

Breast Cancer Screenings Back on the Radar

By Public Relations Specialist Addison Arave

The most commonly diagnosed cancer among Alaska Native women is breast cancer. Screening is the best method to detect cancer in its earliest stages, which increases the likelihood of successful treatment. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention cites a study that shows a 98% decrease in breast cancer screening rates among American Indian and Alaskan Native women from January 2020 to June 2020. According to the CDC, this decline has caused delayed diagnoses, poor health consequences, and an increase in cancer disparities among women already experiencing health inequities. With precautions in place, now is the time to talk with your provider about your screening options.

Due to the delay in screenings and missed annual or biannual appointments, many hospitals are seeing higher amounts of breast cancer diagnoses in the later stages. One hospital in Boston saw its percentage of positive tests almost double from 6.6% to 12.6% in just the last year. It is important to resume general health practices, including cancer screening.

Screenings save lives. Knowing how and when to get screened while following the recommended testing schedule is crucial to early detection. While recommendations can vary slightly between clinics, Southcentral Foundation Radiology recommends an annual mammogram for women ages 40 and older throughout the remainder of their lives. SCF mammography technologists use the most up-to-date technology, 3D mammography, which provides earlier breast cancer detection, 40% less callbacks, and detection of between 20-65% more invasive cancers than conventional mammography alone. Customer-owners are receiving the highest quality screening with the most accurate results possible.

While mammograms can help detect cancer before physical changes such as lumps appear, breast self-exams help women become familiar with how their breasts look and feel so they can notify their provider if there are any changes. A breast self-exam is a convenient screening method recommended for women of all ages, can be performed at home, and should be a part of a monthly routine.



Being aware of how your breasts feel and what is normal is important for people of any age and can help detect changes and causes for concern later. An example of the importance of self-examination is customer-owner Jesse Mercurief.

“I remember finishing up with my women's annual exam at Southcentral Foundation and seeing a 'Do It Yourself Breast Exam' door handle flyer. Mind you, at the time I never grab these sorts of things ever,” Mercurief said. “When I get



home, I hang it on my bedroom door handle and never think of it again until about six months later. I'm getting out of the shower and sit on the edge of the bed to cool off for a bit and notice the flyer hanging there and think to myself, 'Let's see if I can follow the directions on how to do a self-breast exam.' Within the first couple of motions, I had found a lump in my left breast almost the size of a golf ball. I stopped as soon as I felt it, thought to myself, 'no way!' I felt again and sure enough there it was and has never left me since.”

Being aware of how to perform a self-check for lumps in her breasts and learning what is normal helped Mercurief begin her fight against breast cancer earlier than she would have otherwise.

“I thought when I heard the news that it was cancer my life would soon be over. It had spread [to] stage 3 and it was a BRAC 2 mutation, which also meant that I had a very good chance of getting ovarian cancer [and] that my chances of metastatic cancer are very high.” Mercurief said. “I may be a survivor and have fought with everything I had in me to win this fight, to become the thriver my oncologist said I would be because, at the time, my 3-year-old daughter needed me, and she helped me fight every step of the way.”

Mercurief's story is an inspiring reminder that health and wellness is ever-evolving. It is never too late to learn more about your body, what to watch out for, and how to detect changes. To learn more about your risk for breast cancer, how to perform a self-breast exam, or screening options, talk with your provider.

SCF has cancer education resources to provide information for customer-owners so they can proceed with confidence and encouragement. Contact Health Education at (907) 729-2689 to learn more about how to prevent cancer in your everyday life or to join the bi-monthly Power of Hope Cancer Education and Support learning circle.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Cancer Society, Fred Hutch

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

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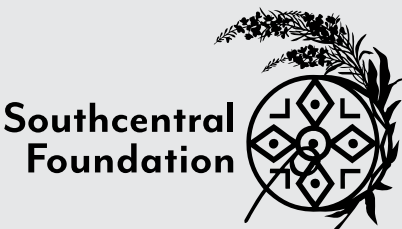
Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.

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Southcentral Foundation Celebrates April Kyle as President and CEO

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations



Southcentral Foundation President and CEO April Kyle, a CIRI shareholder of Athabascan descent.

The Southcentral Foundation Board of Directors has named April Kyle as president and CEO of the organization. Kyle had been serving as interim CEO since August 2020. Kyle began her career with SCF in 2003.

“We are pleased to welcome April as president/CEO of Southcentral Foundation,” said SCF Board of Directors Chairman James Segura. “As we look to the future, we are confident April is the right person to lead SCF and carry on the long legacy of health care transformation to provide the very best health outcomes for those we serve.”

A CIRI shareholder of Athabascan descent, Kyle was born and raised in southcentral Alaska, spending summers with her family in Ninilchik. Her career with SCF spans two decades. Prior to her year as interim CEO, Kyle was a member of SCF’s Vice President Leadership Team as the vice president of behavioral services. Kyle has been a part of building SCF’s Nuka System of Care, a relationship-based approach to whole-person wellness. She was one of the first graduates of SCF’s Executive Leadership Experience Program, as well as a member of the Alaska Native Executive Leadership Program’s inaugural class at Alaska Pacific University and the Alaska Journal of Commerce’s Top Forty Under 40 class of 2013. She received her master’s degree in business administration from the University of Washington.

“I am grateful for this opportunity to serve as president/CEO,” said Kyle. “Participating in our health care transformation, as both an employee and a customer-owner, I have seen firsthand what is possible when decisions are driven by customer-owners and supported by an extremely talented workforce who value collaborations and partnership. We will build on the last three decades of achievement as we move forward in health and wellness.”

