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

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

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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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Breast Cancer Screening Saves Lives

By Public Relations Specialist Shamika Andrew

Breast cancer is the most common cancer found in women — affecting one out of eight women in the U.S. Knowing how and when to get screened while following the recommended testing schedule is the best method to detect cancer in its earliest stages, which increases the likelihood of successful treatment.

Southcentral Foundation Radiology recommends getting a clinical breast exam by your health care provider every year beginning at age 20 and an annual mammogram for women ages 40 and older. SCF mammography technologists use the most up-to-date technology, 3D mammography, which provides earlier breast cancer detection and detects 40% of more invasive cancers than conventional mammography alone.

Why do I need to get a mammogram every year?

Comparing mammogram pictures from year to year makes it easier for the radiologist to find changes early.

I have no family history of breast cancer; do I still need to have annual mammograms? Yes, any woman can develop breast cancer.

Does a mammogram hurt?

There may be discomfort while the breasts are being compressed. If you have menstrual cycles, try to schedule your mammogram at least three days after your period when your breasts are not tender.

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 their providers can be notified right away if there are any changes. A breast self-exam is a convenient screening method recommended for women of all ages. It can be performed at home and should be included as part of a monthly routine.

To perform a breast self-exam, a woman may be standing or lying down. She should use her three middle fingers to press down into the breast with light, medium, and firm pressure. This should be repeated over the entire breast on both sides.

She should note any lumps, thickening, hardened knots, dimpling, swelling, or other abnormalities. If anything abnormal or concerning is detected, she should contact her primary care provider to verify and discuss next steps. This process should be repeated monthly.

Since breast cancer is a common condition among Alaska Native and American Indian women, SCF providers are versed in the screening and testing process, and in determining a follow-up care plan if a cancerous growth is found. Regardless of the outcome of a physical exam or mammogram, customer-owners can be confident they are getting the highest quality screening, the most accurate results possible, and providers who will partner with them to determine the best courses of action.

SCF Health Education offers a Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program that provides community outreach and cancer prevention materials for customerowners. It is recommended to get screened more often if your family has a history of cancer. Screening and early detection can save lives.

If you have questions about your breast cancer risk factors or screening options, contact your primary care team.



Changes to share with your provider are:

- Lump or hard knot
- Swelling, warmth, redness, or darkening of the breast
- Changing in the size or shape of the breast
- Dimpling or puckering of the skin
- Itchy, scaly sore or rash on the nipple
- Pulling in of the nipple or other parts of the breast
- Unusual nipple discharge that starts suddenly
- New pain in one spot

The Power of Sharing Story: Recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoa and Family Wellness Warriors

"Come home and give those kids a life."

These were the words from Family Wellness Warriors Director Bobbi Outten's father that saved her. Outten had been married for 11 years when she left her husband for the seventh and final time. She ran with just a few personal belongings, her three young children, and one on the way. Outten shared she felt desperate and credits her parents, pastor, and a caring network of people for supporting her to find the strength to leave a home laced with addiction, chaos, control, and violence. Because she found a safe community, Outten never turned back.

"Something that is so key when having the courage to speak up is finding a safe place with safe people, people who are going to respond in ways that are supportive, accepting, and nonjudgmental," FWW Community Engagement Advisor Polly Andrews shared.

After finding the inner courage to share her story, Outten found her safe place and people, and it changed her life and the lives of her children. Today, her children are grown and committed to providing safe homes through foster care, breaking cycles, and changing the end of the story for themselves and many others.

Outten is happily remarried, and when she is not being a grandma or working on her farm, she leads FWW, a program with a goal of returning to the strengths of Alaska Native and American Indian culture to build healing relationships, community connection, and resiliency to trauma. For Outten, this work will always be personal, a part of her own healing and hope.

