

## Arise and Conquer: Alaska’s Drive Toward Vaccine Success

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoo

The warrior presence that has kept Alaska Native people resilient and strong through the millennia rose up when it came to the vaccine rollout in Alaska.

The Alaska Department of Health and Social Services reports almost half of Alaska is fully vaccinated, and that number is steadily rising. The Alaska Tribal Health System contributed immensely to the statewide collaboration toward vaccine success.

### Owned by the People, for the People

Tribes are sovereign nations with discretion over the health care needs of their communities. This provides Tribal health organizations the freedom to make decisions about vaccine supplies that are different from state and federal guidelines. Organizations across the ATHS tailored their distribution to include populations that would otherwise have to wait months to be vaccinated. For example, many Tribal health organizations distributed vaccines to Elders age 55 years and older and youths age 16 years and older much sooner than the national average timeline.

### Community Relationship-building

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the ATHS has kept focus centered on community — the foundation of many Alaska Native cultures. ATHS quickly secured vaccine supplies from the Indian Health Service that were larger than the amount the state government had obtained. As a result, many Tribal health organizations had a surplus to extend vaccines to communities well beyond Alaska Native and American Indian groups. Many Alaska Native Tribal health organizations moved efficiently with



vaccine administration, much faster than many cities and states from throughout the nation.

Southcentral Foundation exemplified this as it quickly moved to include a diverse array of communities from the southcentral Alaska area when it came to administering vaccines. Early in the vaccine rollout process, SCF formed community partnerships, which included the Municipality of Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, to provide vaccines for people experiencing homelessness, individuals incarcerated, law enforcement, teachers, and emergency medical services, among many more hard-to-reach communities. SCF also partnered with Tribal leaders to provide vaccines for rural communities. Eventually, SCF moved to provide vaccines for all Alaskans age 16 years and older while much of the nation was beset by long lines and drawn-out wait times.

### Culturally Relevant Messaging

Recognizing that Alaska Native and American Indian people were disproportionately affected by COVID-19, Tribal leaders and Tribal health organizations spared no time distributing vaccines to rural villages and remote, hard-to-access communities, which account for much of Alaska’s highest vaccination rates. Many of the messages focused on preserving Alaska Native cultures and communities. Tribal leaders and Alaska Native community leaders played an impactful role in building trust among many of the Indigenous populations.

Many Alaska Native cultures believe that past, present, and future generations are connected. The present generation of Alaska cannot change the past, but with vaccines available, it has the tools to make a better future for generations to come.





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Vision

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

Mission

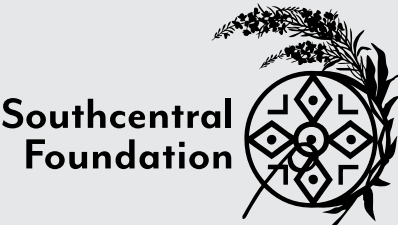
Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.

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Building Trust in COVID-19 Vaccines for a Healthier Alaska

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Brandy Gallagher

Vaccines are the best hope for ending the coronavirus pandemic, but misconceptions and false information have made some wary of receiving a vaccine. Health care organizations across the globe have worked tirelessly to reduce the number of COVID-19 infections and deaths by distributing the vaccine to as many people as possible. False information shared online may influence vaccine decision making – impacting the number of people who choose to be vaccinated. Understanding the facts about the COVID-19 vaccines can help you make an educated decision.

Here is the truth behind some of the most common misconceptions circulating the internet.

Myth #1. COVID-19 vaccines cause COVID-19.

Neither the authorized COVID-19 vaccines nor the ones currently in clinical trials in the United States can cause you to test positive on viral tests.

Myth #2. The COVID-19 vaccine was rushed and skipped steps.

Despite the expedited timeline, two COVID-19 vaccines were created, evaluated, and authorized for emergency use in under a year in the U.S. Like other vaccines before, the COVID-19 vaccines went through the proper clinical trials and did not cut corners. A worldwide emergency matched with significant resources and technology made it possible to get a head start, compile research, overlap phases, and expedite review.

Myth #3. mRNA vaccines can alter your DNA.

COVID-19 vaccines do not change or interact with your DNA. The mRNA in vaccines never enter the nucleus of the cell, which is where DNA is located.

Myth #4. You shouldn't get the vaccine if you've ever had an allergic reaction.

Anaphylaxis, or severe allergic reaction, can happen with venom, food, medication, and even bee stings. If you have had any allergic reactions, it is recommended to speak with your primary care provider about your medical history to make an informed decision. After receiving a COVID-19 vaccine, medical observance is required for a specified time period, based on your medical history, to ensure treatment if needed. Medical care is immediately available if a reaction does occur.



Southcentral Foundation Registered Nurse Case Manager Amanda Heard administers the COVID-19 vaccine to Certified Nurse Midwife Bonnie Bishop-Stark at SCF's vaccine clinic.

Myth #5. If you've been infected with COVID-19 already, you don't need to get vaccinated.

Even if you have already recovered from COVID-19, it is possible to be infected with COVID-19 again. Experts are still studying how long you are protected after your body has been infected with COVID-19. Current studies show the vaccine offers a longer and more robust protection than being infected.

Myth #6. A COVID-19 vaccination won't protect me from getting sick with COVID-19.

A COVID-19 vaccination teaches your immune system how to recognize and fight the virus and protects you from getting sick with COVID-19. There is no way to know how COVID-19 will affect you, if you'll have long-term health effects, or how intense the level of care you may need.

How can you help build confidence in the COVID-19 vaccines? Chances are you know someone who has been vaccinated, or you have been vaccinated. Have a conversation, ask questions, share your story about your vaccine experience, and distribute only facts to help others understand the truth.