For more information on Southcentral Foundation Board of Directors and executive leadership, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/about-us/leadership/.

First Wayfinding App in Alaska Launches on the Alaska Native Health Campus

By Southcentral Foundation and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium



Tinitun, pronounced, “tin-ee-toon” is the Dena’ina word for “trail: major passageways of human movement.”

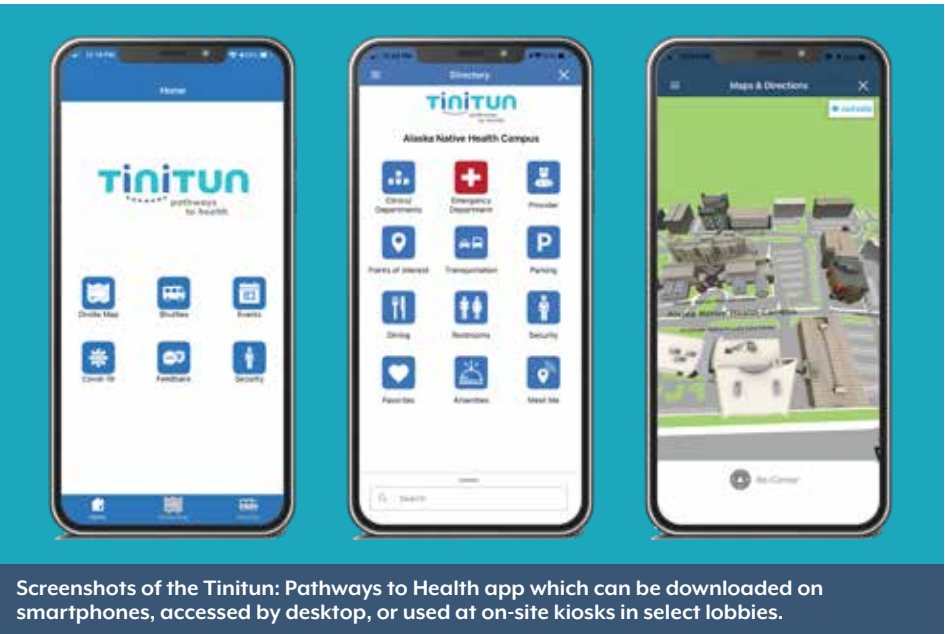
Southcentral Foundation and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium have partnered to implement a state-of-the-art digital wayfinding solution for customer-owners and visitors navigating around the Alaska Native Health Campus. This technology, which includes indoor turn-by-turn directions inside the Alaska Native Medical Center hospital and Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, is the first of its kind in Alaska.

The Tinitun: Pathways to Health app is available for download on smartphones, accessed by desktop, or used at on-site kiosks in select lobbies. The app will help campus visitors locate providers or clinics with ease, discover campus food options, find the nearest shuttle, mark the location of their parked cars, and more.

Tinitun, pronounced, “tin-ee-toon” is the Dena’ina word for “trail: major passageways of human movement.” This name is used with permission to acknowledge the people and culture of the Dena’ina, on whose land the Alaska Native Health Campus is situated, while also describing the app’s function: connecting customer-owners with their health care using modern technology. The app’s multiple capabilities, as well as the acknowledgment that all paths are different and based on individual choices, are underscored by the tagline pathways to health.

The Tinitun app is a result of the feedback voiced by customer-owners who identified a need to find a solution to navigate around campus, as well as access information about transportation, patient housing, and associated care coordination services. Tinitun app will have expanded

functionality in the future, its primary objective is to provide a positive, digital wayfinding experience.



On-site kiosks are now in place in the Patient Housing lobby, the main rotunda entrance of the ANMC hospital, the Healthy Communities Building lobby, and ANPCC main and 2 East entrances. It is anticipated that kiosk locations will be expanded in the future.

Start mapping your next Alaska Native Health Campus visit by downloading the Tinitun app to your Apple or Android smartphone.

For more information, or to access the software from your computer, visit <https://anmc.org/tinitun>.

Four Directions Expands Services to Matanuska-Susitna Borough

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Michelle Mincks

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

Every community in Alaska is impacted by substance use. Strengthening and expanding the services available for addiction treatment and recovery can improve the outcomes of those struggling with substance and alcohol use.

“Chickaloon Village Traditional Council is pleased to partner with the Four Directions Outpatient Treatment Center to provide our support for ensuring the success of this program which has a proven track record of success in Anchorage,” Chickaloon Village Traditional Council Chief Gary Harrison said.

Benteh Nuutah Four Directions Outpatient Treatment Center provides substance use treatment in an outpatient setting for adults ages 18 and older. Services are available for all Matanuska-Susitna Borough residents. Customer-owners interested in seeking services will connect with a masters level therapist to identify the most appropriate level of care and a treatment pathway best suited to meet that individual’s unique needs.

“Southcentral Foundation has grown our addiction treatment continuum over the last several years. I am excited that this growth now includes offering substance use treatment for customer-owners in the Mat-Su Valley. We know that treatment works, and the positive impact treatment has on a person’s physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness,” Michelle Baker, acting vice president of SCF’s Behavioral Services Division said.

Customer-owners who are ready to enter *Benteh Nuutah* Four Directions can start right away. The program includes both individual and group treatment that is tailored based on each person’s unique strengths,



story, and goals. The clinician will partner with each individual to create an initial plan to begin moving toward wellness goals. This plan may also include a referral to other programs such as detox, residential treatment, psychiatry, primary care, and learning circles among others. Average length of treatment is 4 - 6 months and varies depending on treatment goals.