Everyone has a story behind their eyes and deserves to be heard with dignity and respect. FWW offers learning circles and training intensives throughout the year that provide safe spaces for people to share their

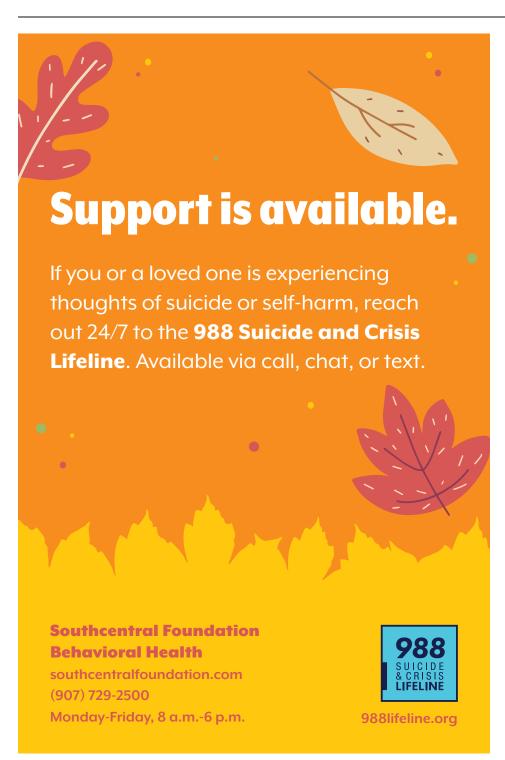


stories and heal from the effects of trauma. Participants explore healthier ways of relating in a culturally connected, safe, and peer-led space.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence and need immediate help, here are some resources:

- 24-hour Abused Women's Aid In Crisis hotline at (907) 272-0100
- Standing Together Against Rape at 907-276-7279
- StrongHearts Native Helpline at 1-844-7NATIVE

FWW will be hosting a Domestic Violence Awareness Observance and Walk Wednesday, Oct. 18 from noon to 1 p.m. in the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby to increase awareness and highlight resources To learn more about this event and the services FWW provides, please contact (907) 729-5440.





Medicaid Renewal Preparedness is Key to Maintaining Coverage

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Tara Carey

Medicaid eligibility renewals returned to the regular annual review process April 1. This impacts community members who qualified for Medicaid while federal provisions were in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. To limit gaps in health coverage, being prepared can give your family time to consider your options and take action. Medicaid renewal preparedness starts with making sure your contact information is current and by opening and responding to all mail from the Alaska Division of Public Assistance.

Renewal dates will vary for families, and renewals will be processed in batches throughout the year and into 2024. Typically, annual renewals occur around the anniversary of when coverage began.

DPA recommends the following to be ready for Medicaid renewals:

- Update your contact information using the online Medicaid information update form (https://www.surveymonkey.com/ r/25NKQW2) or by calling the Medicaid Information Hotline at (883) 441-1870.
- Check your mail for important information about your coverage.
- If renewal forms are received by mail, fill out and return the forms.

Some recipients will be able to renew automatically if their information is available and can be confirmed electronically. For those who qualify for the electronic renewal process, information about their Medicaid status will be mailed.

Those whose coverage cannot be automatically renewed will be contacted by DPA to provide more information about their eligibility. If a renewal form is needed, there will be a specified time frame to complete



Customer-owners can meet with Family Health Resources during visits at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center.

and submit the form, generally 30 days, so it is important to continue to look for updates in the mail. If you do not submit the form on time, there is the risk of losing coverage.

During the renewal period, you will receive a notice from DPA on your renewal status and options to pursue if you are no longer eligible. After the renewal process is complete, DPA will send notice of when enrollment ends, information on how to appeal if coverage is lost, and information about buying other health coverage on HealthCare.gov.

Southcentral Foundation Family Health Resources is committed to assisting customer-owners and community members through their Medicaid renewal and application. FHR is participating in community events to share information about maintaining health coverage, conduct eligibility screenings for different health coverages, and assist with health insurance applications and renewal processes. Look for FHR at the ANMC health fair at the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention, and follow SCF on Facebook to learn about other community events FHR will be at.

Customer-owners and community members can visit FHR in the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center or call (907) 729-4470 to make an appointment with the team located at the Chugach Square Mall.

