnership to empower healthier relationships and strengthen families in the Norton Sound region. This collaboration, through FWWI's three-year regional model, has been made possible by tribal leaders, community members and agency partners, and funding from the State of Alaska.

Norton Sound's Community Based Steering Committee is taking the lead in shaping what the family wellness collaboration will look like in the years ahead. To lay the groundwork, the committee, FWWI and other partners gathered to host an informational session on FWWI and conduct community readiness assessments Feb. 25-26. Results from the community readiness assessments – which focus on resources in the area and community awareness on issues such as family violence and child maltreatment – are being compiled to share with community members. Discussions over the two-day period also included culturally appropriate strategies and the education, tools and skills needed to end the cycle of harm in families and communities.

Next steps will involve developing an action plan to collaborate with FWWI in providing education and training, community leadership development, support groups, and family and community support to reduce family violence and child maltreatment in the region. FWWI's philosophy is built around relationships, which includes providing tools for breaking the silence of harm, starting a healing process, and empowering healthier relationships moving forward.

For more information about the collaboration, or to learn how you can be a part of ending domestic violence, child maltreatment or child neglect, please contact Southcentral Foundation's FWWI at (907) 729-5440.

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Southcentral Foundation is an Alaska Native owned health care organization serving Alaska Native and American Indian people living in Anchorage, the Mat-Su Valley and 55 rural villages in the Anchorage Service Unit.

Incorporated in 1982 under the tribal authority of Cook Inlet Region Inc., Southcentral Foundation employs more than 1,500 people in over 65 programs.

Southcentral Foundation Mission

Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.

Southcentral Foundation Vision

A Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.

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Southcentral Foundation shares Nuka System of Care abroad



SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb presents the Michael Shea Memorial Lecture to more than 400 people in the historic Assembly Rooms in Edinburgh, Scotland.

By SCF Public Relations

Members from Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) leadership team recently traveled abroad to share insights about health care innovation and improvement with U.K. leaders in government and health care. The invitational visits, held Feb. 13-24 in Wales, Scotland and England, included a series of workshops, lectures and Q-and-A sessions focusing on SCF’s Nuka System of Care.

Health care redesign in Wales

On an invitation from the National Health Service of Wales (NHS Wales) and the 1000 Lives Improvement Service, SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb presented in Cardiff, Wales, at their conference entitled “The Nuka System of Care: Lessons for health care redesign in Wales.”



SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb meets with the Scottish Government’s Clinical Director of Quality Dr. Jason Leith, Deputy Chief Medical Officer Dr. Frances Elliott and Deputy Director for Primary Care David Thomson after presenting at a conference hosted by Survivor Scotland.

Katherine Gottlieb was accompanied by SCF Vice President of Resource and Development/Chief of Staff Dr. Kevin Gottlieb, SCF Vice President of Organizational Development and Innovation Michelle Tierney and SCF Medical Director Dr. Steve Tierney.

NHS Wales was particularly interested in the Nuka System of Care’s strong emphasis on customer-owner experience, community focus and workforce engagement.

“This is a fantastic opportunity for Wales to learn from a health care organization that has achieved excellent health outcomes by working with people to understand their needs,” said 1000 Lives Plus Director Dr. Alan Willson, one of the hosts of the event.

FWWI inspires Scotland

Katherine Gottlieb was also invited to serve as the featured speaker at the Michael Shea Memorial Lecture in Edinburgh, Scotland, which was attended by more than 400 people. The lecture focused on foundational elements of the Nuka System of Care such as customer ownership and other approaches rooted in the traditions and values of Alaska Native people.

In a separate conference hosted by Survivor Scotland, SCF was also invited to share highlights of SCF’s Family Wellness Warriors Initiative and its community approach to addressing domestic violence, child abuse and child neglect.

King’s Fund in London

Lastly, SCF leadership received an invitation from the King’s Fund, an independent charity working to improve health and health care in England, to present on the Nuka System of Care in London. A Q-and-A session with SCF leadership followed the presentation.

Through SCF’s Nuka Institute, subject matter experts share their knowledge, lessons learned, and experiences with SCF’s Nuka System of Care. Interested parties receive tools and information capable of supporting change and redesigning current approaches to care.

To learn more, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/nuka.

“Hospice Humanitarian” walks among us

By SCF Public Relations

Cathy Hopkins, home care nurse for Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Home Based Services, received a 2014 Hero of Healthcare award in the category of “Hospice Humanitarian” at the Hospice of Anchorage’s annual gala dinner and auction on March 1.

In presenting the award, the Hospice of Anchorage shared her positive impact as follows:

“Cathy excels at working with patients facing end-of-life, and her work sets an example of how the same compassionate principles can enhance the team’s ability to provide excellent, responsive care to all of their clients. Cathy believes good can come

from bad and that people thrive when they have support. She maintains a positive outlook on life, a belief that carries over to her work.”

In her work with SCF over the past few years, Hopkins has provided timely, supportive care to customer-owners with complex wounds and medical issues.

Hopkins has also successfully facilitated physical therapy services and provided compassionate training and supervision to Licensed Practical Nurses and home health aides. She has been described by customer-owners, supervisors and peers, as a perfect example of what it means to be a high quality home care nurse.



Cathy Hopkins, RN, is an exemplary home care nurse for Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Home Based Services. She received a 2014 Hero of Healthcare award from Hospice of Anchorage March 1.

RAISE intern receives UAA student appreciation award

By SCF Public Relations

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Graduate Intern David Clark was honored with a student appreciation award at the annual University of Alaska Anchorage Martin Luther King, Jr., Student Appreciation Luncheon held Jan. 20. He was nominated by UAA’s Emerging Leaders Program staff.

