ANCHORAGE NATIVE NEWS

Alaska Native People Shaping Health Care

Winter 2022







Working Together to Ease the Strain on Health Care

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations

It's been over two years since the first cases of COVID-19 were detected in the United States. Since then, much has been learned about the virus and countless lives have been saved and communities protected due to vaccination.

Through the pandemic, we've seen different COVID-19 variants sweep through communities, straining health care resources and personnel.

Without question, operating a health care system during the COVID-19 pandemic has been challenging. Whether you receive services at Southcentral Foundation or another health care facility, you can make a difference and help ease the strain.

In addition to getting your COVID-19 vaccine and booster, there are many things you can do to keep yourself and your loved ones safe while keeping our medical system available for those with critical needs.

Phone and telehealth appointments are a safe and convenient way to meet with your provider. Save gas, avoid the waiting rooms, and receive the same high-quality care without leaving your home. Call your primary care team to schedule a telehealth visit.

Southcentral Foundation urges customer-owners to sign up for and use MyHealth to ask your health care team questions. You can also view future appointments, some lab results, and your current clinical record. Encouraging your friends and family to sign up for MyHealth helps free-up clinical time while ensuring customer-owners can access some health records and have their health care questions answered. If you would like to sign up for a MyHealth account, talk to your primary care team and they will assist you with the registration process.

SCF Pharmacy has two convenient options for customer-owners needing medication refills. Customer-owners are encouraged to take advantage



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Southcentral Foundation Pharmacy is offering curbside pickup to limit the number of individuals in the waiting area. Curbside pickup must be scheduled in advance.

of the pharmacy refill hotline to receive medication refills by mail. Avoid the lines and call the SCF Pharmacy refill line at (907) 729-2117 for your next refill. If customer-owners are unable to wait for mail-out services, Pharmacy is offering curbside pickup to limit the number of individuals in the waiting area. Curbside pickup must be scheduled in advance. Customer-owners can call Pharmacy at (907) 729-4172 to schedule a time. Curbside pickup is available Monday through Friday from 10 to 10:30 a.m., 1 to 2 p.m., 3 to 3:30 p.m., and from 5 to 6 p.m.

Testing for COVID-19 remains an important factor in understanding how the virus is spreading. While lines at some testing sites may become long at times, confirming that someone has the disease helps public health officials and others understand the level of immunity in a population. SCF opened a drive-thru COVID-19 testing site at 999 E. Tudor Road. The testing site, operated by Visit Healthcare, is open Monday through Saturday from 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. and is available to all community members. There are many testing sites in the community. Find the one closest to you at anchoragecovidtest.org.

Self-tests are rapid tests that can be taken at home or anywhere, are easy to use, and produce rapid results. Free self-tests are available at www.COVIDtests.gov. COVID-19 self-tests are one of many risk-reduction measures, along with vaccination, wearing a mask, and avoiding large gatherings, that protect you and others by reducing the chances of spreading COVID-19.

Health care professionals continue to play a critical role during the pandemic. Southcentral Foundation has openings for dental assistants, certified medical assistants, case management support, and many more professions. You can make a difference in the lives of many by joining the

team at Southcentral Foundation. Contact (907) 729-4955 to start your career at Southcentral Foundation .

Los 4501 Diplomacy Drive Anaska 99508

For vaccine information, testing locations, resources, and more, visit https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/covid-19-information/.

The Anchorage Native News is published by Southcentral Foundation Public Relations.

If you have questions, comments, wish to submit articles, or be added to our mailing list, please contact SCF Public Relations.

SCF reserves the right to edit all submissions for clarity, length, and content.

Every article will be considered for publication depending upon space available.

