



Spring into Action

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Honoring the 100-Year Anniversary of the Great Race of Mercy: A Modern Day Journey of Vaccines to Rural Alaska

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

Whether you are a history buff or a movie fan, chances are you have heard the heroic stories of Togo and Balto and the role they played in 1925 Great Race of Mercy from Nenana to Nome, Alaska. Musher and their dog teams crossed treacherous terrain during Alaska’s winter to safely bring diphtheria antitoxin to Nome. Without the antitoxin, it was expected that the population of Nome and the surrounding regions, about 10,000 people, would have suffered a nearly 100% mortality rate.

While transportation, communication, and health care have improved over the past 100 years, do you ever wonder how immunizations get to rural communities in 2025? To honor the 100-year anniversary of the Great Race of Mercy, let’s follow the modern journey Southcentral Foundation vaccines take to safely arrive at a rural clinic, and the importance of your role in making and keeping appointments.

It seems simple — you schedule an appointment, you show up, and you get vaccinated. On the back end, however, there are dozens of people including SCF pharmacists, couriers, immunization coordinators, pharmacy technicians, and primary care employees ensuring you receive vaccines efficiently and safely.

A rural vaccine’s journey at SCF starts with an inventory check from the clinic. SCF Pharmacy coordinates with community health centers to determine the quantity of adult and pediatric doses and the date needed.

The first leg of the journey is from the supplier to the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Pharmacy. Vaccines are delivered from several sources including the Indian Health Service, State of Alaska Epidemiology Department, and McKesson Pharmaceutical Distribution. Upon arrival, all vaccines are inspected, labeled, and sorted. They are stored in a refrigerator or freezer, depending on the type.

“The team’s vaccine coordinator must also indicate in the electronic health record each location the vaccine will be stored, from offsite clinics to the Alaska Native Medical Center, so it can be documented when administered,” SCF Clinical Director Pharmacist Callista Carlton shared.

Before community health centers receive vaccines, they must track the refrigeration temperature twice daily and provide proper documentation that it stays within the appropriate temperature range.

ANPCC Pharmacy then plans the next leg of the vaccine’s journey, shipping to rural Alaska.

“Pharmacy packages vaccines in a VeriCor cooler with a temperature monitoring device that tracks the contents temperature from the moment we hit start and zip

the tote, to the moment the clinic receives the cooler and hits stop. Once the tote and log tag are returned to Pharmacy, we can download the data and see that the vaccines stayed within an acceptable temperature range for their journey from



Lt. Cmdr. Michael Bakker, ANTHC provider and Cmdr. Kristen Maves, SCF pharmacist, deliver COVID-19 vaccines to Indian Creek Health Clinic in Tyonek.

Anchorage to the rural site,” Carlton shared. “A pharmacy technician then brings the package to the airfield to depart on the next scheduled flight.”

When the clinics receive the vaccines, they are inspected to ensure the packaging is intact, have remained at the correct temperature, then logged into inventory. When the vaccines are removed, the special cooling totes and temperature monitor devices are sent back to Anchorage.

The final leg of a vaccine’s journey requires you.

Just as the mushers of the Great Race of Mercy did, health care workers go the extra mile to ensure vaccines get to you effectively, safely, and quickly. A lot of work begins behind the scenes when you schedule a vaccine appointment. When you schedule an appointment, be sure to keep the appointment, or let your provider know if you need to reschedule.

When one person is immunized, children, parents, and grandparents are all safer from life-threatening disease. Together, we can continue the legacy of protection for generations to come.

To ensure your family’s immunizations are up to date, connect with your integrated care team or visit the State of Alaska VacTrAK website at vactrak.alaska.gov.

Stop by SCF tables at NYO

Southcentral Foundation is a proud sponsor of the Native Youth Olympics Games in Anchorage, April 24-26. Stop by SCF’s booth to learn more about health and wellness services.

Alaska Airlines Center
 Thursday, April 24 and Friday, April 25 | 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
 Saturday, April 26 | 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

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Southcentral Foundation

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Grounding Yourself Through Mindfulness Techniques

By Senior Marketing Specialist Emma Irish

With the arrival of spring, an increase in daylight, and rising temperatures comes a sense of renewal for many people. In preparation for Mental Health Awareness Month in May, Southcentral Foundation invites customer-owners to practice 31 days of mindful moments to reflect and consider adopting into your daily routine.