Clark, a college freshman, is maintaining a 3.0 GPA at UAA while working as an SCF intern in the Alaska tribal health system and as a resident advisor at the UAA campus dorms. He participates in student government activities, which included a recent trip to Juneau where he lobbied for the university’s needs at the Alaska State Capitol. Before starting his freshman year, he spent his summer immersing himself in the college experience via the Rural Alaska Honors Institute.

Clark has participated in several intern sessions with SCF, dating back to 2010 when he initially applied and was accepted into the RAISE Summer Program. Over the course of his SCF internship experiences, he has opened up and his self-confidence has grown. This award recognition reaffirms what SCF has long known about its RAISE interns: our youth today are our leaders tomorrow.

Federal grant funds awarded to create Alaska’s newest Community Health Center

Chickaloon Village Traditional Council and Southcentral Foundation partner to expand primary care in Matanuska Valley

By SCF Public Relations

Chickaloon Village Traditional Council and Southcentral Foundation (SCF) leadership and staff have been working in partnership over the past 10 years to secure stable funding for the *C’eyiits’ Hwnax* Life House Community Health Center in Sutton, Alaska. Grant funding for the clinic from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, represents a turning point in primary care access in the Matanuska Valley.

The HRSA New Access Point grant provides seed money to get the clinic operating as a Community Health Center. As such, expanded medical services will be available to both Alaska Native and non-Native people from communities between Palmer and Eureka, including Chickaloon, Sutton, and Glacier View. Charges are adjusted on a sliding fee scale, depending on the household income and ability to pay.

The Chickaloon Village Traditional Council owns the physical space for the *C’eyiits’ Hwnax* Life House Community

Health Center and provides oversight and guidance for the services in the area. SCF provides the contracted management, including staffing the health center with a primary care provider, a nurse case manager and support staff. Some assistance with medications, dentistry, behavioral health, and transportation is also offered.

“This is a very exciting advance in rural health care. Working together, we have been able to secure this funding and help more people get access to primary care. It also opens doors for future expansions, and facilities, services, and programs eventually being owned and ran by Chickaloon,” said SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb.

Community health centers work to improve access to quality primary health care services that are comprehensive and culturally competent. Community-based and customer-directed, health centers are well positioned to be responsive to the specific health care needs of their community.

“Bringing health care to Sutton, Chickaloon, and Glacier View has always been important to our Tribe and our partnership with SCF has made this a reality,” said Chickaloon Traditional Chief and Chairman Gary Harrison. “We are excited about being able to share these vital services with our friends and neighbors and improve the health status of our community.”



Southcentral Foundation Program Coordinator Kari Shaginoff and Physician Assistant Benjamin Olmedo at the Native Village of Chickaloon’s *C’eyiits’ Hwnax* Life House Community Health Center in Sutton, Alaska.

Awards

Honoring national, state and local leaders

Family Wellness

Healthy Lifestyles Clinic: A collaboration benefiting young customer-owners

By ANTHC Marketing & Communications and SCF Public Relations

Childhood obesity is an experience lived out every day by many Alaska Native and American Indian youth and their families in Alaska. The Pediatric Endocrinology Clinic at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), which is jointly owned and managed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and Southcentral Foundation (SCF), began in 2011. Noting a spike in referrals for pediatric obesity, ANTHC and SCF worked together to develop a response. The result was the new Healthy Lifestyles Clinic, a monthly clinic that is currently in “pilot” phase.

“Childhood obesity is a significant problem in our society,” said ANMC Pediatric Endocrinologist Dr. Rachel Lescher. “With the collaboration of medical, dietary, behavioral health and exercise physiology providers from both SCF and ANTHC, our goal is to meet

the needs of children struggling with weight management.”

The ANMC Healthy Lifestyles Clinic supports children and their families in setting and achieving goals for health and wellness. One afternoon each month, Lescher along with SCF Behavioral Health Consultant Rufus Reese, SCF Registered Dietician Jessilyn Dunkelberger and SCF Clinical Exercise Specialists Deb Evans and Erin George meet individually with children and their families to provide guidance and healthy living tips specific to each of their respective disciplines. ANMC Pediatric Endocrinology RN Case Manager Sherry Hammock is the clinic coordinator, ANMC Office Specialist Agnes Hunt works with families to schedule the clinic time, and SCF Certified Medical Assistant Julia Walunga provides support in the clinic.

Before this new approach was piloted, ANMC and SCF providers worked on an

individual basis to rule out causes of obesity aside from high caloric intake and to see if there were any medical complications related to the obesity. Providers would also regularly connect with the children and their families to help with weight management and goal setting. This old approach was not resulting in much of a shift in weight or health and wellness.

Childhood obesity frequently leads to adult obesity and complications such as diabetes and heart disease. An improvement needed to be made in the way the health care system was working together with families to improve the health of its youngest customer-owners. Data is still being collected, but so far, the relationship-based, customer-driven Healthy Lifestyles Clinic has proven to be a step in the right direction.

For more information, please call ANMC Pediatric Endocrinology RN Case Manager Sherry Hammock at (907) 729-8803.

Interview with “LOSE TO WIN Champion” Carrie Mirando

By SCF Health Educator Kendra Merculief

Q: Why did you decide to join Southcentral Foundation’s LOSE TO WIN program?

A: I joined the program to lose a few pounds, but I mainly wanted to improve my numbers for blood cholesterol and blood pressure. I knew I needed to address and change some of my bad eating habits.