For more information about Medicaid renewals, visit health.alaska.gov/dpa or call Southcentral Foundation Family Health Resources at (907) 729-4470 in Anchorage or (833) 729-4470 toll-free.

Melissa Merrick Celebrated for Leadership, Advocacy

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations and Corporate Communications

Southcentral Foundation Executive Vice President Melissa Merrick accepted the Social Worker of the Year award at the biennial conference of the National Association of Social Workers Alaska Chapter on Sept. 22.

While most know her as the executive leader of SCF's primary care services, Merrick began her work with the organization 16 years ago as a behavioral health consultant. Trained in family-focused

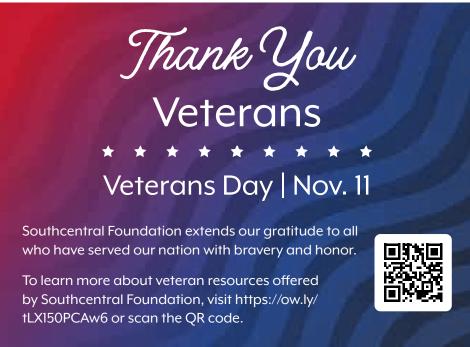


services and licensed as a social worker, Merrick has a passion for smooth transitions between medical and behavioral services and bringing teams together to improve access to integrated health care. She worked for many years to help grow SCF's integrated behavioral health program and expand behavioral health integration beyond the primary care clinics. Merrick has also played key administrative and clinical roles in several other quality improvements at SCF, including the current approaches to medication assisted treatment, rural health care delivery, early childhood mental health, and persistent pain management.

Merrick is a past board member for NASW-AK and also presented a breakout session on "Leading with Social Work Values" at the NASW-AK Biennial Conference on Sept. 20.

For more information about the Southcentral Foundation leadership team, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/about-us/leadership.





From Trainee to Teacher, Success in the Dental Assistant Training Program

By Public Relations Specialist Levi Oyster

Southcentral Foundation Learning and Development Clinical Advisor Carol East, of Aleut descent, found out about the Dental Assistant Training Program in 1999. At the time, East was seeking a career change.

One day she was with her son at the SCF Dental clinic and asked the attending dental assistant how to enter the field. The assistant shared that she trained elsewhere, but if East was interested, training was available at SCF. After speaking with a DAT program advisor, East started as a trainee five days later.



"The program changed my life," East said. "I had always wanted to be in dentistry, but I married young, had a family, and had a job that helped us get by. With this program, I had a career."

The DATP is a paid employee training that combines classroom instruction with intense hands-on clinical training. The curriculum includes preventive, restorative, surgical, endodontic treatments, and more.

Upon enrollment, East soon learned to assist the dental team and providers in chairside-related duties in all aspects of general dentistry.

After graduating from the program, she became a passionate dental assistant and quickly progressed to supervisor and began mentoring incoming trainees. East loved the teaching aspect and wanted to become an instructor of the program, so she went back to school for a Bachelor of Health Science with an emphasis in public health.

"Once I completed my bachelor's degree, I applied for and was hired as a dental assistant training specialist at SCF," East shared. "After teaching my

first cohort, I decided I wanted to know why people learn differently and what I could do to enhance other people's learning."

She then went back to school for her Master of Education to be able to teach at a higher level.

After teaching the DATP for three years, East progressed to her current clinical advisor role in the Development Center with a primary focus on supporting training within the Dental department. Having her life changed by the program, East enjoys seeing the impact training has

on new employees.

"I love watching young men and women grow into their role as a dental assistant," East said. "The smile on their faces when they finally get what we are asking them to do is priceless. That personal accomplishment I see on their faces is the best gift this teacher could ever ask for."

One of SCF's corporate objectives is to increase the percentage of Alaska Native and American Indian people in clinical positions. The DATP teaches entry-level applicants to become dental assistants and is designed to help SCF reach this goal. Many graduates of the program quickly find this opportunity to be a life changing steppingstone in their careers.