Mindfulness is the practice of focusing on the present by tapping into our five senses to ground ourselves in the moment. By focusing on what we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell, we find ourselves in the now. In doing so, we can release ourselves from any anxiety of the past and future. One of the most significant benefits of mindfulness is its positive impact on mental health.

Mental health is an important piece of whole-person wellness and affects how we think, feel, act; determining how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices. By practicing mindfulness, individuals learn to observe their thoughts and emotions without reacting impulsively. Studies have shown that mindfulness-based interventions, such as Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy, can help alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression.

Mindfulness may also enhance emotional regulation. By fostering a nonjudgmental awareness of emotions, individuals can respond to challenges with greater composure and resilience. Instead of being overwhelmed by negative emotions, mindfulness practitioners learn to acknowledge and accept their feelings. This skill is particularly beneficial in relationships, and promotes empathy and patience. As a result, individuals who practice mindfulness often experience more fulfilling and harmonious relationships with others.

But how do you practice mindfulness? To clear up any misconceptions, you do not need to have a clear, calm, or even organized mind. Mindfulness simply provides the opportunity to practice and train the mind to focus on the present moment.

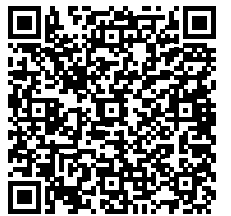
Focus on one thing at a time, whether it be enjoying a meal, listening to the leaves under your feet as you take a walk, or feeling the sun on your face through the windshield on your drive to work. You can practice mindfulness in traditional activities such as beading, sewing, dancing, and subsistence gathering. Take time to slow down, breathe deep, and honor the moment. Over time and with practice,



Join Southcentral Foundation in May to practice 31 mindful moments.

mindfulness may increase happiness, gratitude, and give you a greater sense of overall fulfillment.

For more information about mindfulness and learning circles, or other available support options, individuals are encouraged to connect with their integrated care team or behavioral health provider. Scan QR code to learn more.



Protect Loved Ones, Your Community from Measles

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications



Keeping up to date on immunizations is your best defense and can keep measles from spreading.

Your primary care team at Southcentral Foundation is available to discuss your health care at any time. You may have noticed measles making local, national, and even global news. While the news may feel overwhelming, getting the facts will help you make informed decisions. Here are some steps you can take to reduce your risk of measles.

Don't panic! There has only been one confirmed case of measles in Alaska this year. The case involved an unvaccinated individual who traveled overseas. Further spread was avoided by rapid medical and public health responses, and the high number of people in the community who have been vaccinated against the disease. Measles is highly preventable if you are vaccinated.

Learn the facts. Measles is among the most infectious of all diseases and is especially dangerous to unvaccinated children and unvaccinated pregnant women. The measles vaccine is safe and can provide up to 97% protection from contraction when exposed and reduce the risk of the severe complications. Unvaccinated children who contract measles have a one in four

risk of hospitalization, and one in 20 may develop pneumonia. Additionally, unvaccinated children are at a greater risk for serious medical complications.

Check your vaccination records. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends the measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) combo vaccine series starting at 1 year of age. Alaskans can check their immunization record on the Alaska Department of Health web page, the Docket phone app, or through your primary care team. Due to the long-lasting protective effect of the MMR vaccine, most adults who were vaccinated as children or were born prior to 1957 do not need additional vaccines. It is recommended that children receive their first dose of measles vaccine between 12-15 months of age, and their second dose between 4-6 years of age.

You can get vaccinated now! If you or your loved ones are not up to date with your measles vaccine, you can get vaccinated now. While early vaccination is recommended due to the risks for younger kids, the vaccine is effective for older children and adults.

Know the signs and symptoms. Symptoms often include a high fever, cough, runny nose, red and watery eyes, and a rash that breaks out 3-5 days after the first symptoms begin. Measles is an airborne illness, spread when an infected person coughs or sneezes.