“An outpatient treatment program rooted in cultural values is vitally important to supporting healthy outcomes for individuals and families living in the Mat-Su,” Harrison said.

If you are interested in learning more about *Benteh Nuutah* Four Directions Outpatient Treatment Center in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, call (907) 631-6300. To reach Four Directions Outpatient Treatment Center in Anchorage, call (907) 729-6300.

Flu Vaccination is One of the Best Defenses for Remaining Healthy

By SCF Integrated Pharmacist Theresa Castellanos



An annual flu vaccine protects you and the people around you.

Getting an influenza vaccine is one of the best defenses for remaining healthy this winter season. With the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the spread of new variants, now is the time to do our part in keeping ourselves and communities safe from spreading infectious viruses such as the flu.

The flu causes considerable morbidity and mortality in children and adults. In the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 20,000 children under the age of 5, and 400,000 others, are hospitalized every year due to complications from influenza. Vaccination is the most effective means of preventing the flu and the CDC recommends vaccination be completed by the end of October.

Everyone 6 months and older is recommended to get an annual flu vaccine. The only contraindications to getting the vaccine would be if a

- person experienced a previous severe allergic reaction (e.g. anaphylaxis) to a flu vaccine. There are many flu vaccine options available to account for those who are allergic to eggs, those who may be pregnant, and Elders over the age of 65.
- Some benefits of flu vaccination:
- It prevents you from getting sick with flu. During 2019-2020, flu vaccination prevented an estimated 7.5 million influenza illnesses, 3.7 million influenza-associated medical visits, 105,000 influenza-associated hospitalizations, and 6,300 influenza-associated deaths.
 - It helps protect women during and after pregnancies, reducing the risk of flu-associated respiratory infections by half. A flu vaccine given during pregnancy also protects the baby from flu for several months after birth, when they are not yet old enough to be vaccinated.
 - It is important for people with chronic health conditions because it reduces their risk of getting seriously ill.
 - Protects you and the people around you, including those vulnerable to serious flu illness such as babies and young children, Elders, and people with chronic health conditions.
- Southcentral Foundation will hold a drive-thru flu shot clinic on Oct. 16 and 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., located in the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center west parking lot. The flu vaccine is available for customer-owners ages 3 years and older. No appointments are necessary. Call SCF Pharmacy at (907) 729-4172 for more information. Customer-owners may also receive a flu shot from their primary care providers.

Source: <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/2019-2020.html>

November is National American Indian and Alaska Native Heritage Month

Celebrate with SCF by sharing your own regalia photos, stories, and traditional recipes on social media using

#HeritageMonth #SCFRegalia2021
#_____ (insert name of your tribe)



HELP FIGHT THE FLU!



Drive-Thru Pharmacy Flu Clinic

OCTOBER 16 AND 23
10 A.M. - 2 P.M.

ANPCC West Parking Lot
4320 Diplomacy Drive

Getting a flu vaccine will be more important than ever. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends all people 6 months and older receive a yearly flu vaccine. The flu vaccine will reduce your risk from flu and help conserve health care resources.

Must have established medical chart, no appointment necessary.
Talk with your provider if you have any questions or concerns.



Employee, Military Veteran Utilizes Southcentral Foundation Services to Recover from Trauma

By Public Relations Specialist Gabby St Clair

“Fire, fire, fire!” the crew yelled, as the entire battleship shook, and black smoke encompassed their surroundings. On April 19, 1989, a 16-inch gun turret exploded on the USS Iowa. The explosion killed 47 sailors instantly. The investigation concluded the explosion likely took place due to the powder bags being over rammed when loaded.

While the explosion was more than 30 years ago, for Michael Todd, Southcentral Foundation manager of Data Services and Research, it seems like yesterday. Todd was serving in the U.S. Navy on a similar battleship at the time of the explosion. This tragedy brought awareness to the risks he was facing each day and how even if he completed his job safely and efficiently, equipment malfunctions or human error could have devastating consequences.

“In the military, there can be an overwhelming level of stress that you experience by feeling powerless of your surroundings,” the Navy veteran said.

A father of three and stepfather of three more, Todd served on active duty for one tour and completed six years in the Navy Reserves. His primary job was as a boatswain’s mate, considered to be a jack of all trades. His duties included deckhand maintenance and flight operations, and firefighter. During general quarters evolutions, he served in the 16-inch gun turret as both a gun powder handler and range finder.

He served on the USS Missouri, which is now retired and rests in the heart of Pearl Harbor Memorial. The battleship was in commission for World War II, the Korean War, and the Gulf War.

“The working schedule kept us busy, and there wasn’t much time for reflection while we were in the Persian Gulf,” Todd shared as he reflected on the periods of loneliness and depression he encountered. The crew deployed to the Persian Gulf for extended periods, and the only way

to communicate with their families was by mail.

The military veteran of 10 years began working at SCF in January 2017. He was completing new hire orientation when he heard about a program called Soldier’s Heart. Todd said Soldier’s Heart not only helped him in his personal life but benefited his professional career, as well.

“Soldier’s Heart is a peer-led program to help veterans, first responders, law enforcement, and their families learn skills that can help them get through their post-traumatic stress in their personal and professional lives,” he said.

Its goal is to identify people who are interested in understanding post-traumatic stress in their lives and share the tools and resources to deal with issues related to post-traumatic stress.

“I did not realize how much the trauma impacted me until I completed the Soldier’s Heart program. I had feelings of unease and stress but never understood where it came from. After completing Soldier’s Heart, I was able to identify my triggers and use tools from the training to cope,” shared Todd.