Q: What did you like best about participating in LOSE TO WIN?

A: I appreciated the weekly support and encouragement I received from the program employees. Also, all the educational handouts and useful health-related promotional items we received.

Q: Which tool has been the most helpful in reaching your long-term goal?

A: I took their suggestions and started to record all the food I ate. I also wore a pedometer since I have a sedentary job and sit a lot. It keeps me motivated to stay active and challenge myself every day.

Q: How has your life changed since you completed LOSE TO WIN?

A: I practice portion control now. If I feel tempted to keep eating, I will immediately wrap up the leftovers and put the food away. I did not know how to correctly read food labels and was educated on what to look for and what to avoid.

Q: What was the most difficult obstacle you had to overcome to achieve your goals?

A: Emotional eating, which for me occurs during times of stress or sadness and holidays when a lot of food is available.

Q: How has LOSE TO WIN impacted your daily choices?

A: Since learning about nutrition labels, I have made better food choices and I don’t buy certain unhealthy foods anymore. I don’t eat out as much and, if I do, I ask how the food is prepared at the restaurant. I also stopped eating fast food!

Q: Do you have any advice for people planning to join LOSE TO WIN or a similar program?

A: Stick to the program and don’t find excuses to skip classes. The program is only for a limited time frame (13 weeks), but hopefully it can become life changing like it was for me. The information available for

participants is very helpful and informative. This is my life and I’m motivated to be healthy and happy every day!

LOSE TO WIN is a free, 13-week program offered by Southcentral Foundation (SCF). It offers a support system with clinical exercise specialists, dietitians, and your peers to help you improve your health and lose weight. For more information, or to sign up for the next LOSE TO WIN orientation session starting May 1, please call the SCF Health Education and Wellness Center at (907) 729-2689.



Carrie Mirando, a LOSE TO WIN Champion, started exercising at the SCF Health Education and Wellness Center over a year ago. She is thankful that SCF offers this health and wellness benefit to customer-owners and employees alike.

Rural Community Wellness

Community gets Affordable Care Act questions answered

By SCF Program Coordinator Shannon Johnson-Nanalook

Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Nilavena Subregional Clinic invited the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) Health Reform Group into the community to assist with the completion of Affordable Care Act exemptions and/or

applications. The ACA event was held at the Newhalen School Jan. 22-23 and 20 households requested and received assistance. ANTHC’s Health Reform group has spent the winter traveling to rural regions of Alaska to distribute paper applications and offer assistance to anyone who has questions or needs help filling out the forms.

NEXT UP: Spring Health Fair

Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Nilavena Subregional Clinic is hosting its Spring Health Fair at Newhalen School on May 2. The event will offer fun, healthy activities for individuals and families. Highlights will include Zumba® and “Get your Garden Growing” activities led by the SCF Health Education Department as well as beading for cancer awareness.



Community members enjoy a health fair at the Newhalen School.

Let’s circle up!

By SCF Public Relations

Learning circles are opportunities for people to connect and build relationships while participating in wellness activities. Southcentral Foundation (SCF) has recently enhanced and expanded its learning circles as a core service option.

How do you know what is available and if this option will work for you? SCF’s learning circles are organized using 10 major categories:

- Nutrition and Fitness
- Emotional Support
- Parenting
- Healthy Families and Healthy Relationships
- Vocational and Life Skills
- Recovery/Addictions
- Men’s Activities
- Living with Chronic Conditions
- Pregnancy
- Cultural Activities

A conversation with your primary care or behavioral health provider can help you figure out what may be a good match. You can also explore the various topics using the SCF Learning Circles and Events calendar at www.southcentralfoundation.localist.com. You can sort by scheduled date and time, or even conduct a general search using the term, “learning circle.”

Jocko Younger, a learning circle facilitator at SCF, responds to frequently asked questions and shares some of his experiences.

Q: What really happens in a learning circle?

A: Each learning circle has its own unique objective, but input from participants is the common thread. SCF believes strongly that there is great value in sharing life experiences and supporting fellow participants.

Q: What is the value in attending a learning circle?

A: Participants have an opportunity to experience a group of people who have similar concerns within a peer-centered and safe environment. There is no requirement to participate so everyone is there for their own personal benefit in some way.

Q: What have you observed in learning circles that helps participants most?

A: Participants benefit from hearing from others who have been on a similar journey, especially from those who have been on the journey a little longer than they have. I’ve heard many times that participants were really scared to try something new initially, but then got a lot out of the experience and were glad they joined.

Q: Can I be in the same learning circle as my spouse/family member/friend?

A: In most learning circles, yes, but there are a few that have different requirements. The best thing to do is contact the learning circle facilitator to ask. But be sure to not limit yourself, based on who else is participating, when you begin taking steps on the journey you want to take.

If you have any questions about learning circles, please contact SCF Learning Circle Manager Sandy Bohling at (907) 729-5725 or sbohling@southcentralfoundation.com.



Get the facts: Colorectal cancer screening

By SCF Public Relations

Did you know that the likelihood of Alaska Native people developing colorectal cancer is double that of Caucasians? Early detection is key, and as such, colon screening exams are recommended by the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) for Alaska Native men and women ages 40 and older.

Screenings can find and remove polyps before they turn into cancer. If you have been screened before, you will be screened again five years after your last flexible sigmoidoscopy or 10 years after your last colonoscopy.

You may need to get screened before you turn 40 if there is a family history of colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer is beatable, treatable and preventable. Please talk to your provider about when you should start the screenings.