For more information, please call your primary care provider, or visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

### COVID-19 VACCINE

Myths v. Facts

	MYTH	OR	FACT
COVID-19 vaccines are proven to be effective.			✓
COVID-19 vaccines contain safe ingredients.			✓
COVID-19 vaccines contain microchips.	X		
COVID-19 mRNA vaccines contain aborted fetal cells.	X		
COVID-19 vaccines are held to the same rigorous standards as all other vaccines used in the U.S.			✓
COVID-19 mRNA vaccines alter human DNA.	X		
COVID-19 vaccine can give you COVID-19.	X		
COVID-19 vaccines significantly lower the risk of getting severe COVID-19 symptoms.			✓
COVID-19 disease can cause long-term health complications.			✓
Widespread vaccination protects populations and those high-risk.			✓
The ingredients in COVID-19 vaccines are safe for pregnant and breastfeeding women.			✓

**Ask your provider if you have any questions.**

It can be difficult to know which sources of information you can trust. When reading or sharing information online, please ensure you are using trusted, credible sites.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/facts.html>

# Healthy Communication Rooted in Alaska Native Cultural Strengths

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoo

For thousands of years, Alaska Native people have mastered telling stories through a myriad of ways: oratory, totem poles, tattoos, dancing, drumming, singing, carving, and many more. No past challenge nor trauma could restrain the storyteller aspect of Alaska Native cultures, and the COVID-19 pandemic is not going to either.

Employees from the Family Wellness Warriors have shared how they have drawn upon cultural values to maintain healthy communication with participants and have also offered creative ideas for how to keep people connected and telling their stories safely throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

“With the kind of unique challenges that Alaska Native people have faced in dealing with trauma and the history, we have resiliency, and we’re able to adapt and still come together,” Learning and Development Associate Tyler Young said.

This resilience and adaptability allowed FWW to continue to connect and share story through changes such as incorporating virtual learning circles quite successfully.

Learning and Development Training Specialist Polly Andrews said teatime over the phone has been an enjoyable way to keep communications going with FWW participants.

Much of this communication could be modeled within our own personal circles. “The learning circle represents what a healthy family may look like, how a healthy family communicates,” Young said.

With the challenges that come with physical distancing, sometimes it is a matter of remembering that Alaska Native people have the innate ability to communicate through many creative and diverse ways. Young stressed that any communication is better than none at all. Fun ways to stay connected include virtual teatime, virtual recipe swapping and

cooking, virtual dog-walking, teatime over the phone, virtual dinner with friends, family gatherings through Zoom, virtual knitting while sharing story, crafts and conversations through Zoom, virtual painting sessions, among much more.

While resilience and adaptability are important, the most critical cultural aspect is community.

“Back in ancestral times, Alaska Native people gathered in ways that healed. We were always gathered at that sod house together. We were gathered around the fire together where story was shared, where people spoke with one another in ways that were healing and supportive of one another,” Andrews said.

Through the same values of resilience, adaptability, and community the ancestors had, this generation of Alaska Native people will continue to successfully connect and share their stories, and the pandemic will not slow that down any time soon.



Learning and Development Training Specialist Polly Andrews shares how Family Wellness Warriors has drawn upon cultural values to maintain healthy communication with participants throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information about SCF’s Family Wellness Warriors, call (907) 729-5440.

**It’s going to take all the tools  
in our bucket  
to conquer COVID-19!**

COVID-19 vaccine

Hand washing

Hand sanitizer

Physical distancing

Mask wearing

**Career Opportunity**  
PRESIDENT/CEO

*Join us in working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.*

Southcentral Foundation’s Board of Directors is seeking qualified candidates for the position of President/Chief Executive Officer. The SCF President/CEO is the highest-ranking position within the organization and reports directly to the Board of Directors. The SCF President/CEO directs the performance and operation of the corporation, ensures the financial sustainability of the corporation, and oversees the development and implementation of strategies to achieve SCF’s short term and long-range corporate goals and objectives.

The SCF Board of Directors welcomes qualified candidates from within SCF as well as from outside the organization. Interested individuals can learn more about the qualifications for the President/CEO position by visiting <https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/president-ceo-recruitment-announcement/>



# Mental Health in the Pandemic Climate

By Behavioral Health Consultant Kylie Duby

Bills piling up, stressed relationships, online school, and hunkering down at home are some reasons many people may be struggling mentally since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Feeling fatigue, worry, irritable, nervous, and unsure are normal ranges of emotions during this time. Support services are available at Southcentral Foundation.

Being isolated from our usual activities can increase stress. Learning new ways of emotional expression is imperative to maintain a healthy life. Taking time away from social media, news, making time for exercise, and getting outside daily are some examples of healthy coping skills you and your family can do together. SCF learning circles can also help you stay connected while focusing on exercise, overall wellness, and mental health — all offered via Zoom.

Financial worry feels unsafe, as it is one of our basic needs of survival and can attribute to higher stress. With increased stress, some may engage in behaviors that are unwanted or unusual, like drinking or doing drugs. Talking with your integrated care team about your current coping skills and whenever strong emotions of anger, anxiety, or depression occur may be helpful in navigating support. Your integrated care team can connect you with a behavioral health consultant to help with coping



Southcentral Foundation has resources available even through this pandemic to help adapt to the changes.

skills, stress, and mental health. Positive coping skills can help reduce the intensity of emotions and build resilience and stress tolerance. Community resource specialists are



Southcentral Foundation continues to offer virtual visits for customer-owners through the pandemic.

also available and can help customer-owners with financial, housing, food, or transportation assistance resources.

Adapting to change can be draining. Since the onset of the pandemic, we have all been asked to change how we function as individuals, employees, parents, and spouses. Reaching out for support is not only a positive thing for you, but can also help your relationships with others. SCF is here to assist you with building on your strengths, values, and what matters to you to not only survive, but thrive.