Michael Todd, manager of SCF Data Services and Research.

For more information, please contact Soldier’s Heart at (907) 729-6671, soldiersheart@southcentralfoundation.com or www.southcentralfoundation.com/services/soldiers-heart.

With respect,
honor,
and gratitude,

Southcentral Foundation thanks all veterans for their sacrifices and service to our nation.

Join the Southcentral Foundation Team!



Southcentral Foundation offers a wide variety of employment opportunities with a generous and competitive benefits package. We employ fully qualified employees in all positions and commit ourselves to recruiting and training Alaska Native and American Indian people. We offer an award-winning onboarding program for entry-level positions throughout the organization.

For listing of open positions at SCF, please visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/employment

Celebrating Laboratory Excellence

By SCF Public Relations

The Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association presented its 2021 Patient Safety "Beacon" Award to the Alaska Native Medical Center, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Southcentral Foundation, and Dr. James Tiesinga, on behalf of the ANMC Laboratory, at a virtual event Sept. 22.

The Beacon Award recognizes commitment to health equity and high-quality patient care and safety programs. It is one of several 2021 ASHNHA awards celebrating the perseverance of Alaska's health care champions through the pandemic. The work at the ANMC Lab is a collaboration between ANTHC and SCF. The team is led by Tiesinga as medical director and includes lab managers, pathologists, medical technologists, lab and histologic technicians and lab assistants. They work together using state-of-the-art technology to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of health conditions. Results of lab tests often identify the presence of infection or disease in the earliest stages, when treatment is less costly and interventions can produce better outcomes.

The award honors shared commitment and collaboration in support of the state's health and wellness, including implementing a COVID-19 vaccine distribution program and increasing COVID-19 testing capacity for Alaskans. ANTHC and SCF moved efficiently with vaccine administration while much of the nation was beset by drawn-out wait times. Also, very early in the pandemic, even before the U.S. declared a state of emergency, the ANMC Lab worked with suppliers to acquire COVID-19 testing equipment, collection media and swabs, and to push these supplies and equipment out to rural areas. Because of this foresight, by April 3, 2020, ANMC became one of the first in Alaska to begin in-house COVID-19 testing.



The Alaska Native Health Campus houses many of Southcentral Foundation's and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium's buildings and programs in Anchorage.

"At the beginning, we very quickly approached almost 2,000 tests per day," said Tiesinga, ANMC Laboratory Medical Director. "As the number of routine tests waxed and waned depending on hospital admissions, COVID-19 testing quickly became our laboratory's primary focus. On average, we process over 570 tests a day."

The pandemic required the ANMC Lab to ramp up testing at a swift pace while maintaining the highest safety standards. As of Sept. 1, the team has processed and resulted 333,829 COVID-19 tests, helping make Alaska one of the

most tested states in the country. Safety in labeling, specimen stability, and transport all play important roles in achieving accurate, timely test results. The team works 24 hours a day with the ANMC hospital, including the Emergency Department, and partners with SCF's primary care clinics and Tribal partners to receive and process many hundreds of COVID-19 samples daily. The ANMC Lab has continued to expand in response to the needs, including acquiring the best equipment available and training staff.

"I am very proud of our team of laboratory professionals for their dedication to providing safe, high-quality health care for Alaska Native people," Tiesinga added. "Despite ongoing challenges and a high-stress work environment, seeing their teamwork, resilience, and daily commitment to the mission is what truly keeps me going."

"We appreciate ANMC Lab's heroic contributions to detecting COVID-19 infections early and slowing the spread of this virus in our communities," April Kyle, Southcentral Foundation President/CEO said. "They have been vital to our missions on the ANMC campus and to our COVID-19 response."

Looking for a new journey?

Look no further.

Begin your journey as a dental assistant in the Dental Assistant Training Program.

Find more information and an application, visit:

www.southcentralfoundation.com/services/dental-services/become-a-student/

SCF Dental Assistant Training Program
(907) 729-5749
scfdatprogram@southcentralfoundation.com

Health Education Virtual Learning Circles Via Zoom

MONDAY No Health Education learning circles are held on Monday.	TUESDAY 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m. Lose to Win MEETING ID: 987-2163-4738 Description: Focus on 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. <i>(Second and last Thursday of each month)</i> 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 Noon - 1 p.m. 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.

For more information on all Southcentral Foundation learning circles, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/learning-circles/.

Cultural Classes Pass on Traditions to Generations

By Public Relations Specialist Esther Robertson



Learning how to make a flower is one of the many options in the beading class offered by the Traditional Healing Clinic.

For thousands of generations, after a busy season of hunting and gathering from the land, Alaska Native and American Indian people would make regalia and herbal medicines in the colder months. The tradition continues with the help of Southcentral Foundation's Traditional Healing Clinic, which hosts cultural classes for customer-owners in Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and for SCF employees. The clinic offers online classes for participants of all skill levels on how to bead, make salve, sew rabbit fur mittens, and identify local plants. In addition, kuspuk making is offered as the only class currently held in person.

Taking part in cultural classes is an opportunity for participants to learn or share information related to their cultures while connecting to others with similar interests. Some people have not had the opportunity to learn their Tribe's traditions of beading, sewing, or using local plants for food and healing.

These classes are an example of SCF's effort to preserve and share traditional plant and cultural knowledge. Hands-on participation in

cultural activities strengthens one's sense of belonging and identity, which can support mental health.