The procedures

Flexible sigmoidoscopies screen for colorectal cancer by looking at the rectum and lower intestine. The appointment takes 30 to 45 minutes while you are awake, and daily activities can be resumed immediately after the test. If polyps are found during the procedure, a colonoscopy will probably be recommended.

A colonoscopy looks at the rectum and large intestine or colon. The entire appointment can last three to four hours and you will be sedated during the test. Daily activities can be resumed 24 hours after the test. If polyps are found they can usually be removed during the test. Colonoscopies are recommended once every 10 years.

*For more information, please talk with your provider or call the ANMC Colorectal Cancer Screening Clinic at (907) 729-5730 or toll free at (800) 478-6661. You may also watch a series of videos, including the Alaska Native movie, *What's the Big Deal?*, at www.youtube.com/user/ANTHCepicenter.*



Colon Carnivals offer fun learning experience

In recognition of Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, the Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Health Education Department hosted weekly Colon Carnivals throughout March to raise awareness and offer information on screening and prevention, nutrition, exercise, and tobacco cessation.

Colon Carnival activities included cooking demonstrations featuring high-fiber foods, an exercise day with ZUMBA® and yoga, a game day and much more!

For information about the annual Colon Carnivals, please call SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689.



Fashion show contestants taking part in Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) March 7 Dress in Blue Day fashion show in the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center walk through the “Nolan the Colon” runway. This event was in recognition of National Wear Blue Day to raise awareness of colorectal cancer screening and prevention.

What can a dietitian do for you?

By SCF Medical Services

Registered dietitians are a package deal: they are food experts, providing science-based knowledge beyond nutrition education. They demystify our food system and share accurate information about nutrients, ingredients, food marketing and much more. In addition to offering advice and diet counseling, dietitians also provide motivation, support and accountability.

Consulting with a dietitian will be beneficial if you are concerned (or curious) with any of the following:

Disease Prevention

Although family genes can’t be changed, you can make a difference today that will provide better odds of preventing diseases such as Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Disease Management

- Speaking with a dietitian will provide improved control of conditions such as:
- Diabetes or pre-diabetes
 - High cholesterol or blood pressure
 - Gastrointestinal disorders
 - Kidney disease
 - Liver disease
 - Food allergies

Pregnancy and Breastfeeding

Dietitians answer questions, and provide advice and support for healthy vitamin/

nutrient intake before, during, and after pregnancy, both for you and your baby.

Weight

If you need to lose, gain or maintain, a dietitian can help you create personal and realistic goals, suggest strategies for success, and encourage you to stay on track.

Eating Smart

Knowledge is power: navigate through food-related marketing and misinformation; learn to read food labels, discover healthy cooking and add quality to your life.

A dietitian can provide custom meal plans to include traditional Alaska Native foods, recommend individual energy needs and create nutrition and exercise goals. From guiding those looking to shed the extra pounds to customer-owners wanting to prevent and/or manage chronic diseases, a dietitian can be a valuable partner on the journey to wellness.

If you receive services at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center and would like to meet with a dietician, please contact your primary care team at (907) 729-3300. If you receive services at the Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center, please call (907) 631-7800.

New iPad app tested in clinics

By SCF Research Department

Southcentral Foundation (SCF) is continually seeking ways to support the relationship between customer-owners and their integrated care teams. For example, the SCF Research Department has been working with customer-owners, primary care providers and community leaders to create a decisions support tool that helps facilitate communication. The decisions support tool is an iPad app that aids in depression management decisions.

The new iPad app is currently in its trial phase and being used in some Anchorage Native Primary Care Center clinics. So far, customer-owners and primary care providers have shared that they find the tool helpful and would recommend it to other facilities. Feedback also shows that the tool is increasing motivation to think about mental wellness and that it offers an opportunity to learn about depression without having to talk about it. Customer-owners and providers using the tool also pointed out opportunities for improvement such as the need for emphasis on family relationships, larger more understandable text, and additional information on treatment options available outside of SCF.

SCF Research plans to address these opportunities for improvement and enhance depression management by introducing the improved iPad app into additional clinics this spring. The second phase of research will assess if the app aids customer-owners and providers in making decisions about depression treatment options.

For more information or to get involved in a research project, please contact SCF Research at (907) 729-8575.

Sharing lessons learned with Harvard

By SCF Resource and Development

On March 7, Southcentral Foundation (SCF) President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb was invited to teach a course at Harvard Medical School highlighting SCF’s Nuka System of Care. The course is part of a month-long block elective that offers advanced medical students exposure to a portfolio of concepts and skills that will contribute to their professional development.



Fourth-year Harvard Medical School students attend a March 7 class on Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Nuka System of Care. SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb led the discussion along with SCF Vice President of Organizational Development and Innovation Michelle Tierney.



SCF President/CEO Dr. Katherine Gottlieb engages with fourth-year medical students at Harvard Medical School March 7.



Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care Director Dr. Russell Phillips.

“I view Nuka as our ‘true north’,” said Harvard Medical School Center for Primary Care Director Dr. Russell Phillips. “Nuka’s focus on working with patients and communities to create and promote health in both mind and body serves as a model to us all. Nuka inspired the Center for Primary Care at Harvard Medical School to expand our own focus from health care to health. We look forward to working with Nuka to lead change throughout the world.”

Phillips will be featured as the keynote speaking at the fourth annual Nuka System of Care Conference June 16-20 in Anchorage.

ANMC at 60

By ANTHC Marketing & Communications and SCF Public Relations

IT’S BEEN 60 YEARS

since the “Anchorage Medical Center” hospital opened on Third Avenue in downtown Anchorage. This occasion offers an opportunity to celebrate the evolution of care, services and technology that bring better health to Alaska Native people, as well as share stories of those who have played roles in the hospital’s history.