For more information about the Dental Assistant Training Program, visit bit.ly/3DGDZ2x. To view all Southcentral Foundation job opportunities, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/careers or call (907) 729-4977.

Nilavena Regional Health Center Celebrates 20th Anniversary

By Public Relations Specialist Christine Adams



Six villages surround Iliamna Lake: Igiugig, Kokhanok, Iliamna, New Halen, Nondalton, and Pedro Bay. While each community has a small clinic with one or two health aides, there are limitations, especially regarding trauma and emergency response. In 1999, the villages enlisted the help of Southcentral Foundation to plan, develop, and build a facility to offer more comprehensive services to the Iliamna Lake Region, including Port Alsworth.

The result was the Nilavena Subregional Clinic, now called the Nilavena Regional Clinic, a 9,000-square-foot medical clinic with an emergency room, four exam rooms, a laboratory, a pharmacy (connected to the telepharmancy system), a dental suite with two examination chairs, and more. The clinic opened its doors July 15, 2003.

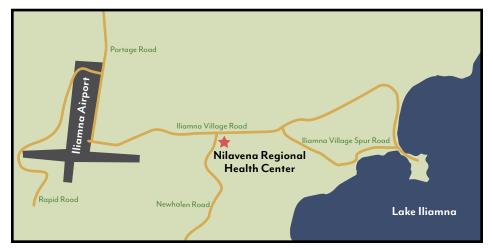
"Customer-owners and community members have been extremely grateful Southcentral Foundation is the health organization providing services for Nilavena," Nilavena Regional Health Center Supervisor Shannon Johnson said.

Nilavena Regional Health Center is a federally qualified health center offering services to all community members including Alaska Native, American Indian, and non-Native people. The clinic currently serves approximately 1,200 community members year-round, with increased visits in the summer during the fishing and tourism season.

Since its opening, services at Nilavena Regional Health Center have continued to expand to include limited specialty services such as dental, optometry, dietetics, and health education. Most recently, the clinic welcomed its first Tribal doctor apprentice. Julianna is not a tribal doctor yet who provides traditional healing services.

Nilavena Regional Health Center celebrated its 20th anniversary with a community barbecue in August.

For more information about Nilavena Regional Health Center, visit https://bit.ly/3OR8OYN.

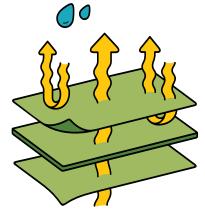


Warm Up to These Clever Tips for Winter Safety

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoa

With days that look like nights and skies lit by aurora borealis, Alaska can be a wintry wonder, reminding us of why we choose to live in this beautiful state. Here are some tips on how to stay safe and warm while enjoying and appreciating the splendors of the Alaskan winter season:





Stay Warm and Dry

Think layers — Base layer, to regulate heat, should be wool, silk, or polyester. Insulating layer, to retain heat, should be wool, down, or fleece. Shell layer, to protect from the elements, should be waterproof and windproof.

Waterproof socks —Slip each foot into plastic bags after putting on thin socks. Slide on another pair of thin socks to secure plastic and you should be set.

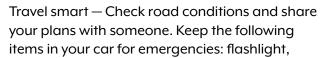
Heat rice packs — Secure rice in a clean sock, warm in the microwave 20 seconds, and place in a desired location, such as the bed or seat, to warm the surface. Heated rice bags are also great for sore muscles and hand warmers.

Retain heat — Open curtains on sunny days for solar warming, close doors throughout the house to trap warm air, and invest in heavy drapes to insulate heat on colder days.



Stay Safe

Gain traction — Keep a bag of kitty litter in your car trunk. If your car gets stuck in snow or ice, sprinkle kitty litter at the base of your tires to add traction. Slip-proof driveways with additional kitty litter or sand.



batteries, emergency thermal blankets, duct tape, first aid kit, snacks, water, flares, shovel, lighter, and cell phone charger.