Traditional Healing Clinic Manager Carla Ogle shared, "Family and community activities connect cultural teachings to health and wellness. Participating in traditional activities improves cultural awareness among urban Alaska Native and American Indian people. This promotes resilience and provides healthy activities for individuals, families, and communities."

Some plants used for the salve making class are harvested from the Traditional Healing Clinic Garden or from harvest outings. Instructors teach the basic principles of making salve and the benefits of each plant used. During summer and fall seasons, customer-owners can view the garden located near the Traditional Healing Clinic at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center. Helpful signage identifies each plant in the garden.

Engaging in the classes is made easy. Materials are mailed out after registration. Students learn how to bead, sew, or make salve from the comfort of their homes via Zoom. An internet connection and electronic device is needed to view classes and must be provided by participants. The rest is up to you. Log-in and learn!



Tribal Doctor Apprentice Heather Beltz prepares cottonwood bud infused oil to make salve.

For more information about cultural classes at Southcentral Foundation, call Traditional Healing Clinic at (907) 729-4958. To register for a class, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/services/traditional-healing/.



STRENGTHEN - The Foundation - FOR ALL GENERATIONS

Open Enrollment, an annual period when individual health insurance companies accept new members, is every fall for many employer offered health insurances, and also for two of Southcentral Foundation's insurance sponsorship programs.

- » SCF's Medicare Part D Sponsorship program is open from **Oct. 15 – Dec. 7.**
- » Tribally-Sponsored Health Insurance Program is open from **Nov. 1 – Dec. 15.**
- » Your employer's open enrollment for health insurance is from **Nov. 1 – Dec. 15.**

For assistance or questions, contact SCF's Revenue Cycle Central Verification Team at (907) 729-6728 or SCFRCInquiries@SouthcentralFoundation.com.

Medication Disposal

Protect your family, Alaska wildlife, and the environment. Dispose of your unused medication properly.

- Alaska Native Medical Center Hospital
- Anchorage Native Primary Care Center
- *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center

For more information about medications that can be accepted, contact your pharmacy.



Place all unused legally held medications including over-the-counter, prescription drugs, and controlled substances (Schedules II-V) into the MedSafe Collection Receptacles.



Pediatric and Adult Dental Surgeries Move to Ambulatory Surgery Center

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Tara Carey



Alaska Native Medical Center Ambulatory Surgery Center is located in the University Lake Medical Center near the Alaska Native Health Campus.

Southcentral Foundation Dental has made many changes over the last year, and a fresh approach to pediatric oral surgeries is one of the newest improvements. Common pediatric dental rehabilitation services, wisdom teeth extractions, and oral surgeries are now held at the Alaska Native Medical Center Ambulatory Surgery Center near ANMC hospital.

SCF’s dental surgery process has not changed, but relocating most dental-related surgeries to a smaller surgery center makes the experience for customer-owners smoother. It is easier to access and takes less time to navigate through the smaller building which can be helpful for customer-owners and caregivers. A positive dental experience can impact oral health for a lifetime.

Children’s Dental Case Management Support, Geraldine Jones shared, “the move to utilize the Ambulatory Surgery Center increased the number of days designated for children’s oral surgery from three days a week to offering the surgeries five days a week. The number of customer-owners seen has doubled during this time. I am so excited to see that we are helping more children around Alaska.”

In anticipation of the added surgery options, the Ambulatory Surgery Center was remodeled and new dental equipment installed. Customizations were made to the layout to accommodate a variety of oral surgeries. This created an efficient workspace that has all the equipment needed for pediatric dentists and oral surgeons to provide care.

Performing dental surgeries in the redesigned Ambulatory Surgery Center also makes room for exciting changes at ANMC, including a new da Vinci surgical system, a robotic-assisted surgery tool that will improve the surgery experience. ANMC is the only Tribal health facility in Alaska with this new surgery system.

Select dental surgeries will still be performed at ANMC and will be determined on a case-by-case assessment. To help minimize preventable dental surgeries, SCF’s Dental team encourages customer-owners to implement an oral health routine that includes the following:

- Brush twice a day for two minutes with a fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily
- Use a fluoride mouthwash if you are over 6 years of age
- Visit the dental clinic at least once per year for a check-up
- Choose healthy snacks such as fruit, berries, veggies, cheese, and yogurt

It is important to have a dental home to help maintain good oral health. SCF is proud to serve Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and villages within the Rural Anchorage Service Unit.

For more information about SCF Dental, or to make an appointment for an exam, call (907) 729-2000.

Giving Alaskans protection and health year-round, so we can enjoy the things we love.

A photograph of two young boys standing side-by-side. They are wearing traditional Alaskan clothing, including dark jackets and blue jeans. They are holding large, round ceremonial drums with intricate designs. The background is a dark blue gradient with a large orange circle behind the boys.

VACCINES

A circular logo for Domestic Violence Awareness and Action Month. The logo is divided into four quadrants with the following text: "Building Resilience", "Creating Hope", "Healing and Justice", and "Healthy Relationships". In the center, it says "Domestic Violence Awareness and Action Month". To the right of the logo is a photograph of a tree made of many small hands, with a sign that says "We are Warriors. Our hands are for protecting!"

Domestic Violence Awareness and Action Month

In observance of Domestic Violence Awareness and Action Month, Family Wellness Warriors is hosting a webinar highlighting the work of FWW, Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center, and Victims for Justice, to address violence through our stories, our voices, and our community strengths.

Registration required. Free CEUs provided.

Available Oct. 15 - 22: It Takes Us All: Healing from Violence Through the Strength of Community

For more information or to register, email pandrews@southcentralfoundation.com or call FWW at (907) 729-5440.