For more information, or to schedule with a BHC or CRS, please call (907) 729-3300 at Anchorage Native Primary Care Center or (907) 631-7800 at *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center.

For more information on virtual learning circles or exercise groups, please visit [www.southcentralfoundation.com/learning-circles/](http://www.southcentralfoundation.com/learning-circles/)

# Pharmacy Extends Service Beyond the Counter

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoo

The Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Pharmacy has shown its work extends well beyond the counter. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the award-winning pharmacy has contributed to keeping the community safe through commitment to quality, ingenuity, and a dynamic array of services.

### Curbside Services

While ANPCC Pharmacy continued to dispense medications at the clinic, curbside pickup was implemented to support Southcentral Foundation's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past year, the operation evolved from directly dispensing medications from a tent in the south parking lot at ANPCC, to the current temporary building with a bank-style window. ANPCC Pharmacy also expanded hours to increase opportunities where customer-owners could pick up their medications.

### Medication Deliveries

Though ANPCC Pharmacy delivered to the Brother Francis Shelter and the Covenant House before COVID-19, one great development was the expansion of delivery services to the clinic at the temporary shelter set up at the Sullivan Arena. ANPCC Pharmacy also delivers medications to those who are sick and immobile. SCF Pharmacy Manager Debra Tobuk said medications were delivered for customer-owners who were quarantined in hotels.



Pharmacy curbside services evolved from dispensing medications from a tent in the south parking lot at Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, to the current temporary building .

### Additional Viable Services

During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, ANPCC Pharmacy's mail-out services of medications jumped from 200 fills a day to over 400. The physical distancing that mail-out provides makes it the most preferred method by customer-owners for ANPCC Pharmacy to dispense medications.



Customer-owners are able to receive medication from the curbside pharmacy from their car window.

For those customer-owners who want to pick up medications onsite at ANPCC, the many safety precautions set into place have been a success. Many customer-owners have voiced their appreciation for the convenience and extra-added safety that in-clinic dispensing has contributed. Often times, onsite pharmacists are able to fill orders during appointments at the primary care clinics in ANPCC. For individuals who may be in a wheelchair, Elders, or parents with a young babies, this means one less stop to make.

### Vaccine Efforts

The breadth of ANPCC Pharmacy's services broadened to the SCF COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic at the Dr. Katherine and Dr. Kevin Gottlieb Building where many pharmacists and pharmacy technicians volunteered to administer vaccinations. Six pharmacy technicians became certified to administer vaccinations and their skill sets will be of benefit to ANPCC Pharmacy for forthcoming operations such as future flu shot clinics. Through creativity, innovation, and cutting-edge modifications, ANPCC Pharmacy has shown the possibilities of providing safe and quality care are limitless, even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For more information about available services, ANPCC Pharmacy can be reached at (907) 729-4172.



# Safety and Fun Under the Midnight Sun

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoo

The natural playground that Alaska offers can quickly turn from a picturesque postcard to an unforgiving terrain if one attempts to enter it unprepared. Within Alaska Native cultures, there exists a deep respect and reverence for the land, the environment, the people, and the animals. Embracing this frame of mind along with keeping updated on safety preparedness skills can ensure awesome fun under the midnight sun.

The following summer safety tips are provided by organizations such as the American Red Cross, the National Park Service, and the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation.

- Stop the spread of COVID-19. Fully vaccinated people can resume activities without wearing a mask or physically distancing except where required by state, federal, or Tribal law. For individuals not yet vaccinated, when in public wear a face mask, carry hand sanitizer and continue to maintain 6 feet distance between yourself and members outside your household.
- Be fire smart. Avoid grilling indoors, inside tents, or in campers. Steer away from using a flammable liquid (especially gasoline) to start a fire. Visit <https://nps.gov> for tips on how to start a campfire safely. Wear snug-fitting clothes, short-sleeved garments, and closed toe shoes. Know how to put out a clothing fire: stop, drop, and roll.
- Practice bike safety. Wear bright or reflective clothing. Always use a helmet whether riding a bike or ATV. Ride single file in the direction of traffic. Get acquainted with traffic laws. Bicyclists follow the same rules as motorists.
- Ensure water safety. Avoid swimming alone, and always supervise children. Always wear a life vest. Instead of jumping into water to save a friend, use the “reach, throw, don’t go” technique, which involves using a long object to pull a struggling swimmer to safety. By using this strategy, one can help a friend without putting themselves at risk.
- Be bear aware. Avoid outdoor recreation at dawn, dusk, and at night because these are periods when bears are most active, foraging and



Follow simple safety tips like wearing a helmet. It could save your life.

- hunting. Make noise – carry a whistle, bells, and bear spray or a firearm to avoid surprising a bear and triggering an attack.
- Respect the environment. Practice the “pack in and pack out” method, which means packing in only your needs and packing out your trash. By practicing this simple, clean, and environmentally friendly technique, you are able to leave no trace behind and properly clean up campsites.
- Be prepared. The Red Cross advises at minimum, your emergency/ survival kit should include the following: three-day supply of water, three-day supply of non-perishable food, flashlight, battery-powered radio, extra batteries, first aid kit, medications, multipurpose tool, personal hygiene products, copies of personal documents, cell phone and charger, extra cash, emergency blanket, family and emergency contact information, and a map of the area.
- Let someone know your plans. Always share your plans with someone, and make sure they know what time you plan to return. Arrange to contact them upon returning, and provide emergency contacts in case of emergencies.
- Have a fun and safe summer!

# COMING SOON!


## Benteh Nuutah Four Directions



Southcentral Foundation, in partnership with Chickaloon Village Traditional Council and Knik Tribal Council, is expanding the Four Directions Outpatient Treatment Program for Substance Use to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

Stay tuned in the coming months for more information.