Play safely — Wear a helmet when operating an ATV or snow machines to protect your head, and opt for light moisture-wicking layers when active. Keep microfiber towels handy to stay dry and continue having fun.



Stay Prepared

Keep emergency lighting — Ensure each member of the family has a flashlight with batteries, and keep extra candles and lighters/matches on hand. Lint, toilet paper rolls, and duct tape can serve as fire starters.

Stash food and water — Bottled water and canned food are often the first items stores run out during emergencies. Get into the habit of buying extra bottled

water and canned food every time you go shopping to build an emergency supply.

Stock batteries — It is a good idea to have a multipack of batteries stored, instead of trying to buy them all at once during an emergency.





Save the date for the annual ANMC Health Fair at AFN!

Thursday, Oct. 19, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 20, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Second floor of the Dena'ina Civic and Convention Center

Join us for the ANMC Health Fair at AFN! We'll have an adult flu vaccine clinic, healthy eating and lifestyle tips, wellness and prevention services, and much more!



The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Southcentral Foundation jointly own and manage ANMC under the terms of Public Law 105-83. These parent organizations have established a Joint Operating Board to ensure unified operation of health services provided by the Medical Center.

Prepare, Prevent, and Protect Against Respiratory Illness

By Southcentral Foundation Public Relations and Corporate Communications

As Alaskans, we expect the snow to fall, sun to shine, and fish to run each year. Just as we expect these annual events, we can also anticipate the seasonal flu, COVID-19, and respiratory syncytial virus. Fortunately, there are steps you can take during months with higher rates of respiratory illness to keep yourself, your family, and your community protected.

"While it's encouraging to see the decreasing impact of COVID-19 in the community, it's important to remember that it's still around and causing severe illness, especially in high-risk people," Southcentral Foundation Medical Director Dr. Michael Cooper said. He also advised customerowners to remember other serious respiratory viruses, such as influenza and RSV, and the steps you can take to reduce the impact on yourself and loved ones.

Protect against the flu

It is recommended most people ages 6 months and older receive a flu vaccination every year beginning in September or October. Alaska has year-round flu activity peaking between November and March, so it is never too late to receive your flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is effective for up to six months, making it essential to receive each year. While the flu vaccination cannot guarantee you will not get the flu, it can reduce your risk of severe illness.

Protect against COVID-19

May marked the end of the global COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic has ended, COVID-19 and other variants are still present.

Alaska Native and American Indian people are at a higher risk of COVID-19-related hospitalizations, illnesses, and death. Your best defense against contracting and spreading COVID-19 is staying up to date on vaccines and boosters, practicing physical distancing, staying home when you are sick, and getting tested if you have symptoms.



Prevent RSV

RSV is a common respiratory virus that people usually experience cold-like symptoms but can cause serious lower respiratory infections such as bronchiolitis and pneumonia. Infants, children, and Elders are most likely to develop serious RSV that may result in hospitalization. RSV vaccines for those at risk are not available yet but are being developed. To reduce the risk of getting and spreading RSV:

- Avoid kissing, sharing utensils, and holding/shaking hands with those who have symptoms.
- · Cover your coughs and sneezes, and wash your hands often.
- Avoid being around others if you are sick and sanitize highly used surfaces often.

Staying home when you are sick, handwashing, and staying up to date on vaccines are measures we all can take to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses such as the flu, COVID-19, and RSV.

For more information, please contact your primary care team directly or through MyHealth.

Raise Interns Embrace New Cultural Curriculum

By Technical Writer Uinita Mauigoa



There was a time when this land was pristine and inhabited by multiple cultures living in reciprocity and respect alongside each other, the animals, and the elements. Thousands of years have passed, and many of these cultures Indigenous to Alaska are still thriving today.

An important goal for Southcentral Foundation's Raise Program is to provide Alaska Native and American Indian interns opportunities to develop their identities, connect with their communities, and develop a cultural understanding to carry into their futures.