Virtual Learning Circles Foster Community Connectedness

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations and Family Wellness Warriors

"Learning circles are a safe place to share story and build relationships with others across multiple generations within the community," Southcentral Foundation Learning Circle Associate Taylor Hughes said. SCF provides opportunities for customer-owners to build community and support one another by offering virtual learning circles. Learning circles are core to SCF's mission of working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services. Here are the current virtual learning circles, offered by Family Wellness Warriors.

Generational Healing learning circle explores our healing journey with an understanding of the generational influences that contributed to the harm we have known. It anchors us in the hope a generational perspective of recovery provides. This learning circle is offered Tuesdays from 1 to 2 p.m.

Na Tia Sukan: Recovery Support learning circle is a recovery focused learning circle that provides support, encourages self-development and promotes healthy lifestyle skills. This learning circle is offered on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays from 1 to 2 p.m.

Anger: A New Outlook learning circle explores the anger cycle and the proper steps to take when we get angry. Two learning circles are offered per week. Mondays from 2:30 to 3:45 p.m. is open to all customer-owners. Tuesdays from 2:30 to 4 p.m. requires registration and is court approved.

Community and Connection is a learning circle that assist with building community and staying connected. Enjoy a cup of coffee and tea while attending virtually on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 8:30 to 9:30 a.m.

Soldier's Heart is an education training program to help combat veterans, first responders, law enforcement, and their families. This learning circle addresses the effects of post-traumatic stress and provides information, tools, and methods to help cope with symptoms. Join virtually or in person on Wednesdays from 6 to 7:30 p.m. To attend in person, call (907) 729-5440.

Life Skills is a learning circle, offered on Thursdays from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., to develop new skills, continue your recovery, and build relationships with others. You do not have to walk this journey alone.

Family is Sacred learning circle is an opportunity for parents or caregivers to enrich parenting skills. Following the Fatherhood is Sacred® curriculum from Native American Fatherhood and Families Association, this learning circle provides tools for families raising children to promote positive changes in their homes and their communities. Thursdays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. is open to all customer-owners. Fridays from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. requires registration and is Office of Children's Services approved. If you would like more information, or to join this learning circle, contact Family Wellness Warriors at (907) 729-5440.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, SCF will evaluate learning circle services in the coming months, and schedules may be subject to change. Stay connected and build relationships by participating in virtual learning circles.

"We offer care for our community by providing support, meeting people where they are in their journeys, and listening and responding from the heart," Hughes said.



A customer-owner views the virtual learning circles available for building community and supporting one another.

For more information on learning circles and other opportunities, please visit <https://bit.ly/3iX2mIU> or call (907) 729-5440.

October is National Dental Hygiene Month

A photograph of a woman with short brown hair and glasses, smiling, next to a young boy with dark hair, also smiling. They are in a dental office setting.

Daily brushing and flossing, a healthy diet low in sugar, and regular dental care support healthy smiles for life.

Recommended oral hygiene routine:

- Brush twice a day for two minutes with a fluoride toothpaste
- Floss daily
- Use a fluoride mouthwash if you are over 6 years of age
- Visit the dental clinic at least once per year for a check-up
- Choose healthy snacks such as fruit, berries, veggies, cheese, and yogurt

SCF RAISE Program Interns Increase Job Prospects

By Public Relations Assistant Shamika Andrew

Southcentral Foundation RAISE interns increased their job prospects by participating in writing workshops. During the summer program, interns were introduced to different health care careers at SCF. Exploring potential job opportunities offered resume guidance and inspiration for them to outline their skills, education, and other strengths.

The interns learned team building, mentorship, personal financial wellness, and portfolio development. They also participated in the Step-Up to Writing workshop. Participants submitted four written essays that aligned with SCF's core competencies: customer care and relationships; communications and teamwork; improvement and innovation; and skills, abilities, and professional development.

Interns were shown different types of resumes that are available to use and when to use them: chronological vs. functional vs. curriculum vitae. RAISE interns were tasked to identify which resume best matches their career interests. They also wrote a cover letter and drafted their resumes to include their internships with the RAISE Program and other jobs they have had in the past.

"The portfolio and resume activities helped me prepare for scholarship applications and learn professional forms of communication," RAISE intern Ermelina Gonzalez said.

With the completion of the summer RAISE internship, participants are better prepared to enter the job force and have an increased understanding of writing, applying for a job, and professional development skills. SCF is committed to guiding Alaska Native and Native American youth on their journeys to adulthood and career success through RAISE internships and other related programs.

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

Cool Tips to Stay Warm and Safe This Winter

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoo

The ancestors of this vast arctic land harnessed it using only organic materials and pure ingenuity. This season, win at winter by applying the same concepts of innovation, using many of the materials you already have.

- Common cold remedy. Sooth your sinuses and nix congestion with this simple yet effective remedy. Mix into a hot cup of herbal tea a dash of cayenne pepper, the juice of half a lemon, and a tablespoon of honey.
- Upcycled sweater mittens. Keep heat from escaping your extremities with surprisingly easy-to-make cozy sweater mittens. All you need is a mitten template, scissors, needle, and thread.
- Orange peel fire starters. Orange peels have oils that make them flammable and efficient fire starters. Simply dry orange peels for 24-48 hours and store them in a plastic bag. The pluses are that it emits a citrusy scent, and it is environmentally safe.
- Walk like a penguin. Penguins are masters at walking on ice, adapt their walk to dodge falls. Shuffle your feet and take short steps, keep your arms to the side and hands out of pockets, concentrate on balance, and go slow.
- Windshield wiper covers. Stick windshield wipers up and slip on an old pair of knee-high socks to protect ice from forming and sticking to the window.
- Coffee grounds for ice. Sprinkle coffee grounds on slippery walkways or driveways to gain extra footing for safer stepping.
- Keep duct tape in your car. Not only does it fix many things, but duct tape is also highly flammable and can be used to start a fire for heat in an emergency.