# JULY IS NATIONAL CLEFT AND CRANIOFACIAL AWARENESS MONTH

**Did you know** Alaska’s Cleft Lip and Palate Program, jointly operated by Southcentral Foundation and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, is the first state endorsed cleft lip and palate program in Alaska?

The program uses a comprehensive team approach to provide quality care, and is open to all Alaska residents, both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries.

For more information, call (907) 729-5265.



# Alaskan Family Summer Staycation Adventure Guide

By Public Relations Specialist Esther Robertson

After a long and cold winter, summer is finally here. Having some fun this season does not have to break the bank. Here are some ideas to enjoy with your family.

**1. Customize your own biking adventure.**

Grab your helmets and bikes, and enjoy some exercise and fresh air. The Tony Knowles Coastal Trail is an 11-mile trail along the coast of Anchorage. This is one of seven trails to choose from that covers 45 miles of potential adventures. It is a great way to see the beautiful city of Anchorage.

**2. Take a hiking tour, guided or self-guided.**

Eagle River Nature Center trail offers a variety of trail options: choose from a ¾-mile, 3-mile, 6-mile, or 23-mile path. Alaska is flush with hiking trails, so, with a little research, you can plan a day of hiking for you and the family. Safety is priority, so be sure to pack bear spray and water. Take in the scenery filled with the Chugach Mountain range, lakes, waterfalls, and wildlife.

**3. Pack a healthy lunch for a family picnic.**

Put on some sunblock, set down a blanket, and enjoy a meal with your loved ones in the great outdoors.

**4. Harvest veggies at a local farm that offers a pick-your-own service.**

Nothing is better than family time and farm-fresh produce. Have fun while picking veggies and supporting a local business. Pyrah's Pioneer Peak Farm located in Palmer allows customers to visit the farm and pick their own vegetables for a reasonable price.

**5. Create a home spa night.**

Set the mood for a comfortable night in with relaxing music. Enjoy a spa night by painting your nails, putting on a face mask, taking a bath, or incorporating other comforting self-care activities into your evening to help you feel pampered.



Make the best of your summer staycation by spending time enjoying the great Alaskan outdoors.

**6. Camp with your family.**

Whether it is in your back yard or your favorite camping ground, camping is a wonderful way to make precious memories with family.

**7. Make a fort in the living room for a fun movie night.**

Little things like making a fort can make an ordinary movie night more fun. Make some popcorn and put on your favorite movie for the family to enjoy in a fort!

**8. Facilitate a family game night.**

Turn off your devices, and fill the room with laughter while gathering around the table with cards, dice, or board games, and your family.

**9. Get inspired with an arts and crafts night.**

With the midnight sun, mountain scaped views, and wildlife, there is no shortage of creative inspiration. Get together with your family to paint, draw, upcycle household items, sew, or knit.

**10. Go on a fishing retreat.**

Last but not least, an Alaskan summer is not complete without the thrill of catching fish to fill your freezer. Whether it's at the lake, creek, or bay, fishing is always a blast and the fish are tasty and nutritious. Remember to pick up a fishing license before you head to your favorite fishing hole.

## Traditions of the Heart



### Caring for women who care for others.

**What is Traditions of the Heart?**

Traditions of the Heart empowers women to make healthy choices and provides information and tools to achieve wellness while encouraging other women to do the same.

**Join today!**

Talk with your provider to let them know that you want to join and you will be connected with a personal health coach.

**For more information visit:**

**Traditions of the Heart**  
Phone: (907) 729-6740

scftraditionsoftheheart@southcentralfoundation.com

Turn intentions into action!

## Health Education Virtual Learning Circles Via Zoom

**MONDAY**

No learning circles are held on Monday.

**TUESDAY**

**11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m.**  
**Lose to Win**  
**MEETING ID:**  
**987-2163-4738**

**Description:**  
Focus healthy lifestyle changes with this evidence-based weight management program.

**WEDNESDAY**

**10 - 10:50 a.m.**  
**Toddler Time**  
**MEETING ID:**  
**966-1195-2949**

**Description:**  
Participate in educational and fun activities for toddlers. Sing, craft, and play with other children in the community.

**THURSDAY**

**Noon - 1 p.m.**  
*(Second and last Thursday of each month)*  
**Power of Hope**  
**MEETING ID:**  
**959-7817-7527**

**Description:**  
Learn about cancer prevention resources and receive support and tips for managing life with cancer.

**THURSDAY**

**12:30 - 1:30 p.m.**  
**Teatime with Elders**  
**MEETING ID:**  
**937-5949-4088**

**Description:**  
Participants, ages 55 and older, can build community through engaging activities and participate in conversations about disease and cancer prevention.

**FRIDAY**

**11 a.m - Noon**  
**Dinner Makes a Difference**  
**MEETING ID:**  
**926-3324-7356**

**Description:**  
Learn about meal preparation, grocery budgeting, healthy recipes, and how to involve kids in the kitchen.

## Register Now

The Tikahtnu Plant Symposium promotes Indigenous knowledge about Alaskan plants with hands-on activities that encourage a holistic approach to wellness.

**Dates:**

**Aug. 3, 4, and 5**

**Location:**

**Zoom webinar**

**Cost:**

**Free**

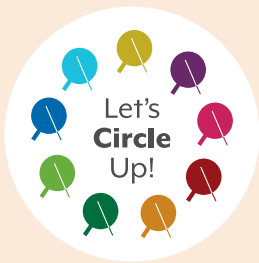
### REGISTRATION

<https://bit.ly/3fc2kjW>

For more information, contact  
Traditional Healing Clinic at (907) 729-4958.