SCF Public Relations

4501 Diplomacy Drive Anchorage, Alaska 99508 (907) 729-4953 SCFMediaRelations@scf.cc

SCF Public Relations

Shamika Andrew Addison Arave **Denise Bingham** Kira Bouwens Melanie Brenner Tara Carey Lyla DeTavernier Tara Durand Basilio Gonzalez Domonique Hansen Connie Irrigoo Erik Judson **Sharon Leighow** Uinita Mauigoa Michelle Mincks Nicole Nordstrom **Esther Roberston** Stephanie Smith Gabby St. Clair

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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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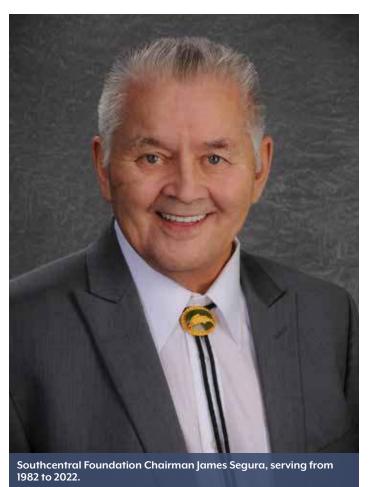
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Honoring James Segura, Retired Chairman of the Southcentral Foundation Board of Directors

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations

Chairman James Segura has retired from Southcentral Foundation's Board of Directors after nearly 40 years of service. As one of SCF's founding board members, Segura has been with the organization through every phase of its growth and improvement.

Segura has dedicated much of his life to collaborating and partnering with others to influence positive changes in the health care system, first as a board member and Indian Health Service beneficiary and later as both a customer-owner and chairman of the board. Full customer ownership, which has been a hallmark of SCF's operations for decades now, was ushered in by Segura and other leaders in the 1990s. Customer ownership launched SCF's whole system transformation, which was based on the wants, needs, values and priorities of Alaska Native people. Segura helped lead the way in developing customer-owner driven programs and services to meet community health needs. Over his decades of service, his commitment to the health of Native Communities has been unwavering.



"With his dedication to SCF governance for nearly 40 years, Mr. Segura has fostered an environment of improvement and innovation," said SCF President and CEO April Kyle.

Born and raised in Kenai, Segura's journey started with a commitment to not only his people, but also to his country by enlisting in the U.S. Navy. Following his service, he spent several years working with the State of Alaska and the federal government before beginning his career with the Kenai Native Association. Over a nine-year period, he worked his way up to the position of deputy director. Later, opportunity led him to his next position as executive director of Salamatof Native Association, where he dedicated the next 20 years of his career. As a member of the Alaska Native Health Board and the Kenaitze Indian Tribal Council, and as chair of the Salamatof Housing Entity, Segura's efforts have contributed to the continued strength of the communities he has served.

For his leadership in health care, Segura was honored with the CIRI Shareholder of the Year Award in 2005, earned national accolades as the National Indian Health Board's Regional Impact Award recipient in 2010, and the NIHB's Native Public Health Innovation Award national recipient in 2019.

The January meeting of the SCF Board of Directors included a celebration of Segura's retirement, with gratitude and appreciation from all. Segura said, "I am truly proud of the great strides that have been made in the delivery of care for our people. I would like to thank all the people who work tirelessly, every day, to improve the health and wellness of Alaska Native and American Indian people."



Celebrating 40 Years of Self-Determination

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations

After decades as "beneficiaries" of an inefficient, underfunded federal health care system, Alaska Native and American Indian people were ready for radical changes in their health care experience. Southcentral Foundation's origin story begins with groups of determined Alaska Native and American Indian people coming together and advocating for a voice in program planning and operations.

As a result of their persistence, Congress passed the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act in 1975. In this Act, Congress acknowledged that federal domination of these health and education programs was causing more harm than good. The legislation gave Tribes greater control over the funding which affected their community health and well-being. Encouraged by this change, Alaska Native people established SCF on March 8, 1982, under the Tribal authority of Cook Inlet Region, Inc. The vision was a health care system, rooted in cultural strengths, that could improve health and change lives. A series of amendments and other legislation throughout the '80s and '90s allowed Tribes to take self-determination several steps further to own and operate their programs. At last, by the late '90s, Alaska Native people in southcentral Alaska had full control as the "customer-owners" of the health care system.

Customer-ownership key to SCF's past, present, and future

On this milestone anniversary, SCF celebrates the voices of all the customer-owners who have shaped and driven the health care system's design over its 40 years. From its humble beginnings, when SCF first assumed contracts with the federal government to manage dental, optometry, and health education services in the region, to 1997 when ownership of the primary care system was transferring to Alaska Native people in the region, SCF leaders have always looked to customer-owners to determine the changes that are needed and desired.