Connect with your primary care team. When making health care decisions, it is natural to have questions. Primary care providers at Southcentral Foundation welcome discussions about decisions that affect your family's health. Your primary care team is ready to address any reservations or concerns you may have. When fewer people are vaccinated in a community, the risk of deadly outbreaks increases. When most people are immunized, communities and those most vulnerable to severe disease are safer from life-threatening complications from diseases like measles.

For more information about your immunization status, contact your primary care team directly by sending a secure message through MyHealth, or by visiting southcentralfoundation.com to find the clinic nearest you.

Tips for Eating Healthy on a Budget

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

Eating healthy while not breaking the bank is a challenge many Alaskans are familiar with. Here are a few tips to remember the next time you are planning a trip to the grocery store.

Buy in bulk. Buying in bulk may be higher in price initially, but the per-unit cost is almost always less expensive. Dry and canned goods like pasta, rice, oatmeal, beans, and soups are good to buy in bulk because they have a long shelf life. Buying in bulk may save money and time because it means fewer trips to the grocery store.

Buy frozen and canned fruits and vegetables. Fresh produce can be expensive in Alaska, and it goes bad quickly. Frozen and canned fruits and vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh produce because they are picked at peak ripeness, and their nutrients are preserved when frozen or canned. When buying frozen and canned produce, read the nutrition label and choose options with no added sugar or sodium. If these options are not available, you can also rinse the produce to remove any additives.

- Ideas for frozen vegetables: steam in the microwave for two minutes and add as a side dish to any meal or into a casserole.
- Ideas for canned fruit: canned pineapple, oranges, peaches, or pears are great options to pair with cottage cheese for a nutritious snack.
- It is okay if you don't like certain fruits or vegetables. Chances are, if you swap in a different fruit or vegetable or prepare it another way, you might enjoy it.

Eat the recommended 25-35 grams per day of fiber. Fiber helps make you feel full and regulates your digestive system. Many traditional Alaska foods, like wild greens and berries, are good sources of fiber. Whole grains, like oatmeal, popcorn, frozen vegetables, and beans, are all good options to help you eat your daily amount of fiber.

Shop sales. Most grocery stores have mobile apps that allow you to select coupons and see what is on sale before you shop. To make the most of the coupons, plan your meals based on sale items. Consider signing up for the store's rewards program to save more money.



Healthy eating doesn't have to break the bank. Get creative with pantry staples and watch them turn into healthy meals.

Cook at home. Restaurant meals are always more expensive than cooking at home. In fact, a meal from a restaurant can cost five times more than making the same meal at home. Going out to eat can be enjoyable and convenient but cooking most of your meals at home saves money.

Explore nutritious foods and their benefits at Dinner Makes a Difference learning circle with Southcentral Foundation Health Education. Connect with health educators every Friday in the Learning Kitchen located on the first floor of the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center from noon to 1 p.m. Customer-owners of all ages are encouraged to participate. This interactive learning circle features recipes and skills to support your wellness goals and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

For more information on healthy cooking learning circles, please contact SCF Health Education in Anchorage at 907-729-2689 or Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center Wellness Center in Wasilla at 907-631-7630.

Try a budget-friendly healthy recipe.

Scan for recipe. →



Culture Connects:

●●●●● Spring Into Wellness

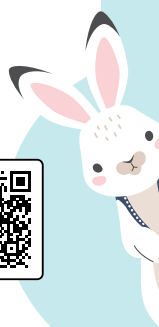


April 18 | 11:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center

Join Southcentral Foundation for Culture Connects, a celebration of Alaska Native traditions, wellness, and community.

Enjoy cultural activities, traditional foods, and fun for the whole family — including a special visit from the Easter Bunny!

Scan the QR code to view upcoming events.



Get Your Garden Growing!



April 17 | 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Lobby

Learn about the health benefits of gardening while preparing for your own home garden. Health Education will have a variety of vegetable and herb seeds and starts for participants. Bring a bag or box to get your supplies home! Starts will be limited to eight per person.

We are excited to help you get your garden growing!



Safeguard Your Health with Colorectal Cancer Screenings

By Marketing Specialist Levi Oyster



Integrated care team providers are a safe resource to discuss colorectal cancer screening.