# Southcentral Foundation Learning Circles



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Southcentral Foundation will continue to evaluate learning circle services in the coming months, and schedules may be subject to change. Currently, Family Wellness Warriors is offering the following learning circles virtually through Zoom video conferencing:

## Stress Reduction and Relaxation

**Thursdays, 5:30 - 7 p.m.**  
Meeting ID: 290 027 9397  
Passcode: FWWILC!20

## Generational Healing

**Mondays, 3 - 4:30 p.m.**  
Meeting ID: 999 5333 0639  
Password: FWWILC!20

**Thursdays, 5:30 - 7 p.m.**  
Meeting ID: 970 7792 2782  
Password: FWWILC!20

[www.southcentralfoundation.com/learning-circles](http://www.southcentralfoundation.com/learning-circles)

# Sharing Fish Fills Bellies and Hearts

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Tara Carey

When schools of hooligan arrive in Alaska waters, Alaskans know this means we are on the cusp of summer! Hooligan fuel Alaska in many ways: food, trade, and as the main ingredient in a treasured condiment, hooligan oil. Hooligan also make a delicious gift and is one of Alaska's many accessible fish to harvest.

In recent years, Elder customer-owners who participate in Southcentral Foundation's Elder Program activities have gone on fishing excursions to catch hooligan, get fresh air and exercise, and visit with friends. This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic limitations, Elder Program employees went fishing and shared the bounty with Elder Program participants upon request.



Fresh hooligan from Twenty Mile River will benefit Elder customer-owners.

"This was an opportunity to go out and catch hooligan, explore Alaska, participate in subsistence, and maintain the cultural practice of supporting Elders," said Elder Program Manager Aaron Osterback. The Elder Program also received fish from the Operation Fish Drop project that was created by Sam Schimmel, a Stanford University student and youth leader in the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest Indians. Schimmel is originally from Alaska and is Siberian Yupik and Kenaitze Indian. Operation Fish Drop focuses on food insecurities within Alaskan Native and American Indian communities. The Elder Program delivered fresh frozen salmon to 400 Elder customer-owners residing in the Anchorage area.

# Former RAISE Intern Returns to Where Her Journey Began

By RAISE Intern Supervisor Mercedes Sylva

My experience as an intern was life changing – a passion for education was ignited, and goals that once seemed out of reach became obtainable with my newfound skillsets. Graduating high school would not have been possible without the mentorship I received during my RAISE Program internship at Southcentral Foundation. While homeschooling during my junior year, RAISE Program employees advised me to attend Specialized Academic Vocational Education High School. By attending SAVE, an alternative high school, I was able to catch up on my credits and graduate with my class. The memory of walking across the stage to receive my diploma is cherished and held close to my heart.

The RAISE Program internship was an opportunity for me to get in-depth on-the-job training. My internship experience was mainly focused on worksite development. My time was spent working with SCF Public Relations and the Corporate Office.

When I joined the RAISE Program, I was shy and nervous. The program taught communication skills, checking-in, and public speaking. It focused on the value of checking-in and how that can impact a team dynamic.

By the end of my internship, while I was nervous to present, I was able to share my story in work groups at an SCF Nuka Conference and the National Indian Education Association's Annual Convention and Trade Show.

The RAISE Program offered mentorship and training while using cool and exciting ways of teaching us new things. Cultural activity projects, such as making a traditional drum, sewing a kuspuk, and helping with the



RAISE Program Intern Supervisor Mercedes Sylva.

fishnet at the Kenaitze Indian Tribe Educational Fisheries, were valuable to me. I got lots of practice processing fish!

By being a part of the RAISE internship, I walked away with lifelong friends, good memories, and a skillset that allowed me to jumpstart my academic and professional careers.

As a result of the skills developed during my internship, I acquired full-time work and enrolled in college. From there I obtained my associate degree in general studies, which allowed me to explore career paths. Now I'm going back to school this fall to work toward a bachelor's degree in business management.

As a RAISE intern, I learned how powerful it is to believe in someone, the value of teamwork, how to speak from the heart, and professional skills that led me to a rewarding career.

SCF supervisors offered professional guidance and shared profound life lessons. My journey has come full circle, and I am back at the RAISE Program but in a new role – RAISE intern supervisor. Providing mentorship and training for youth is vital. They are the next generation of leaders. In my new position, my aim is to share knowledge and tools that will help RAISE interns in their journeys through school, work, and life.

For more information about RAISE Program, call (907) 729-5015.



# Navigating Health Care Costs at Non-Tribal Facilities

By Revenue Cycle Supervisor of Outreach and Enrollment Ariel Berg and Senior Public Relations Specialist Michelle Mincks

During a medical emergency, many people aren't thinking about the cost of life-saving measures. According to a recent survey, 60% of Americans have had debt from medical bills, with emergency visits as the leading cause. A phone call to Purchased and Referred Care, formerly known as Contract Health Services, could provide relief from costly bills that may come after an emergent or urgent care visit.

"We process more than 150 claims per month on average," said Southcentral Foundation Outreach and Enrollment Supervisor Zach Fuqua, who oversees the SCF PRC team at *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center. Fuqua shared that SCF PRC primarily assists customer-owners who reside in Matanuska-Susitna Borough with emergent visits to Mat-Su Regional Medical Center emergency room.

PRC has limited funding available to assist customer-owners with payment for urgent or emergent medical needs. Urgent visits are categorized as health issues that need immediate attention, that would otherwise become an emergency if not treated. Emergent visits are events that present an immediate threat to life, limb, and/or eyes.