By the numbers

NOV. 29, 1953: The Anchorage Medical Center of the Alaska Native Service (ANS), also known as the ANS hospital, opens as the largest civilian building in Alaska.

THE 930,600-SQUARE-FOOT facility was constructed in the shape of a large cross. The main building had five floors with a partial basement. The west wing had a sixth floor solarium. The central area extended to eight floors, with much of the space used for storage and for housing mechanical equipment.

THE FIRST THREE PATIENTS, now known as customer-owners, arrived Nov. 30. All three were admitted to the hospital with pulmonary tuberculosis. Two more cases arrived the following day, and nine more the day after that. By the end of December, 153 patients had been admitted; nearly all were from rural communities and most had tuberculosis.

Approximately **190 EMPLOYEES** worked at the hospital – among them were 70 nurses, including one of the state’s four Alaska Native nurses; eight medical officers; four dental staff, including one Alaska Native dental assistant; and 10 ancillary professionals.

Source: R. Fortune, *Alaska Native Medical Center, A History, 1953-1983* (1986).



A group of longtime Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) employees gathered for a photo to commemorate the arrival of ANMC’s 60th anniversary. Most of these staff members have working histories that date back to the old hospital in downtown Anchorage. Photo courtesy of ANTHC Marketing.

Family caring for family at the Alaska Native Medical Center

Family is at the heart of Alaska Native culture and at the heart of the care provided at the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), which has been jointly owned and managed by the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) and Southcentral Foundation (SCF) since 1999. Many relatives – brothers and sisters, parents and children, husbands and wives – and multiple generations of families work, or have worked, together in Alaska Native health care in Anchorage, dating back to the original hospital.

For example, more than a dozen members of the Roehl family currently work on the Alaska Native Health Campus, a few with careers dating back to the old hospital.

Six Roehl siblings represent the core of the family’s longtime presence in the Alaska Tribal Health System. Brothers Mark and Carl Roehl are members of ANTHC’s facilities team. Ileen (Roehl) Sylvester is SCF’s vice president of executive and tribal services. Robert Roehl is SCF’s RAISE Program supervisor. Naomi (Roehl) Miller is an SCF finance manager. Charles Roehl is a former ANTHC electrician who occasionally works as an ANMC contractor. Additionally, they have cousins, children, nephews and nieces who also work in various roles for ANTHC and SCF.

Earlier generations of Roehls were also passionate advocates for Alaska Native health care. The siblings’ aunt, Sophie (Roehl) Chase, was a founding SCF board member whose leadership helped guide the transition from the old ANMC hospital to our modern ANMC facilities, services and campus.

“There’s a great sense of pride for me, and for all of us, that we have so many family members working on our campus,” explained ANTHC Supervisor of Facilities Mark Roehl. “We don’t personally work together very often, but we’ve been taught well and we all work hard to be very good at our jobs.”



More than a dozen Roehl family members work in various roles on the Alaska Native Health Campus. Pictured, from left, are Carl Roehl, Mark Roehl, Esther Roehl, Ileen Sylvester, Robert Roehl and Jodie Pike.

Primary care in the Matanuska-Susitna Valley

By SCF Public Relations

The *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center (VNPCC) began serving Alaska Native and American Indian residents of the Matanuska-Susitna Valley in August 2012 at its location on the corner of Knik-Goose Bay Road and Palmer-Wasilla Highway in Wasilla. The construction of the primary care center was the result of successful collaboration between Southcentral Foundation (SCF), Chickaloon Village Traditional Council and Knik Tribal Council.

The Q-and-A below recognizes achievements from the past year, highlights plans for increased services, and responds to frequently asked questions about receiving care at the new VNPCC.

Q. Has opening the new facility improved access to primary care services?

A. Before the expansion, the same quality care was offered but the smaller building space limited the services that could be provided and the number of people that could be served. Now that six integrated care teams are available to provide new and expanded services, customer-owners can stay closer to home and yet access the same primary care offered in Anchorage.

Q. Which services are new?

A. Services such as primary care, behavioral health, dietary, radiology and pharmacy services have been offered since the new facility opened in August 2012. Services such as dentistry (including pediatric services), optometry, wellness and health education activities, audiology and laboratory are being phased in for increased access by customer-owners. At this time, general dental services such as examinations, cleanings and fillings are offered daily along with pediatric dental services on Wednesdays for children ages 6 and under. All specialty services are referred to the SCF Fireweed Dental or ANMC Dental Clinics in Anchorage. The Wellness Center offers several wellness services including group exercise classes and state-of-the-art equipment such as treadmills, elliptical machines, free weights, stationary bikes and Nu-Step machines for persons with limited mobility. Customer-owners must first meet with one of the Wellness Center’s exercise specialists before utilizing the workout equipment. Appointments can be made by calling SCF Health Education in Wasilla at (907) 631-7630.

Q. Does the VNPCC provide emergency care services?

A. No, the VNPCC only offers primary care services and cannot treat any emergency care needs. If it is not practical for you to wait to see your provider at VNPCC or travel to ANMC with your urgent or emergent medical needs, the VNPCC has limited funding available to assist with payment at another emergency care facility. You may be required to pay some or all of the cost. For more information on how to apply for this assistance, contact SCF VNPCC Contract Health Services at (907) 631-7664.

Quyana Clubhouse program expansion

By SCF Medical Services Division

Southcentral Foundation is pleased to announce a 1,400-square-foot expansion of Quyana Clubhouse at its current location. This additional space will provide an opportunity to better serve the growing needs of our community members who experience severe and persistent mental illness.