Did you know Southcentral Foundation and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium offer screenings to aid in early detection of colorectal cancer? Alaska Native and American Indian individuals have the highest rates of colorectal cancer; however, this disease is highly preventable, treatable, and beatable with early detection and timely screenings.

Colorectal cancer is a type of cancer where cells grow rapidly in the colon or rectum. It is one of the most common types of cancer in the world as well as one of the most survivable when detected early.

The idea of a colonoscopy or colorectal cancer screening may make some people hesitant. It is common and natural to worry about potential discomfort and embarrassment due to the preparation for the procedure and to the procedure itself. The potential screening results can also produce anxiety, but colorectal cancer screening is an important step in maintaining long-term health. SCF and ANTHC are dedicated to providing compassionate care and ensuring customer-owners feel informed and supported throughout the screening process.

SCF Health Educator Julie Stayden works to dispel worries and concerns customer-owners experience regarding their health care.

“I share my own experience and family history of colorectal cancer. I also share that colon cancer does not have any significant signs or symptoms until late stages. A colonoscopy is a medical procedure that allows a provider to examine the large intestine, the colon, for abnormalities,” Stayden explained.

It can be challenging for customer-owners to feel comfortable talking with providers about their bowel health. There is a natural tendency to avoid sharing openly due to the sensitive nature of the part of the body involved.

“There is often embarrassment about the procedure or discussing it with a provider.” Stayden expressed. “Screening involves inserting a thin, flexible tube called a colonoscope into the rectum and advancing it through the colon. You are given a twilight sedative, and you won’t feel a thing.”

Colorectal cancer screenings can detect precancerous tissue growth before the cells turn into cancer. Stayden noted that while some customer-owners are nervous about the procedure beforehand, they were ultimately glad that had been screened. If polyps are found, they are removed and customer-owners are happy to have them out of their body whether cancerous or not.

Screening for colorectal cancer is recommended for Alaska Native and American Indian people once every 10 years beginning at age 40. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it is important to stay current on annual exams, screenings, as well as monitoring for any signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer. While there are often no noticeable symptoms of colon cancer, some that may be experienced are diarrhea, constipation, blood in stool, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, fatigue, and loss of appetite.

To ensure you are up to date on exams and screenings, please reach out to your integrated care team.

Lt. Cmdr. Theresa Castellanos Receives American Pharmacists Association Immunization Champion Award

By Communications Specialist Jesse Holt

Southcentral Foundation Integrated Pharmacist Lt. Cmdr. Theresa Castellanos was selected as a 2025 recipient of the American Pharmacists Association Immunization Champion Award. The award recognizes individuals and organizations who have made extraordinary contributions toward improved vaccination rates within their communities. It was presented during the 2025 APhA annual meeting and exposition in Nashville.



Integrated Pharmacist Lt. Cmdr. Theresa Castellanos.

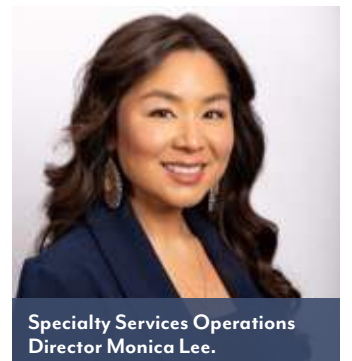
Castellanos is a recognized leader with more than 10 years of experience in vaccine subject matter and has partnered with organizations to safely and effectively offer vaccinations throughout Alaska. Each October, she coordinates walk-in flu vaccine clinics staffed by a multidisciplinary team of pharmacists, technicians, nurses, and administrative personnel. In addition, she has helped organize clinics throughout Anchorage, allowing high-risk populations access to influenza, COVID-19, RSV, pneumococcal, and Shingrix vaccines. For the last three years, she also partnered with state and local organizations to provide free vaccines at the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention. Last year, her team of more than 30 volunteers administered over 2,000 vaccines in six days.