SCF has a rich history of conducting focus groups, surveys, one-on-one interviews, and meetings with customer-owners, including Elders and

Tribal representatives from all over the region, to obtain feedback. Early on, the priorities identified by customer-owners were drafted into a list of requirements that SCF calls its "Operational Principles." SCF used the requirements to develop a mission, vision, and key points, and then set out to find best practices that could be tailored to fit what the customers really wanted.

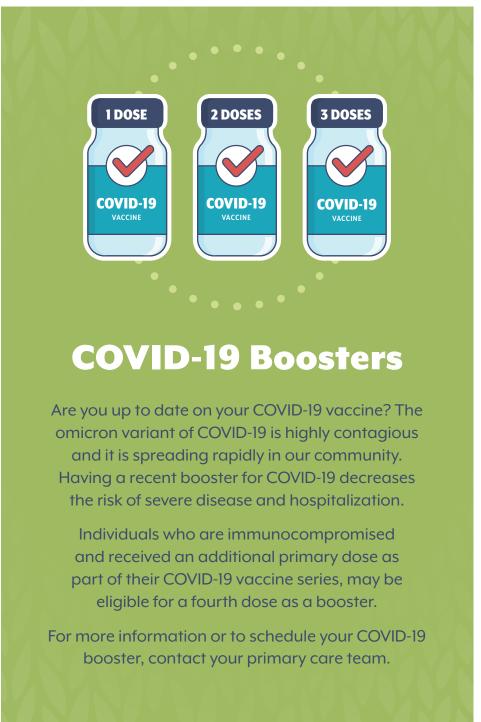
SCF's Nuka System of Care is a departure from beneficiaries or "patients" serving as mere recipients of tests, diagnoses, and pills. Instead, customer-owners actively share responsibility for the success of the health care system and for their family's health and wellness. Working together, at all levels, ensures the system is fully aligned with customer-owner values and priorities. Every aspect of the Nuka System of Care, from facility and infrastructure design to health care delivery and improvement, is driven by customer-owners.

With the improvements in the underlying principles of the health care system, came the expectation that customer-owners be involved in decision making, including asking questions and providing input. Providers share responsibility with customer-owners and their families, supporting customer-owners' health goals and, along the way, providing evidence-based treatments, coaching and encouragement. The Nuka System of Care emphasizes understanding each customer-owner's unique story, values, and influences to engage and partner in care and support long-term change. With customer-ownership, everyone started to work together toward one vision: A Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.

By putting the voice of the customer-owner at the forefront of what SCF does and how it's done, the Nuka System of Care will continue to develop and improve for generations to come.

For more information on the history of Southcentral Foundation, visit bit.ly/3Gx3UZG.





Access Health Care Management Resources Through MyHealth

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations

Southcentral Foundation is committed to providing the best health care possible. Due to COVID-19, short-staffing, and the high volume of calls, phone wait times have been longer than normal at primary care facilities. While this prolonged process may cause delays and frustration, SCF has another avenue of health care management for customer-owners called MyHealth. MyHealth is a product of Cerner®, is HIPAA compliant, and provides customer-owners with the ability to securely view, store and share their health information. If you receive treatment at SCF, you are eligible to register for this secure online service.

On MyHealth, you can:

- · View or cancel future appointments
- View your clinical record summary (current medications, allergies, immunizations, health notes, surgeries, and procedures)
- View limited lab results (potentially excluding sensitive test results or results that may require further discussion with your provider)
- · View limited personal information
- Access a clinical document generator (a snapshot of medical information for a single visit or all visits)
- Access secure messaging for health-related inquiries
- Access your COVID-19 vaccine record and view COVID-19 test results

If you are not registered for MyHealth, speak with an SCF front desk employee, your registered nurse case manager, your provider, or contact Alaska Native Medical Center Central Registration at (907) 729-1395. You will be asked to provide your email and a security question, which will prompt an email to be sent to you outlining the remainder of the registration process.

To access MyHealth, you can either visit bit.ly/scfmyhealth in your web browser or download the HealtheLife mobile app.