Over the last several years, SCF’s Quyana Clubhouse has worked hard to provide meaningful services while keeping pace with the increase in clubhouse members. The program has added primary care services, as

well as health education, tobacco cessation and fitness planning activities that take place on-site at Quyana Clubhouse.

These enhanced services have not only been appreciated by customer-owners, but also have resulted in fewer emergency room visits and overall improvements in health and wellness.

With the expansion of Quyana Clubhouse’s facilities, the program will be able to add additional meeting rooms for customer-owners and an on-site exercise room. This will expand opportunities

for physical fitness and support the program’s goal of addressing some of the more prevalent chronic health issues such as diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

Quyana Clubhouse currently serves more than 100 members, and anticipates that this expansion will build up the capacity to serve an additional 35.

For more information about the expansion project or SCF’s Quyana Clubhouse, please call Quyana Clubhouse Manager Leonard Trenton at (907) 729-6572.

AWRP Valentine’s Day tea

Southcentral Foundation’s Alaska Women’s Recovery Project hosted a Valentine’s Day Tea.



Alaska Women’s Recovery Project Peer Leaders Valerie Woodring and Sona Johnson-Adams welcomed customer-owners and served tea and coffee Feb. 15 at the program’s annual Valentine’s Day Tea.

Healthy Hearts Go Red event

Southcentral Foundation hosted an event Feb. 7 to raise awareness of heart disease among women.



Members of Southcentral Foundation’s health education team demonstrate upbeat ZUMBA® dance moves that offer an effective workout system and promote a healthy heart.



Customer-owners check out information on the Rethink Your Drink campaign, tobacco cessation and salt-free seasoning, and learn healthy tips for taking care of their hearts!

Love Your Heart event

Southcentral Foundation hosted a “Love Your Heart” health fair on Valentine’s Day to promote steps to reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke.



Employees and customer-owners create heart-healthy wishes for their valentines at the crafting table.



Families bead together as part of a project to promote cancer awareness.

VIP Visits

Leaders in government and health care often visit Southcentral Foundation (SCF) to learn more about Alaska Native owned and managed health care and whole system transformation through SCF’s relationship-based Nuka System of Care.

To learn more, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/nuka.



Byron Mallott (at center), senior fellow for the Alaska Native Policy Center and Democratic candidate for governor, visits with Southcentral Foundation leadership and employees Jan. 17 at Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center.



Southcentral Foundation Vice President of Medical Services Dr. Douglas Eby shares the significance of the design elements at the Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center with Congressman Don Young on Feb. 20.



Southcentral Foundation Director of Tribal Relations & Traditional Healing Dr. Ted Mala and Tribal Doctor Lois Law meet with Northwest Territories Minister of Health & Social Services Glen Abernethy in the Traditional Healing Clinic on March 20.



Tribal Doctor Mary Sears offers a traditional healing demonstration for a visiting delegation of health care leaders from Canada. Allison Fisher, executive director of the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health in Ottawa, Ontario (Canada), is pictured at left.

Native Community

Circle of Life: Fish traps, a family affair

By SCF Public Relations

Spring was a busy time for community members in the small village of Ninilchik, Alaska, in the early to mid-1900s. The village consisted of only a few families living next to the Ninilchik River. If community members were interested in trapping fish in the summer, it was early in the spring they would start gathering materials to build fish traps. Building and maintaining the traps was a family affair, with the children working alongside and learning from their parents and Elders.

Fish traps are immobile devices built on the beach that trap fish as the tide comes in. Traps were built long enough to accommodate the highest and lowest tide and were made with wood, metal, chicken wire, and nets. When the tide would come in, fish would swim through the holes in the wire and were guided to the heart of the trap that contained fish bags. Some traps were as long as 250 feet and up to 30 feet high!

In March, when the temperatures were just warm enough to permit the work, community members would harvest the necessary trees and then take them to the beach. A single trap could require up to 200 trees! Before trucks were available in the village, families would transport the trees by dogsled. Once at the beach, the peeling process would begin. Each log needed to be peeled with a peeling spud before being taken to the trap site. The logs were then bunched, tied, and pushed into the Cook Inlet for transport. A boat provided by the canning company tugged the logs 12 miles northeast to Clam Gulch, Alaska.

With the help of the crew and the tide, the logs made their final stop on the beach of Clam Gulch. This is where the families’ building crews would put their building plans to action. Before a log could be placed into the sand, a metal bar was driven about six feet into it. The logs were then lifted and placed into metal holders held secure by three large spikes. After all the logs were standing, chicken wire or netting would be attached to create the barrier that would guide fish to the heart of the trap.

As the tide would come in, fish would cross the barrier, travel to the heart and become trapped inside. The canning companies provided a scow (or flat-bottomed boat) that workers would toss the caught fish

into. The scow would then transport the fish from the trap south to Seldovia, Alaska for canning.

An Elder of the community described fish trapping for the canneries not as a job, but as a necessity of life in Ninilchik, Alaska. Fish traps were banned for commercial purposes in 1960 after the State of Alaska prohibited them in the state’s constitution. Many Alaska Native communities continue to employ traditional fish traps for their catches and teach the next generation these methods as part of summer fish camps.

Source: Interview with Alvin Steik of Ninilchik (Aleut/Alutiiq, Russian)



The remains of an old fish trap, estimated to be 60 years old, can be viewed in Deep Creek, Alaska. Photo courtesy of Alvin Steik.