Castellanos is a mentor to SCF pharmacy residents and students; and is the primary trainer for immunizations and medication administration. She is also a member of the SCF Corporate Initiative workgroup on immunizations, developing quality improvement practices to decrease immunization errors. Previously, she has been recognized as an Alaska Distinguished Young Pharmacist, received the National Alliance of State Pharmacy Associations’ Excellence in Innovation Award, and was honored in 2024 with an SCF Living Our Values Award.

Monica Lee Named Top Forty Under 40

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

The Alaska Journal of Commerce announced Monica Lee, an Alaska Native leader at Southcentral Foundation, among its Class of 2025 Top Forty Under 40 honorees. Lee’s professional excellence and commitment to community will be celebrated as part of the statewide awards event and featured in the Alaska Journal of Commerce and Anchorage Daily News.



Specialty Services Operations Director Monica Lee.

Lee serves as the operations director for SCF Specialty Services. She is responsible for the daily operations and growth of 20 different departments at SCF, providing both local and statewide health care for Alaska Native families. Her success in her career at SCF has been attributed to her work ethic, relationship building, and customer focus. Her dedication has resulted in significant quality improvements for customer-owners and for the teams partnering with customer-owners to deliver care. She is known across the Alaska Native Health Campus as a fierce advocate for growing and improving services.

Lee’s professional development has included years spent in human resources and management, including her early years with SCF, consulting for other Tribal organizations, and working as a human resources business partner at Arctic IT. She has credited these roles and the Alaska Native Executive Leadership Program at Alaska Pacific University for helping to shape the kind of leader she is today. SCF, along with Arctic Slope Regional Corp. and Doyon Foundation, helped support her participation in the leadership program and she continues to champion these benefits and opportunities for the next generation.

Through her acts of service within SCF and the wider community, Lee propels SCF’s Vision of a Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness.

For more information on the Top Forty Under 40 program, please visit www.adn.com/Alaska-journal-top-40-under-40.

Ending the Cycle, Healing Childhood Traumas

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

In Dena'ina Athabascan, the word for children is ch'anikna and is often used to signify a strong emphasis on caring for and valuing children.

Southcentral Foundation observes Child Abuse and Sexual Assault Awareness Month in April. This observance highlights services available to help families heal.

Traumas caused by adverse childhood experiences such as abuse, neglect, or household dysfunction can have life-long effects. If you are struggling with these traumas, it can be confusing to know how to take the next step to begin the cycle of healing. SCF has resources to support you.

SCF Family Wellness Warriors hosts trainings focusing on healing and sharing tools for adults to take action in ending cycles of child abuse and sexual assault. FWW offers trauma informed training intensives, workshops, and learning circles rooted in evidence-based, peer leadership models.

FWW learning circles are available to customer-owners ages 18 and older. These are peer-led support groups where people are invited to share story, connect, and build relationships through a variety of wellness activities.

Families are invited to explore these and many more learning circles offered by FWW:

- Woch.een Healthy Relationships learning circle
- Arrigah House and other training intensives are offered several times a year (open to customer-owners and family members over the age of 18).

When working toward healing, the compassionate team of FWW professionals are here to walk with you on your journey to wellness.

For more information about Southcentral Foundation Family Wellness Warriors learning circles or training intensives, call 907-729-5440.



Family Wellness Warriors supports healing through workshops and learning circles.

For more information, scan the QR code.



Southcentral Foundation

Nuka Conference

June 23-27

For more information contact Southcentral Foundation Learning Institute at SCFNukaEvent@scf.cc | SCFNuka.com | 907-729-6852

Shine a Light on Suicide Prevention

Together, we can illuminate the path to healing and suicide prevention.

988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

BUILDING EXPANSION ANNOUNCEMENT

Architectural rendering of future building expansion.

BENTEH NUUTAH VALLEY NATIVE PRIMARY CARE CENTER

Southcentral Foundation, in partnership with Chickaloon Village Traditional Council and Knik Tribal Council, opened the 1001 S. Knik-Goose Bay Road location in 2012. SCF is excited to announce the beginning of a three-part expansion project breaking ground this spring.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough customer-owners can expect:

- x2** Doubled facility size
- ★** New programs and services
- ↔** Expanded programs and services

More information will be shared in the upcoming months.

Breaking Free From Habits: Quitting Tobacco

By Marketing Specialist Shamika Andrew



Beading is a healthy habit to keep your hands busy.