Secure messaging is for routine health-related inquiries only and should not be used to communicate urgent matters, as the normal response time is one business day. Messages received after business



hours, on holidays, or on weekends will receive a response on the next business day. Contact your primary care team directly instead of using secure messaging if you have a need that must be addressed sooner than one business day. If you require immediate assistance or are experiencing a medical emergency, please use the emergency system in your community (for example, call 911).

You should not rely on MyHealth for full and complete access to your health record. If you need a copy of your complete medical record, visit bit.ly/3nLlCkr to access the applicable request forms. Contact Alaska Native Medical Center Central Registration at (907) 729-3019 with any questions.

SCF appreciates the continued patience and partnership of customerowners as we navigate physical, mental, and spiritual wellness during this unprecedented time.

For more information about the MyHealth service, a how-to guide for major features, and a list of frequently asked questions, visit southcentralfoundation.com/myhealth.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash and wash your hands immediately after.





Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth

Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.





Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer may be used.

Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



As we all take precaution to avoid the spread of germs, Southcentral Foundation would like to remind customer-owners that the pharmacy offers mail-out services. Avoid waiting in lines by calling the refill hotline.



Pharmacy Refill Hotline

(907) 729-2117 or (877) 320-4321

Please call seven days in advance

Rural Clinic Refills

(877) 365-1104

Please call two weeks in advance

Recognizing Health Care Heroes

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations

The Alaska Public Health Association presented Southcentral Foundation directors Dr. Donna Galbreath and LaZell Hammons with public health awards as part of the virtual 2022 Alaska Health Summit held Jan. 18-20.

Galbreath praised for 30 years of relationship-based care, quality assurance

ALPHA awarded Dr. Donna Galbreath, SCF's senior medical director of quality assurance, the prestigious Dr. Anne P. Lanier Meritorious Health Service Award for decades of contributions to community health and wellness.

Galbreath has worked for Tribal organizations in Alaska since completing

her medical training more than 30 years ago. She comes from a line of traditional healers and uses both traditional Ahtna healing knowledge and Western medical knowledge in her primary care practice. She began her career with a strong belief that primary care — especially integrated within a health care system that values relationships — can transform overall community health. Her efforts as an SCF medical director, including strategic planning and developing comprehensive quality assurance programs, have helped improve the quality of services and increase customer satisfaction. She has been instrumental in helping SCF achieve the highest levels of Patient Centered Medical Home status, in expanding Alaska Native Medical Center's cancer screening and cancer service programs, and in the whole-system redesign of OB-GYN and the Chronic Pain Program. Most recently, she has played a key role in rapidly adjusting programs and services in response to the pandemic.

SCF Senior Medical Director of

Quality Assurance Dr. Donna

A champion of – and advocate for – customer-ownership, she recognizes that if you own something, "you have certain expectations, you're proud of it, you're involved in it, and you take care of it." She has been featured in

Modern Healthcare magazine, Indian Country Today, Alaska Federation of Natives, and the national NLM Native Voices (Native Peoples' Concepts of Health and Illness) exhibit.

Hammons celebrated for outstanding contributions to pandemic response

ALPHA recognized LaZell Hammons, SCF's Learning Institute director, with its Alaska Health Achievement Award for her dedication during the COVID-19 pandemic. From assisting in the set-up of SCF's initial COVID-19 pandemic response, working on-site at *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center to help the workforce pivot to telework and remote



care, to quickly and efficiently setting up and managing the day-to-day operations of SCF's community-wide vaccine clinic in Anchorage, she has been hands-on in both the organization and deployment of SCF's approaches to the crisis. She also put extra care into creating a positive environment for the teams of employees contributing to the pandemic response. Along the way, she sent notes of appreciation, delivered food to those in need, and organized recognition activities.

In this time of staffing shortages and high hospitalization rates as COVID-19 cases surge, Hammons has been working with Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium to enlist the support of SCF employees to work extra shifts, temporarily, at the ANMC hospital. She has been involved with the recruitment, scheduling, training, and coaching of over 200 SCF employees to meet the current needs at the hospital.

In Hammons' role as the director of SCF's Learning Institute, she has also ensured SCF has been able to continue to partner with other organizations to provide support, share innovations, and continue the journey of learning from others.