- Windshield guard. Use a blanket or a rug to cover your windshield overnight to prevent ice buildup and maximize visibility the next day.
- Hand sanitizer for frozen locks. Squirt some hand sanitizer inside the lock, and the isopropyl alcohol in it will melt the ice inside the lock within seconds.
- Carry microfiber towels. Getting wet for any reason is not good while outside during winter. Always have microfiber towels on hand during outdoor excursions to dry boots, clothes, or the body quickly to prevent hypothermia.
- Floor mat traction. Place your floor mats under a spinning tire to give it some traction to get unstuck from snow or ice.
- Vinegar for icy windows. Mix three parts vinegar and one part water in spray bottle, spray the window, and watch the ice dissolve before your eyes.

Additional low-cost options to stay safe:

- Slip-proof shoes. Invest in a pair of grippers to slip over shoes to prevent falls and injury on ice and snow.
- Winter emergency kit. Keep the following items in your car for winter emergencies: flashlight, batteries, emergency thermal blankets, duct tape, first aid kit, snacks, water, emergency flares, shovel, lighter, and cell phone charger.
- Emergency thermal blankets. Purchase a box of emergency thermal blankets, which can keep you warm on even the coldest nights. They are inexpensive and compact enough to store several in your car glove compartment.

Spooktacular Ideas to Celebrate Halloween at Home

By Public Relations Specialist Esther Robertson

More families are opting to celebrate fall activities at home. There are many ways to have fun at home without missing out on the Halloween excitement. Here are some activities to try with your family that are healthy alternatives to traditional trick-or-treating.

Carve pumpkins: Carving pumpkins is a Halloween tradition that goes back for many years! Have fun making silly, spooky, or happy faces with your family. Don't forget to save the seeds for homemade roasted pumpkin seeds.

DIY upcycled Halloween decorations: Transform ordinary household items into unique decorations. Use glue, construction paper, and markers to turn toilet paper rolls into mummies, zombies, or bats.

Hold a family costume dance party: Just because you're not leaving your house, that does not mean you have to go without the costume. Turn the music up, wear your costume, and have a blast!

Make a jack-o-lantern food platter: Arrange your favorite orange foods, such as orange slices, cheese, carrots, or crackers, with a darker colored food, like grapes, blueberries, or olives to resemble a jack-o-lantern.

Have a trick-or-treat hunt: Instead of going door-to-door for treats, try hiding the treats in spooky-themed eggs around the house for the kids to find!

Schedule a family movie night: Gather around with delicious snacks, and watch your favorite Halloween movies.

Host a Halloween-themed dinner: Before indulging in sweet treats, start the night with a healthy and yummy dinner. Try this stuffed pepper jack-o-lanterns recipe!

Stuffed Pepper Jack-o-Lanterns

Ingredients:

- 4 large orange bell peppers
- 1 cup cooked white or brown rice
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 pound lean ground beef, ground turkey, or ground chicken
- 1 medium yellow onion diced
- 8 ounces mushrooms chopped
- 2 cups roasted red pepper sauce homemade or store-bought
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- salt and pepper to taste

Directions:

1. Heat oven to 350 F.
2. Use a knife to slice the top off of each bell pepper horizontally. Set tops aside. Remove all seeds and membrane. Rinse and pat the peppers dry with a paper towel or a clean, soft cloth. Use a small paring knife to cut holes into the exterior of the peppers to make jack-o-lantern faces.
3. Cook rice according to package directions. As rice cooks, use olive oil or non-stick spray to lightly grease a small sheet pan. Arrange peppers and tops on pan and cook in oven for 20 – 25 minutes, or until peppers are cooked, but are still firm. Remove peppers from oven and allow to cool while you make the filling.



For the filling:

1. Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in large skillet over medium heat. Add onion and mushrooms and sauté for 3 – 4 minutes. Increase heat to medium high. Add ground meat and spices to pan and continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until no pink remains.
2. Drain excess grease from pan, reduce heat to medium low, add red pepper pasta sauce and cooked rice. Stir to combine, and cook for 2 – 3 more minutes, or until mixture is heated through.
3. Prior to serving, fill each pepper with approximately 1 cup of mixture, over filling each pepper slightly. Place a top onto each stuffed pepper and serve!

Quit Tobacco for Life with SCF’s Quit Tobacco Program

By SCF Public Relations

Did you know when you choose to quit tobacco, your body takes steps to begin healing itself within 20 minutes of your last cigarette? It’s no secret — quitting tobacco is tough! However, Southcentral Foundation can help make choosing to quit tobacco an easy decision.

SCF’s tobacco treatment specialists are trained to assist customer-owners successfully quit tobacco for life. Tobacco use is associated with many health issues, including lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, oral cancer, and more. Whether living in Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, or one of Alaska’s rural villages, SCF’s Quit Tobacco program is available to guide customer-owners to healthier, tobacco-free lives.

Partnering with primary care teams and other integral members throughout the organization, SCF’s 52-week Quit Tobacco program provides one-on-one counseling, follow-up services, group counseling, and access to nicotine replacement therapy. When a customer-owner decides to quit tobacco, they work with a tobacco treatment specialist to create a plan to quit tobacco and stay tobacco free.