Native Men’s Wellness: Cultural Connectivity

By SCF Native Men’s Wellness Program

Southcentral Foundation’s (SCF) Native Men’s Wellness Program is dedicated to improving Alaska Native and American Indian men’s health through events and trainings that address the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of their lives. The program addresses four core areas: Healthy Living, Awareness, Employability and Cultural Connectivity.

A three-day cultural camp in Seldovia in January was the most recent cultural activity evaluated as a pilot for the program. During the trip, participants took a boat out to search for seals and otters, accompanied by Elders. The focus was on Alaska Native men sharing the experiences they had as young people. Many hours were spent discussing traditional ways of life and traditional uses of the animals.

The group that volunteered to attend, including three youth, reported back on their experience. Here is what they shared:

“My favorite part was being able to hear stories from my Elders. I had a great time learning about all the different sea animals – birds, fish, mammals – and the surrounding islands/ land. I enjoyed learning about the ways the animals travel together and protect their young. While learning how to take care of the animal, I learned how to skin and gut the animals

and learned which parts to keep and what tastes better. Also, an important part is the season in which you choose to hunt, in the winter the animals have the best coats and more blubber.”

“The hunt itself is already living its values. It is work, work of a warrior who provides for his family. Without the hunt you cannot provide for your home and the people in it. The hunt must be taught to the next generation. Teaching is a part of growing. As a person, it shows maturity and prolongs our way of life.”

“My values are all about family and having a good education. I learned so much from my parents and Elders on this trip. I choose to work for a place that values family and education as well. I can continue to mentor other younger generations in my family, and will continue to pursue my goals while upholding these values and set an example for others who are struggling.”

As demonstrated here, cultural experiences led by Elders are capable of shifting the perspectives and understanding of the younger generations. SCF celebrates the impact of cultural connectivity and hope that this is just the first of many different types of cultural camps that the Native Men’s Wellness Program can host in the future.



Southcentral Foundation
2014 Nuka Conference
June 16-20, 2014
Anchorage, Alaska

Save the date!

- Southcentral Foundation’s Nuka System of Care describes the entire health care system created, managed and owned by Alaska Native people to achieve physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.
- Annual Conference
- Pre-conference workshop for building effective relationships
 - General conference with workshop and break-out sessions
 - Evening networking and cultural reception

2011 Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award recipient

Southcentral Foundation Nuka Institute
(907) 729-8608
4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508
southcentralfoundation.com/nuka
www.twitter.com/SCFNuka



Learning Circles Calendar

A sampling of Learning Circles available at Southcentral Foundation (SCF)

Living with Loss

Mondays, 9-10:30 a.m.
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, Raven Room (2nd floor)
4320 Diplomacy Drive

Wellness Recovery Action Planning (WRAP)

Mondays, Fridays, 2-4 p.m.
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, Room #1511
4320 Diplomacy Drive

Creative Self Expression through Art Therapy

This Learning Circle is open with referral from clinician
Wednesdays , 1-3 p.m.
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, Room #1511
4320 Diplomacy Drive

Anxiety 101

Thursdays, 1:30-3:30 p.m.
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, Room #1511
4320 Diplomacy Drive

If you have questions or need more information, please call SCF Behavioral Health Services at (907) 729-2500, option 1.

Na Tia Sukan (recovery support)

Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, 3-4:30 p.m.
Heritage Plaza, Suite 102
4155 Tudor Centre Drive
Contact: SCF’s Family Wellness Warriors Initiative at (907) 729-5443

Men’s Spiritual Growth

Fridays, 8-9:15 a.m.
Mount Yukla Building (Development Center)
4175 Tudor Centre Drive
Contact: SCF’s Family Wellness Warriors Initiative at (907) 729-5440

T.R.A.I.L.S. (Teens Responsibly Accepting Individual Life Skills)

This Learning Circle is open with referral from clinician
Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, 4-6 p.m.
Fireweed Mountain Building
3rd floor, 4341 Tudor Centre Drive
Contact: SCF Behavioral Health Services at (907) 729-2500, option 2

National Library of Medicine’s Native Voices exhibition will travel to Anchorage

By SCF Public Relations

Dr. Donald Lindberg, director of the National Library of Medicine, has put the strengths and enduring wisdom of Native medicine into the national spotlight through the Native Voices: Native Peoples’ Concepts of Health and Illness exhibit, which opened in Maryland in 2011 and will make its way to Anchorage, Alaska, as a traveling exhibit in June.

The focus of the exhibit is on Alaska Native, American Indian and Native Hawaiian concepts of health and wellness, including the interconnected relationships between health, illness, and cultural life. The first tribal consultations on the project date as far back as 2003. NLM put countless hours into coordinating with dozens of partners, including traditional healers and medicine men, tribal councils and consortiums, tribal colleges and academia, urban health boards and health care systems, and museums and other cultural resources to create the collection. More than 70 interviews were conducted and

artifacts and images were contributed by numerous tribal organizations and individuals who appreciated the opportunity to share their healing traditions and be a part of the educational mission of the exhibit.

After a two-year run in the rotunda of the National Library of Medicine in Bethesda, Md. (located on the same campus where scientists conduct research as part of the National Institutes of Health), Lindberg supported an effort to turn it into a traveling exhibit. The exhibit is traveling to underserved communities and cities with large Native populations, with a focus on sharing the information with the next generation. Native Voices lesson plans are providing teachers the means to extend the discussions into their classrooms.

As visitors journey through the exhibit in June (*see May/June Anchorage Native News for schedule*), they will encounter interactive kiosks, a montage of archival images, and oral history videos sharing how

nature, community, and spirit are interconnected with Native ideas of health. The exhibit provides an unprecedented educational resource to those interested in Native health and healing.