Benefits of Telehealth Visits for Customer-Owners

By Public Relations Specialist Connie Irrigoo



Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, many customer-owners have met with their integrated care teams in the comfort and privacy of their own home, office, car, or even miles away. With a reliable internet connection or cellular signal via a smartphone, computer, or tablet, customer-owners can talk with a member of their integrated care team for many reasons. Conditions managed virtually include minor illnesses, chronic condition management, behavioral support, or a preventative care visit.

"Southcentral Foundation worked quickly to provide virtual health and wellness services for customer-owners during the pandemic; we provided a safe and secure way to deliver high quality care over Zoom or on the phone," Southcentral Foundation Vice President of Medical Services Division Dr. Douglas Eby said. "Over the last several years, we expanded distant care for rural clinics; using this approach we were able to quickly deploy telehealth services, onboard employees, and educate customerowners on the benefits of using virtual health and wellness platforms to meet with providers."

Throughout the pandemic, Southcentral Foundation outpatient clinics have tested and improved secure video telehealth on Zoom. If a

customer-owner needs assistance joining a telehealth visit, Zoom's help center (support.zoom.us/hc/en-us) is a resource featuring guides and video tutorials.

Even prior to the pandemic, SCF used telehealth and telepharmacy to provide health services for customer-owners. Expansion of telehealth during the pandemic occurred rapidly in all areas of services provided by SCF.

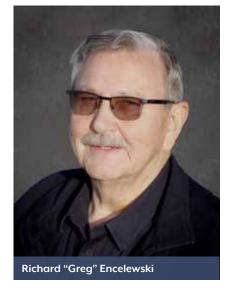
"Being pregnant during the COVID-19 pandemic feels overwhelming at times," customer-owner Addison Arave said. "But it's comforting to know my integrated care team is accessible to me virtually or over the phone, so I don't have to make unnecessary visits to the clinic to talk with them about my concerns. Knowing I have that accessibility to care makes me feel much more secure and safe."

Benefits of scheduling a telehealth visit:

- No risk of exposure to other illnesses
- Convenient and comfortable setting of your choice
- · Eliminates travel time and cost
- No waiting rooms
- Lessens need to take leave time from work or arrange for child care
- $\,\cdot\,\,$ Ability to include who you want in the visit, even if they are miles away
- Choice of connecting by phone, computer, or tablet
- Improves access other health care providers can easily join the visit
- Reduces cost to the health system helping to improve and expand services

Visit southcentralfoundation.com to locate the clinic's phone number in your area, and to schedule your telehealth visit today.

Encelewski, Haldane, Marrs Appointed to SCF Board of Directors







By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations

Three Alaska Native leaders in health and business joined Southcentral Foundation's Board of Directors in January. The current board of directors has a combined 73 years of experience serving Alaska Native and American Indian customer-owners. The three new directors, Richard "Greg" Encelewski, Sandra Haldane and Dr. Jessie Marrs, will contribute to the pursuit of SCF's mission of "Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services."

Encelewski, of Dena'ina Athabascan and Aleut descent, is the longtime president and CEO of Ninilchik Native Association, Inc., and president and chairman of Ninilchik Traditional Council. A hunter and commercial fisherman with a deep appreciation of traditional food resources, he has helped fight for subsistence rights and was instrumental in Ninilchik's land selections under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

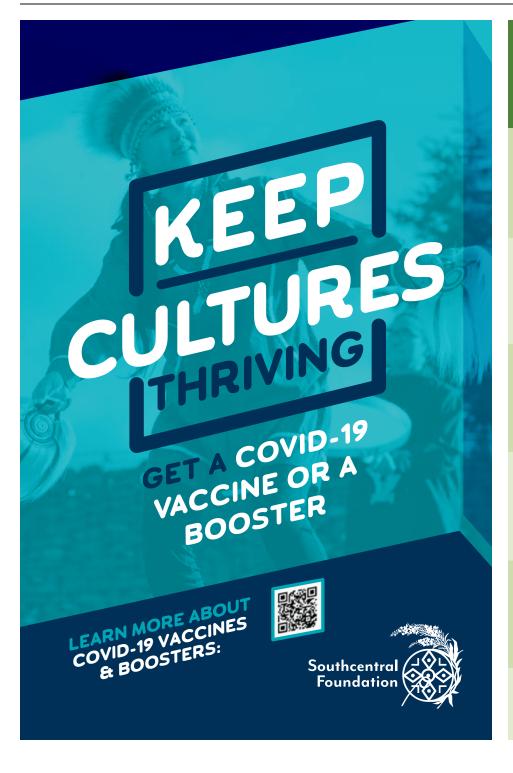
Haldane, who is Tsimshian, has served Alaska Native and American Indian families as the SCF/Alaska Native Medical Center Maternal Child Health director, a former ANMC nurse, and former Indian Health Service