Choosing to quit tobacco is one of the best choices you can make for your health. While not an easy thing to do, many people have quit tobacco by partnering with Southcentral Foundation's Quit Tobacco Program. Tobacco cessation specialists, primary care providers, and behavioral health consultants are here to support customer-owners and assist with alternative strategies as needed.

The Quit Tobacco Program is not just for people who want to stop smoking tobacco, but for anyone who wants guidance on reducing their nicotine use from chewing, vaping, using pouches, or other nicotine-based products. Acknowledging that quitting nicotine or tobacco products is a challenge and can be a gradual process is often the first step. It may take several tries or testing out different methods before you quit completely.

SCF Health Educator Stephanie Rockford shared one method to combat tobacco cravings and smoking urges is to develop a plan to avoid triggers.

"When it comes to tobacco or nicotine cessation, knowing your triggers before you stop using nicotine products and having a plan before the situation arrives decreases stress levels and increases the likelihood that you will be successful in continuing to be nicotine and tobacco free," Rockford said.

Once you understand situations or circumstances that may put you in a position to want to smoke, you can choose to do something different or replace smoking with

a different behavior. For example, chewing gum, or having a spicy mint when you feel like smoking or vaping is an effective replacement for some people.

"There are many methods that can be used to resist using tobacco, including being physically busy, keeping your mind occupied, and telling coworkers, family and friends you are quitting tobacco," Rockford said.

Set small goals and reward your milestones when you achieve them.

Here are some healthy tactics that you can try when you get the urge to use tobacco or nicotine to help you break the habit:

- Brush teeth after meals
- Chew gum or mint
- Take a walk
- Do a crossword puzzle
- Play with fidget toys
- Keep your hands busy with knitting or crocheting
- Eat sunflower seeds
- Color or paint
- Exercise
- Beading
- Write in a journal
- Clean your home or vehicle

Quitting tobacco is the most important step you can take to improve your health. Studies have shown that it takes the average person about seven attempts before they become tobacco free. Quitting is not easy, and it takes time and a plan. You do not have to stop smoking in one day.

SCF's Quit Tobacco Program is open to Alaska Native and American Indian people living in the Anchorage Service Unit. This program offers one-on-one counseling, follow-up services, and access to nicotine replacement therapy.

For more information, contact your integrated care team for Anchorage Native Primary Care Center call 907-729-3300 or Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center call 907-631-7600 to get a referral to the Quit Tobacco Program.

Emergency Services Department Expands to Support Growing Population

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications



The Alaska Native Medical Center expansion will add 18 additional beds creating a 60-bed Emergency Services Department.

As the expansion of the Alaska Native Medical Center hospital continues, leadership from Southcentral Foundation and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, the organizations that co-manage the ANMC accredited campus, attended a blessing ceremony for the additional rooms in the Emergency Services Department. Traditional healers led a prayer and a smudging ceremony before blessing each new room in the Emergency Services Department.

"It was a pleasure to join traditional healers, ANMC leadership, and our ANTHC partners for a blessing ceremony at the Emergency Service Department expansion," said SCF president and CEO April Kyle.

The phased expansion comes at a time when the hospital, which was built in the 1990s to serve Alaska Native and American Indian people across Alaska, has seen major growth in the population it serves. It marks the first expansion in about 25 years for the hospital and the additional beds will become part of a 60-bed Emergency Services Department.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium has taken the lead the significant expansion of the ANMC hospital, working in partnership with Southcentral Foundation. Opening the additional rooms marks the completion of the first phase of the renovations with several more to come.

"One of the biggest challenges we have had for years has been that our Emergency Services Department is vastly small, too small for the population that we serve," said ANMC Administrator Alan Vierling. "The 18 beds give us the opportunity to really give each patient the private experience they need to get the best examination, the best treatment, and the best care that we can provide for them."

Once all phases of the expansion are completed, the hospital's second floor will include 10 new surgical recovery bays and a Clinical Decision Unit for those who may or may not end up needing hospital admission. Expanded trauma capability, including a dedicated drive through ambulance entrance, will occur in later phases of construction. The Emergency Services Department expansion will occur over several years with final completion set for 2027.