National Library of Medicine Director Dr. Donald Lindberg stands with Indian Health Service Director Dr. Yvette Roubideaux after the ribbon cutting for the Native Voices exhibition in Bethesda, Md. Photo courtesy of NLM.

Reflections on an educational, cultural experience in Cuba

By SCF President/CEO
Dr. Katherine Gottlieb

In February, I joined an educational tour group to visit Cuba on personal time. I offered to report back and answer questions about what I learned during the short time I was there.

Overall, I found the visit very interesting. The people we met were very friendly and everywhere we visited felt safe. Buildings and cars go back to the 1950s. Some are beautiful, some need much work. Items that many Americans take for granted are either very scarce in Cuba, or not at all possible to obtain.

Our tour schedule included historical, cultural and architectural points of interest. We were unable to visit the hospitals, but visited with providers we met along the way.

The people of Cuba share some of the same values found in our Native Community; for example, the respect and care that families provide for their Elders. Young people contribute to this care both financially and by providing space in their homes for their Elders to live. The people of Cuba share some of our challenges as well – with both diabetes and obesity being major health issues in their country.

Health care in Cuba is different. The communities are assigned a primary care provider and up to 300 families may be under this person’s care. Access is hard because this provider also serves in the local hospitals. We were told that doctors are one of the two highest paid professions, but, in order for them to meet the needs of the families, many take on second jobs to cover expenses.

If I had the opportunity, I would return to Cuba for another visit to learn more.



An educational tour through Cuba offers opportunities to learn about the cultural and economic realities of the small nation through interaction with the people of Cuba. Cuba is a land of contrasts. Many buildings and cars are beautiful, others are crumbling and in need of fresh paint or repair. Paint, car parts, and other consumer goods that many Americans take for granted are expensive and often impossible to obtain. Health care is free in Cuba, but medicine is not, and, even if available, unaffordable for most Cubans. Cubans use the majority of their salaries for food.

Elder Drum

Promoting independent living through fostering an environment of quality, dignity and pride

MONDAY

Shopping

12:30 to 2 p.m.

Value Village
Northway Mall
Fred Meyer
Sears Mall
Wal-Mart
Please call
(907) 729-6500
for transportation.
Space limited!

TUESDAY

Sew and Bead Group

9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

WEDNESDAY

Bingo

12:15 to 1 p.m.

THURSDAY

Health Education on Nutrition and Fitness

1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

Now located at the SCF Elder Program
6901 East Tudor Road

Please call the Southcentral Foundation Health Education Department at (907) 729-2689 for more information.

FRIDAY

Game Day

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

(Every first, second and third Friday of each month)

Game Day is Elder directed, with a variety of games offered.

Movie Day

12:30 p.m.

(Fourth Friday of each month)

Popcorn and juice are provided.

Important Phone Numbers	
SCF Elder Program Event Hotline: (907) 729-6588	Food Bank of Alaska: (907) 272-3663
Alaska Native Medical Center: (907) 563-2662	Division of Public Assistance: (907) 269-6599
Cook Inlet Housing Authority: (907) 793-3000	American Association of Retired Persons (AARP): (907) 272-1444
Senior Benefits: (907) 352-4150	Salvation Army Meals on Wheels: (907) 349-0613
Anchor Rides: (907) 343-2550	Anchorage Police Department (non-emergency): (907) 786-8500
People Mover: (907) 343-4536	

Healthier hearts by choice

By SCF Public Relations

Protecting your heart as you age can help prevent heart disease and heart attacks. One of the ways you can help protect your heart is by lowering your blood pressure and cholesterol.

If blood pressure medication is prescribed, be sure to ask questions of your provider and pharmacist and learn about the instructions for use.

You can also make food choices that will impact the health of your heart. For example, a low-salt diet can help maintain a healthy blood pressure and relieve stress on the heart, blood vessels, kidneys and liver. If you are watching your salt intake, aim to keep sodium under 2,300 mg per day.

Eating foods that are low in cholesterol and saturated fats and eating more vegetables and fruits are also straightforward heart-healthy choices. According to the American Heart Association, “Cholesterol comes from two sources: your body and food. Your liver and other cells in your body make about 75 percent of blood cholesterol. The other 25 percent comes from the foods you eat.” Cholesterol is only found in animal products. Proteins that are lower in cholesterol and saturated fats include lean meats such as chicken and turkey, and fish, beans and lentils.

If you would like to schedule an appointment with a dietitian or if you have questions about eating heart-healthy foods, please contact your primary care team.

Tips for reducing cholesterol and saturated fat intake:

- Rather than frying, try broiling, boiling, grilling, baking or steaming foods.
- Remove fat and skin from meats.
- Cook with vegetable oil and/or cooking spray.
- Cook with non-fat or 1% milk instead of whole or 2% milk.
- Substitute two egg whites for one whole egg.
- Try soy as an alternative.

Tips for reducing salt intake:

- Use herbs, spices and other salt-free seasonings.
- Try to not use salt at the table.
- Try to not add salt when cooking.
- Avoid fast foods.
- Rinse and drain canned vegetables, beans and tuna fish.
- Before using salt substitutes consult with your provider.



Raphael and Vivian Jimmy are crowned the 2014 King and Queen of Inspiration at the Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Health Education Department’s fifth annual Fiddle My Heart Dance for Elders. Almost 100 people attended the potluck event Feb. 12 in the SCF Gathering Room, which featured live music and focused on fiddle dancing and exercise to prevent heart disease.