Chief Nurse appointee. She is currently serving as a school nurse in Anchorage. Haldane is a former president of Alaska Nursing Action Coalition and former founding member of Alaska Professional Nurses Organization.

Marrs, who is Aleut, is a gynecologist currently practicing with Swedish Medical Group in Seattle. She has specialized in person-centered, compassionate care for women with gynecologic diseases since graduating from University of Washington's School of Medicine in 2004.

The new directors were appointed by Cook Inlet Region, Inc., and expand the SCF Board of Directors from eight to nine, as planned for by the organization to keep pace with growth in the health care system.

For more information on SCF's Board of Directors, visit https://www.southcentralfoundation.com/about-us/leadership.



What steps can be taken to reduce stress about COVID-19?



It is normal to feel sad, stressed, confused, scared, or angry during a crisis. Talking to friends and family you trust can help.



Lessen the time you spend on media coverage that you find upsetting.



Maintain a healthy lifestyle — including balanced diet, sleep, and exercise. Visit bit.ly/32YMiYS to view the SCF online exercise class schedule for customer-owners.

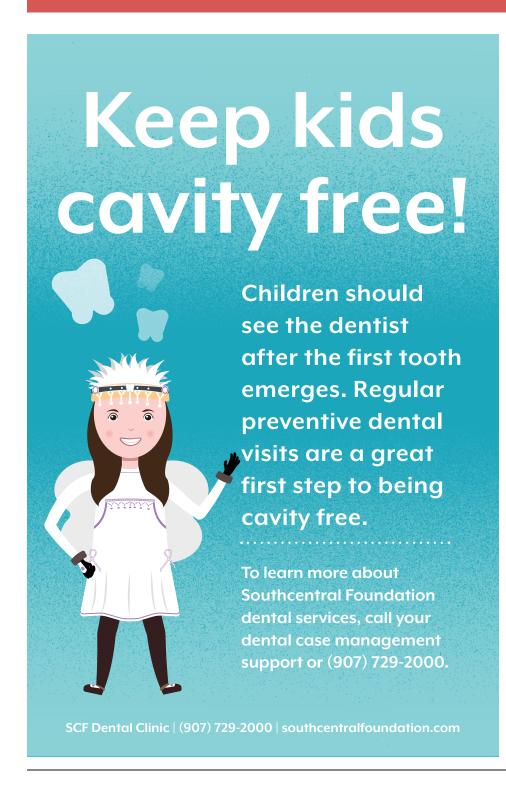


Get the facts. Gather information from sources such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or, a local or state public health agency.



Pay attention to your emotions and reach out for assistance when needed.

If you need assistance, please contact your primary care team or behavioral health provider.





5 Steps to Get Your Garden Growing

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations



Elder customer-owners get fresh air while planting hardened off starters.

Alaska has a unique gardening season — a short temperate summer in a northern altitude with long summer days. The limited growing season gives gardeners a brief opportunity to start a garden and produce fully developed plants before the first frost. If you are up to the challenge, even if this is your first attempt, you can grow to your heart's content with the right tools, timing, and intent.

To prepare for your garden, think about what you might like to grow and research the seeds available. Be mindful of the seeds you select for your starters and consider using seeds that are most suitable for the climate you live in. If you are unsure, your local greenhouse or garden supply can be a great resource. Early spring is seed planting time in Alaska, and after the starters are strong enough, you'll want to harden the plants prior to transplanting outdoors.