According to the Indian Health Service, this funding is part of the PRC program where IHS and Tribal facilities purchase private health care from providers in situations where:

- No IHS or Tribal direct care facility exists;
- The existing direct care element is incapable of providing required emergency and/or specialty care;
- Utilization in the direct care element exceeds existing staffing; and
- Supplementation of alternate resources (e.g., Medicare, Medicaid, or private insurance) is required to provide comprehensive health care to eligible Alaska Native or American Indian people.

Additionally, if you require services the Alaska Native Medical Center doesn't provide, a referral may be needed to a non-Tribal facility. A call to PRC can help you navigate the process.

Customer-owners who reside in the Municipality of Anchorage and are empaneled at Anchorage Native Primary Care Center should call the ANMC PRC at (907) 729-2470. Customer-owners who reside in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and are empaneled at VNPCC should call SCF PRC at (907) 631-7681.

It is essential to contact PRC before receiving services at any non-Tribal health care facility, or within 72-hours of an emergency room visit to avoid a bill in the mail. "A customer-owner who does not follow this process could be billed for medical services," said SCF Revenue Operations Administrator Michelle Wenger. "Ultimately, if they do not follow up with Purchased and Referred Care regarding an eligibility screening, they might have their bill sent to collections and be responsible for payment."

To be eligible for PRC funds, you must be an empaneled Alaska Native or American Indian customer-owner and meet the following guidelines:

- Call PRC within 72-hours of emergency room visit.
- Provide information on your current health insurance status and complete a health benefits eligibility screening.
- If found eligible, apply for Medicaid, Denali KidCare, and/or payment programs.
- Meet the urgent and/or emergent guidelines.

"Our team is here to assist customer-owners with navigating this process, and ensuring they follow the right steps," said Wenger.

*According to the Indian Health Service the Consolidated Appropriation Act of 2014 renamed the Contract Health Services program to the Purchased and Referred Care program in January 2014. For more information, call Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center Family Health Resources at (907) 631-7830. Source: LendingTree survey, Feb. 2021.*

# Staying Connected and Healthy with Innovative Platforms

By SCF Health Education

Southcentral Foundation Health Education is dedicated to the overall well-being of customer-owners and fulfills SCF's mission of working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services. "SCF Health Education's goal is to empower customer-owners to incorporate healthy habits in their daily life. We do this by providing learning experiences on health topics through learning circles, and outreach campaigns," said SCF Health Education Manager Jessica Davis.

SCF Health Education has continued to provide services during the pandemic by using innovative ways to continue customer-owner outreach.

**To join a Zoom class, follow these simple steps:**

1. Visit Zoom.us in your browser on the day and time of the desired class.
2. Select "Join a Meeting" in the top left corner of the screen.
3. Enter the meeting ID for the desired class.
4. Enter the meeting password: HealthEd!
5. Get moving!

**To call in and participate via phone, follow these simple steps:**

1. Call (646) 558-8656 on the day and time of your desired class.
2. When prompted, enter the 11-digit meeting ID for the desired class, then press #.
3. Get connected!

"We were traveling to our service unit areas, bringing health events and education for chronic disease and cancer prevention to rural communities and schools, hosting learning circles in person on campus, at the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School, and community events," said SCF Health Educator Rebecca Rabb, who coordinates wellness events and advocacy programs. When in-person events were cancelled, to support physical distancing, the SCF Health Education team developed creative ways to reach customer-owners, and

continue the SCF Vision and Mission.

Learning circles, which used to be attended in person, have shifted to a virtual platform, and can be accessed with a phone, laptop, or other device. Classes include Dinner Makes a Difference, Teatime with Elders, Toddler Time, Power of Hope Cancer Education and Social Group, and Lose to Win. These uplifting learning circles are offered to all ages of the Alaska Native Community, and encourage healthy life habits.

Meeting virtually with other customer-owners who may be having similar experiences creates a safe, and supportive environment. For example, the Toddler Time learning circle occurs every Wednesday and is a place where caregivers and toddlers engage with others, share stories, learn new skills, and build meaningful relationships. Class schedules can be found on the SCF website or by calling SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689.

"We are here to serve, [and] we are working hard on meaningful interactions, ways to deliver health information, and engaging activities that promote connection," said Rabb.

*Learning circles are available via Zoom for customer-owners to join. For more information, contact SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689.*



Health Educator Rebecca Rabb opens up about how COVID-19 workplace adjustments have impacted her and the customer-owners she works with.

# Power of Hope Offers Support

By Public Relations Specialist Connie Irrigoo

National Cancer Survivors Day, recognized in June, is a day where people impacted by cancer come together to celebrate milestones, get connected, and recognize those who have supported them along the way. Southcentral Foundation offers cancer prevention learning opportunities and support services for anyone in the community going through cancer treatment, cancer survivors, caregivers, and support partners.

SCF customer-owner Marge Parker received the news of her cancer diagnosis a week after she had an annual mammogram in 2006. “I received the results letter after my annual mammogram, it did not say good results, a normal mammogram,” explained Parker. “A week after receiving the results of the mammogram, an Alaska Native Medical Center surgeon called me to schedule surgery.”

A frequent participant in several SCF programs including exercise, Elder Program, and learning circles, Parker knew SCF offered support services to help her navigate the breast cancer diagnosis. She learned about the Power of Hope learning circle that offers participants healthy methods for preventing, managing, and surviving cancer. Parker knew she could talk with her integrated care team, and she could discuss milestones, feelings, and concerns about her cancer experience in a caring atmosphere



Marge Parker found help through exercise, the Elder Program, and the Power of Hope.

through the Power of Hope. Power of Hope is offered through SCF Health Education.

“Southcentral Foundation Health Education offers cancer prevention learning opportunities and support services; a network of support is available for customer-owners and their families to navigate a cancer diagnosis,” shared SCF Health Educator Julie Stayden. Two learning circles are offered for Power of Hope and are held via Zoom from noon to 1 p.m., on the second and last Thursdays of every month.