The increased capacity in the Emergency Services Department is the first major expansion in 25 years at the Alaska Native Medical Center.

Aging Well: Heart Health

By Senior Marketing Specialist George Meyer



Frequently monitoring blood pressure is a proactive step to detect high blood pressure.

Martha is an independent grandmother of five and an active member of her community. She is very proactive when it comes to her health and regularly monitors her blood pressure at home. Recently, she noticed that her blood pressure was trending higher, so she scheduled an appointment with her integrated care team. During the visit, her provider confirmed her blood pressure reading was higher than it was at her last visit.

High blood pressure can develop into a condition called hypertension and if left untreated over time, could lead to serious health issues. Hypertension is diagnosed when your blood pressure is consistently 130/80 or higher based on the average of two or more blood pressure readings taken on different days.

Have you ever been told that you have high blood pressure like Martha? This scenario is fictitious, but with early detection blood pressure can be managed and harmful impacts reduced by taking proactive steps and accessing Southcentral Foundation services.

High blood pressure, or hypertension, is a condition where the force of blood pushing against the walls of blood vessels is too high. If not addressed, it can damage the walls of the blood vessels. This damage causes tiny tears to develop. As time goes on, cholesterol and fat can build up at these areas, forming plaque. The development of plaque can narrow the arteries, which can block blood flow and, in turn, further increase blood pressure. Over time, plaque buildup may lead to a heart attack, stroke, and other serious health issues.

Choosing healthy habits is one of the greatest things you can do to prevent the risk of developing heart disease. Some factors for developing heart disease are out of your control, but others can be modified by making healthy, conscious decisions about your body. Non-modifiable risk factors, or risk factors you cannot change, may include advanced age, family history, gender, and history of heart diseases.

Positive Lifestyle Choices To Prevent High Blood Pressure:

- Avoid or quit smoking — connect with your integrated care team for a referral to the SCF Quit Tobacco Program for support.
- Maintain a healthy weight.
- Eat a diet low in saturated and trans fats and rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy products.
- Eat foods rich in potassium like bananas, avocados, potatoes, etc.
- Consume less than 1,000 mg/day of sodium (salt).
- Get 150 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity per week.
- Limit alcohol intake.

In the scenario above, Martha worked with her integrated care team to create a plan to reduce her blood pressure through diet, exercise, and blood pressure medication.

Southcentral Foundation has resources to support customer-owners with hypertension, including integrated dietitians, exercise therapists, integrated pharmacists, and learning circles. For more information, contact your integrated care team or visit southcentralfoundation.com.

SCF Elder Activity Schedule



MONDAY	Behavioral Health Consultant 10 a.m.-noon	Traditional Healing Drum Group with Gilbert "Buz" Daney 10:30-11:30 a.m.	Shopping* 12:30-2 p.m.
TUESDAY	Culture and Traditions 10 a.m.-2 p.m.		
WEDNESDAY	Family Health Resources 10 a.m.-noon	Behavioral Health Consultant 10 a.m.-noon	Bingo Noon-2 p.m.
THURSDAY	Health Education and Exercise** Noon-2 p.m.		
FRIDAY	Nurse Practitioner Services 10 a.m.-2 p.m.	Elder Jam Noon-2 p.m.	

*Please call the Elder Program at 907-729-6500 for transportation. Space is limited.
**Please call SCF Health Education at 907-729-2689 for more information.

SCF Elder Program | 6901 East Tudor Road, Suite 8, Anchorage, AK 99507 | 907-729-6500

Important Phone Numbers

Alaska Native Medical Center	907-563-2662	Division of Senior and Disabilities Services	800-478-9996
AARP	907-762-3388	Food Bank of Alaska	907-272-3663
Anchorage Police Department (non-emergency)	907-786-8500	People Mover	907-343-4536
Anchor Rides	907-343-6543	Salvation Army Meals on Wheels	907-349-0613
Cook Inlet Housing Authority	907-793-3000	Southcentral Foundation	907-729-4955
Division of Public Assistance	800-478-7778	SCF Elder Program Event Hotline	907-729-6588