To get started you will need a few basic supplies, how many of each item depends on how many starters you hope to plant

- Soil
- Soil pod
- Fertilizer
- Paper cup or personal seedling tray
- Hand shovel or trowel
- Seeds

Once all needed supplies are gathered, stage a workspace so everything is easy to reach and you can catch any fallen soil or seeds. Then, follow the five steps below outlined by Southcentral Foundation Health Education to get your garden growing:

- Prepare seeds for germination place a soil pod into a paper cup or personal seedling tray, water and let it expand, then make a small bowl shape in the middle of soil pod. Place one to two seeds into the bowl shape then cover seeds with soil.
- 2. Water and maintain moisture levels do not use water that has been treated with a water softener; once germination begins, make sure the soil does not dry out.
- 3. Manage temperature and light exposure maintain an indoor daytime temperature between 65 and 68 degrees at nighttime. Suggested placement for seedlings is a bright, sunny window as long as the temperature does not exceed 76 degrees. Sunlight can be supplemented with regular indoor florescent lights.
- 4. Harden off starters begin hardening off 7 to 10 days before you plan to transplant outdoors.
 - a. Day 1 to 3: Place plants outdoors in a shady area, start with one hour and increase each day.
 - b. Day 4 to 6: Place plants in partial shade and move them gradually into the sun, increasing the time outside each day.
 - c. Day 7 to 10: Plants should be ready for the sun.
- 5. Plant seedlings can be planted outdoors around June 1. Start by watering each seedling, and then prepare the hole by adding a small amount of fertilizer and water the area. Create a hole with your hand or hand shovel and place the seedling in the hole, up the first leaves, then firm the soil around the plant.

Congratulations, in five simple steps you have created your own garden. Water your plants regularly, and enjoy the fruits of your labor!

Tips for Keeping Frequently Used Items Clean and Sanitized

By Public Relations Specialist Esther Robertson

Did you know that even though a surface is clean, it may not be sanitized? It is important to stay vigilant against COVID-19 by practicing Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations and keeping your household clean and sanitized.

Use a cleaner that contains soap, which helps to reduce germs on surfaces and decreases risks of infection. This can help remove virus particles. Be sure to follow product instructions. Clean high-touch surfaces throughout your home daily, especially if a household member is sick. Some areas to focus on are doorknobs, light switches, phones, tables, and countertops.

To help make cleaning electronics easier, consider using a wipeable cover for items, such as phones, tablets, and keyboards. Follow manufacturer instructions for cleaning electronics to avoid damaging them.

Clean soft surfaces like carpets, rugs, and curtains with soap and water. Some items may be laundered with warm water. Vacuum rugs and carpeted areas as needed. Wash any laundry with warm water and dry completely. Be sure to clean laundry baskets regularly.





Examples of high-touch surfaces throughout your home.

Disinfect with products that contain at least 60% alcohol and follow directions on the product label. Clean visibly dirty surfaces before sanitizing. Many products recommend keeping the surface saturated with the disinfectant for a few minutes for the surface to be fully sanitized. After sanitizing, be sure to wash your hand thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds. Check the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's List N of disinfectants to make sure your product is effective against COVID-19. https://bit.ly/3qEXiDF

For more information about cleaning and sanitation, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website.

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.

COLOR MIND EXERCISE

Try to say the color of the words, instead of actually reading them. This may be more difficult than you think! The right half of your brain is trying to say the colors, the left half is trying to say the word itself.

YELLOW

BLACK

PURPLE

RED

BLACK

YELLOW

RED

PURPLE

YELLOW

RED

PURPLE

BLACK

PURPLE

BLUE

BI ACK

GREEN

GREEN

RED

ORANGE

BLACK

GREEN

ORANGE

PURPLE

YELLOW

BLUE

YELLOW

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(800) 478-7778

| Division of Senior and Disabilities Services(80 | 00) 478-9996 |
|---|--------------|
| Food Bank of Alaska(9 | 07) 272-3663 |
| People Mover(9 | 07) 343-4536 |
| Salvation Army Meals on Wheels(9 | 07) 349-0613 |
| Southcentral Foundation(9 | 07) 729-4955 |
| | |