Parker is thankful she didn’t have chemotherapy or radiation. She had a lumpectomy, and soon after, a mastectomy at ANMC. “I had some anxiety, worries, and fears,” she shared, “I still thank God I am a cancer survivor; it’s been 15 years!”

Since the cancer diagnosis, Parker participated by Zoom in the Power of Hope and is staying in good physical and emotional shape. She plans on continuing to be active and will attend in-person support services when it is safe to return.

If you or someone you know is considering screening and prevention, has been diagnosed with cancer, or looking for support, help and resources are available. Wherever you are in your journey, SCF will meet you there.

For more information, contact your primary care provider or SCF Health Education. Visit [southcentralfoundation.com/services](https://southcentralfoundation.com/services)



# Evidence-Based Program to Prevent Type 2 Diabetes

By Health Educators Velda Miller and Caroline Wolkoff

Southcentral Foundation's Lose to Win program has supported customer-owners throughout the years on their health and wellness journeys. Lose to Win learning circles incorporate the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Diabetes Prevention Program curriculum, which has a focus toward a healthy lifestyle change. This program meets weekly with all participants in a respectful and safe place, a learning circle. The learning circle offers a community where participants share health and wellness life skills and gain education, guidance, and support.

Success in this program is calculated with measurements and weekly weigh-ins. Lose to Win's firm foundation is based on collaborative efforts to establish a strong tie to the program's mission, to prevent type 2 diabetes.

This class supports participant's efforts in other ways, including health incentives for attendance, action plans, and commitment to the program. Participants utilize peer support, group participation, and accountability by sending in weekly weigh-ins—the shared goal is to measure the scale of success.

The Lose To Win program launched in 2010, and adopted the CDC PreventT2 curriculum, a program proven to prevent or delay type 2 diabetes, four years ago. A core team of professionals with health coaches, registered dietitians, behavioral health consultants, and an exercise physiologist are available to work hand-in-hand with participants.



Health Educator Caroline Wolkoff showcases the kit provided to customer-owners when they join the Lose to Win program.

Each team member rotates and presents the CDC PreventT2 curriculum parallel to their specialty and professional field.

Participants who take part in Lose to Win have many health care partners on their support teams and have opportunities to get to know peers and or colleagues.

Lose to Win's success is a partnership effort with the care and passion of a team of providers who present lessons and guidance in a supportive manner.

At the onset of Lose to Win classes 1 and 2, participants set a weight loss goal of 5-7% of their body weight to improve their overall health and decrease the risk of developing diabetes or heart disease. Lose to Win offers a year-long program with two sessions in each half of the year, which adheres to the CDC guidelines and to become a recognized CDC Diabetes Prevention program in Alaska.

This past year the class went virtual to adapt to a new way of living and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Lose to Win team continues to support each participant's vision of health and wellness by using the scale as a measure of success and providing a learning circle to share stories and experiences in an empowering environment.

To sign up for the next session, or for questions, call SCF Lose to Win at (907) 729-2689, or email [scflosetowin@scf.cc](mailto:scflosetowin@scf.cc)



# Well-Child Checks and What to Expect

By SCF Public Relations

Parents, guardians, and child caregivers know keeping track of developmental milestones and health schedules can be a challenge. That is why regular appointments with your child’s pediatrician or primary care provider are important. During well-child checkups, the provider will observe your child’s development and growth. This includes physical growth measurements such as height and weight, but also hearing, vision, and reflex examinations. The providers will also look for new capabilities consistent with the child’s age. For example, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, a six-month-old baby should begin to sit without support, make different sounds to express joy or displeasure, and attempt to get things that are out of reach.

Well-child checkups are the perfect time to discuss questions or concerns you may have about your child’s day-to-day actions or habits. “I like to think of it as getting some one-on-one tutoring for how to care for your individual child because every child is unique with their own personal needs and challenges. It’s also a chance to offload some of the stress you can feel as a parent and get reassurance that you are doing the best you can for your family,” said Pediatrician Dwight Parker, MD.

If any major life changes or challenges occur, talk with your child’s pediatrician or primary care provider about healthy coping mechanisms or community resources. While well-child checkups are designed to be timely and consistent, parents should not be deterred from scheduling more frequent appointments. Virtual or phone appointments are available and a viable option for parents with questions that may require a one-on-one conversation but not necessarily a physical examination of the child.

Your child’s pediatrician or primary care provider will also share the recommended immunization schedules and the benefits of receiving immunizations. Immunizations, or vaccines, are specifically designed to train the immune system to recognize and combat certain conditions by introducing small amounts of weakened or killed germs into the body,

triggering an immune response. Vaccines are not only beneficial for the recipient, but for their family, friends, and community.

The CDC Immunization Schedule for infants, toddlers, children, and teens is based on years of conclusive research. Timing recommendations are based on how the immune system will respond at each age and how likely they are to be exposed to diseases. “[Vaccines] are carefully developed to prevent disease and lessen its effects. It makes sense to get them as early as possible so your family can enjoy the best protection from some really serious diseases. The earlier you get vaccinated the more bang for your buck you get so to speak. One image I like to use is seatbelt safety. It makes more sense to put it on before the car is rolling than when you are already out on Seward Highway,” Parker explained.

Beat the rush and schedule your child’s back-to-school physical in advance. The Anchorage School District school year begins Aug. 24 for preschool and kindergarten, and Aug. 17 for all other students.



Regular well-child checkups and immunizations allow the littlest customer-owners to live happy, healthy lives.

To schedule a well-child checkup, a back-to-school physical, or to get your child immunized, make an appointment by calling (907) 729-3300.

Suggested Schedule for

Well-Child Checks and Vaccinations

If you have any concerns or need to schedule an appointment, please call your provider.