Raise recently piloted a new work plan, "Alaska Native Culture and History Curriculum Development for Interns," to youth ages 14 to 19. The aim is to support Alaska Native and American Indian interns in developing awareness and appreciation for their own rich cultures and history while designing and establishing a curriculum based on the state's cultural standards.

"There is a point in young people's lives when they ask themselves, 'Who am I really?' It is about the authenticity of self," Raise Youth Advisor Shirley Tuzroyluke shared.

The first lesson of the curriculum, which Tuzroyluke co-created, starts with an overview seen from the Indigenous perspective examining the

peoples, cultures, and languages that existed in Alaska for thousands of years. Interns created a timeline that spanned back 14,000 years. With two inches representing every 100 years, interns produced 25 feet of paper illustrating that this land has been populated for centuries.

Tuzroyluke shared that this fall, the program hopes to expand on this introduction to delve into and learn more about the multiple cultures Indigenous to Alaska.

Examining the history of Alaska reveals that Alaska Native people descended from a long line of strong, intelligent, and resilient people. Tuzroyluke recently shared with interns that an archeology site in Tanana River Valley revealed Athabascan people hunted mammoths, a study highlighted by the University of Alaska Fairbanks. Tuzroyluke enjoys seeing the interns' eyes light up with curiosity.

Cultural awareness and tradition play important roles in youth building self-esteem and developing a positive sense of identity. The Raise Program shares many aspects of culture such as cultural values, ways of knowing and communicating, storytelling, and descendance. Interns have the opportunity to connect with others from varying cultures to learn similarities and differences that weave everyone together.

"We have a responsibility to interns to raise their awareness that they have a very rich and relevant history," Tuzroyluke shared. "It's not something that died at the time of contact with European cultures; it is a way of being that is relevant in today's world."

The goals of the Raise Program are to introduce Alaska Native and American Indian interns to administrative and health care careers, provide work site experiences, and support educational goals to become the next generation of leaders.

To learn more about the Raise Program, call (907) 729-5015.

Southcentral Foundation Elder Program Expands Services

By Public Relations and Corporate Communications



Southcentral Foundation is continually making improvements to better serve Elder customer-owners who visit the SCF Elder Program. Elder Program Manager Chris Klabunde recently announced a new service that provides on-site behavioral health services.

While Elder customer-owners attend lunch or activities held at the Elder Program, located at 6901 East Tudor Road Suite 8, a behavioral health consultant is now available on-site. Customer-owners have direct access to check in with a BHC about life changes, trauma, grief, and other mental health issues. The BHC will provide a listening ear and work with Elder customer-owners to develop a plan to address any issues they may be experiencing.

"Integrating a BHC into the Elder Program enables customer-owners the ease of access to short-term support and referral for longer-term treatment services," Klabunde shared. "Examples would be grief and loss support, as well as referral for substance use treatment. Having this located at the Elder Program is a priority of the Elder Advisory Council and is the result of coordinated efforts of many departments working together to provide exceptional service for Elder customer-owners."

The Elder Program provides a comprehensive approach in delivering services to address the needs of Alaska Native and American Indian people, ages 55 and older, who reside in the Anchorage area. The services are designed to enhance the quality of life and promote independent living through fostering an environment of quality, dignity, and pride.

The Elder Program provides a hot lunch service during the week, advocacy, information and assistance, and referral services. Light housekeeping, in-home visits, and scheduled transportation are provided for those who are eligible. Group outings and health and social activities are scheduled on a regular basis.

For more information about the services provided or volunteer opportunities at the Elder Program, call (907) 729-6500.



MONDAY

Behavioral Health Consultant 10 a.m.-Noon

> Shopping· 12:30-2 p.m.

•Please call (907) 729-6500 for transportation. Space is limited.

TUESDAY

Culture and Traditions 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



Bingo Noon-2 p.m.

WEDNESDAY



THURSDAY

Health Education and Exercise... Noon-2 p.m.

"Please call SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689 for more information.

FRIDAY

Nurse Practitioner Services 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Elder Jam 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



SCF Elder Program | 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508 | (907) 729-6500

Important Phone Numbers