When quitting tobacco, it is normal to experience nicotine withdrawal, cravings, and triggers, but there are tips and techniques that can help curb these symptoms. Tobacco treatment specialists have tools to help customer-owners overcome cravings and tobacco withdrawal symptoms. Sarah Pedersen, a successful Quit Tobacco participant, says when faced with cravings, in addition to nicotine replacement therapy, she likes to keep her hands busy by painting, drawing, or playing games until the craving passes. She said the program “helps her find motivation by having someone check on you showing they care outside of just yourself doing the work.”

Pedersen was surprised how easy it was to join the program. She advises customer-owners who are uncertain about taking the first steps to quit tobacco to “plunge right into it, jump off the bridge into the water. The water is nice when you get down there. I wake up feeling better, I have

more energy, I’ve saved hundreds of dollars, and my kids will get to have me around longer.”

Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center Health Educator Ruthi Blatchford supports customer-owners choosing to quit tobacco in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough. One of her innovative ways to support customer-owners is by suggesting they think of cravings as a highway. When customer-owners are faced with a trigger or craving, Blatchford advises they “pull over” and calmly think to themselves, “How will I feel if I push through this craving and don’t smoke?” followed by “How will I feel if I give in and do smoke, discontinuing my tobacco-free streak?” (See the ad below).

Blatchford and other tobacco treatment specialists reach out to customer-owners individually to support them on their customized quit-tobacco plans. During the 52-week program, participants can expect consistent phone check-ins, tools, and resources for success. Health educators are also available when customer-owners experience setbacks. A setback is a normal part of the quit-tobacco process – it takes the average person seven tries before successfully quitting tobacco. Tobacco treatment specialists are available by phone to support customer-owners through setbacks and to get back on track.



Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center Health Educator Ruthi Blatchford.

If you’ve been considering quitting tobacco, call (907) 729-2689 in Anchorage or (907) 631-7630 in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough to talk to a tobacco treatment specialist, or contact your provider to discuss joining SCF’s Quit Tobacco program.

ENROLL NOW

Prescription coverage at no cost to you.

Medicare Part D annual open enrollment period is Oct. 15 – Dec. 7.

Enrolling in the Medicare Part D Sponsorship Program provides greater resources and expansion of services for customer-owners.

For more information about eligibility, call SCF Outreach and Enrollment at (907) 729-7280.

You are in the drivers seat
You are in control of your cravings.
Pull over and ask yourself:

How will I feel if I don’t smoke?

How will I feel if I do smoke?

Improving Quality of Life Through Education and Lifestyle Changes

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Brandy Gallagher

It is possible to delay, prevent, and treat Type 2 diabetes with lifestyle changes and access to diabetes treatment programs. Customer-owner Paul J. Williams shares his experience of just that. Williams is 78 years old, of Athabascan descent, and was raised in the Fort Yukon area. With guidance from his integrated care team, he was able to control his diabetes, which resulted in reduction of medications, insulin intake, A1C levels, and weight — but most importantly a more fulfilled life.

Williams was diagnosed with diabetes about 20 years ago. His mother had diabetes, so he wasn't surprised by his diagnosis. Gradually, his diabetes worsened requiring an insulin increase from nine to 38 clicks. One click is usually equivalent to one unit of insulin. In addition to insulin, Williams took seven other medications daily.

One day, extremely tired and fatigued, Williams lain in bed all day. His concerned wife called his provider to set up an appointment. After meeting with his integrated care team at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center, they coordinated with Registered Dietitian and Certified Diabetes Educator Elize Rumley. Together they created a plan that could help manage his diabetes and improve his quality of life. Part of the plan included going over test results and discussing steps he can take to live a healthier lifestyle. The journey was not easy, but Williams says it is well worth it.

“It is really hard, especially for an Elder like me. I don't go hunting or fishing anymore, but my son goes fishing and everything else. I don't have access to a lot of Alaska Native food, but my family gives me moose meat and dry meat all the time. That's the biggest thing of a person living in Anchorage, is the temptation of going to McDonalds, craft shows, the fair — where everything has high sugar,” Williams said.

With guidance from his care team and the Diabetes Education Program, Williams' quality of life drastically improved — as did his medical chart.

Williams' A1C levels went from 8.2 to 6.9, his insulin intake reduced from 38 clicks to 10, his weight went from 194 to 172 pounds, and his medications reduced from seven to four. He attributes his success to taking small healthy steps like limiting certain foods and being active as well as understanding how food affects diabetes. Overall, Williams is more active because he has more energy and feels better throughout the day.

“During this journey, there was a time I felt good, and my blood sugar reading was 120. I tried ice cream. I tell you, my reading went over 200 and I thought — I'm not doing that again. Even though it tastes good, and I don't feel bad, it can still affect my diabetes.”

Approximately 1.5 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes each year, and Alaska Native and American Indian people are more prevalently affected than any other ethnicity. It is important to know your risk factors and have your blood sugar tested accordingly. Risk factors of diabetes include being overweight, being 45 years or older or having a parent or sibling with Type 2 diabetes.

Williams' story is just one customer-owner's success at SCF's Diabetes Education Program. This program is an opportunity for customers-owners to learn how to improve their eating habits, increase physical activity, and delay, prevent, or treat diabetes. Participants have the support of other group members as well as lifestyle coaches.



For more information, please contact the Diabetes Education Program at (907) 729-8749.

Out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on physical 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.

NUMBER PUZZLE

Medium

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

Sudoku is easy 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 1 through 9.

Solution

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

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