BIRTH

Hepatitis B

Newborn metabolic screener

NEWBORN

Jaundice screening

Weight check

2 WEEKS

Pediatrician visit

Weight check

Mother postpartum screening

2 MONTHS

DTaP

Hepatitis B

PedVax Hib

Mother postpartum screening

Polio Vaccines

PCV13

Rotavirus

4 MONTHS

DTaP

Hepatitis B

PCV13

Mother postpartum screening

Polio Vaccines

PedVax Hib

Rotavirus

6 MONTHS

DTaP

Hepatitis B

Polio Vaccines

Mother postpartum screening

PCV13

Rotavirus

9 MONTHS

No routine vaccinations due, well child check only.

12 MONTHS

DTaP

Hepatitis A

MMR

PCV13

PedVax Hib

Varicella

Iron and lead screening

15 MONTHS

No routine vaccinations due, well child check only.

18 MONTHS

Hepatitis A

Autism screening

2 YEARS

No routine vaccinations due, well child check only.

30 MONTHS

No routine vaccinations due, well child check only.

3 YEARS

Annual physical exams begin

4 – 6 YEARS

DTaP

Polio Vaccines

Diagnostic hearing test before starting school

MMR

Varicella

11 – 12 YEARS

HPV

Meningococcal

Tdap

Developmental screening and growth measurements each visit from newborn – 18 years.

Influenza vaccine annually 6 months – 18 years.

Dental and vision exams annually beginning at 12 months.

Physical exams and school physicals annually age 3 – 18 years.

The most common side effects from immunizations are fever, soreness and swelling at the site. MMR or varicella vaccines occasionally cause rash 1 – 3 weeks after immunization.

Summer 2021

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# Fall Prevention — A Key Role for Elders to Age Well

By Improvement Specialist Tamara Odden, Palliative Support Consultant Chris Piromalli, and Physical Therapist Regina Swanson



Southcentral Foundation strives to support the health and wellness of Elder customer-owners. The aging well initiative incorporates the 4 Ms — mentation, medication, mobility, and what matters to provide age-friendly, whole-person care.

Mobility plays an important role as you age. Supporting mobility, function, and strength all help to prevent falls so Elders can maintain independence. The fear of falling alone can affect quality of life by keeping you from being active and doing the things you love. Customer-owners can overcome this fear by maintaining physical health to prevent falls.

At SCF, physical therapists partner with customer-owners to support staying active, and mobile, and reach wellness goals. One such customer-owner, an 80-year-old woman, was having mobility trouble and frequent falls. The physical therapist conducted a home assessment to see how she could be more independent again.

To start, night lights were installed and pathways cleared. Then, by adjusting assistive devices, she worked on strength, balance, and walking techniques. Soon, she was able to regain her independence at home and

was no longer losing her balance. Most importantly, she was better able to enjoy time with her husband.

Why do aging adults fall? There are many reasons, and understanding them is the first step to prevention. Polypharmacy, or using four or more prescribed medications, is a common occurrence for Elders and can make it two times more likely they may fall. It is important for Elders to meet with their primary care provider regularly to assess prescribed medications and to ensure they are still effective in supporting good health.

Difficulties with balance and gait may be another reason why an Elder may fall. Using an assistive device, such as a cane or walker, can help a person feel more steady when walking and prevent falls. Customer-owners can ask to meet with a physical therapist to determine if assistive devices can help when commuting or standing for extended periods of time. It is important to learn how to use these devices in a correct way to stay safe.

Drinking enough fluids is essential for aging well and preventing falls. Not only is this important for maintaining good joint and organ function, but not drinking enough fluids can cause fatigue and dizziness, leading to increased falls. Ask your health care team how much fluid you should be drinking each day to stay healthy.

Southcentral Foundation has many resources to assist customer-owners age well, remain active, and stay safe. Everyone has their own set of wellness and health care goals as they age, and there are teams ready to partner on the aging journey. SCF occupational therapy, physical therapy, and primary care providers are available to assist customer-owners create a plan to remain mobile and prevent falls.

For more information about the aging well initiative, please talk to your primary care provider.

Out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on social distancing for higher-risk populations,

**Southcentral Foundation has suspended all in-program activities at the Elder Program.**

For more information, call the Elder Program at (907) 729-6500.

		2		5	4	1	3	9
5		9		3	1	2		8
1		3	9	2		6		
7	3	8	1	9	5	4	6	2
9	1	4	2	6		5		
2	5	6		4				
		7	5	8		3		
		5	3	1		7		
3	2	1	4	7	6	8	9	5

### Number Puzzle

Sudoku is fun to play and the rules are simple. Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers one through nine.

5	6	8	9	7	4	1	2	3
6	4	7	2	1	3	5	9	8
1	2	3	6	8	5	7	9	4
3	1	6	8	4	7	9	5	2
7	8	5	3	9	2	4	1	6
2	9	4	5	6	1	8	3	7
4	5	9	7	2	6	3	8	1
8	7	2	1	3	9	6	4	5
9	3	1	4	5	8	2	7	9

Solution

## Important Phone Numbers

Alaska Native Medical Center.....	(907) 563-2662	Food Bank of Alaska .....	(907) 272-3663
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) .....	(907) 272-1444	People Mover .....	(907) 343-4536
Anchorage Police Department (non-emergency).....	(907) 786-8500	Salvation Army Meals on Wheels .....	(907) 349-0613
Anchor Rides.....	(907) 343-2550	Senior Benefits .....	(907) 352-4150
Cook Inlet Housing Authority.....	(907) 793-3000	Southcentral Foundation .....	(907) 729-4955
Division of Public Assistance .....	(907) 269-6599	SCF Elder Program Event Hotline.....	(907) 729-6588