



2 Longtime Southcentral Foundation Executive Retires, Leaving a Legacy of Advocacy for the Alaska Native Community

3 Level Up Your Health Game: National Men’s Health Month

4 Rural Career Opportunities in Southcentral Alaska

5 Summer Safety: ATV Safety Tips

5 Dr. Bruce Stockhouse Honored with Luminary Award

6 Fueling for Summer: Carbohydrates, Colors, Protein

7 A Healthier Future Starts Now: Most Youth Who Vape Want to Quit

7 Urgent Maternal Warning Signs: Recognizing and Responding to Complications

8 Spotting Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia in a Loved One

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Anchorage, AK
Permit No. 1022

4501 Diplomacy Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Longtime Southcentral Foundation Executive Retires, Leaving a Legacy of Advocacy for the Alaska Native Community

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

After a decades-long career serving and representing the Alaska Native Community, Southcentral Foundation Executive Vice President of Executive and Tribal Services Ileen Sylvester has announced her retirement.

Inspired in part by her memories of the health care provided by the old Alaska Native Service Hospital, Sylvester joined SCF leadership in 1995 during a time of growth and expansion for the small organization. New programming such as family medicine, cancer screening, orthodontics, and Elder care had just been launched and, within her first year of service, SCF, CIRI, and the Indian Health Service broke ground to build the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center. Sylvester served first as a finance manager before becoming operations director in 1996 and then vice president in 1998. After helping to negotiate the transition of the health care system to Alaska Native ownership, she moved into the new role of vice president of Executive and Tribal Services of the larger, more robust SCF.

From the beginning of her career, Sylvester shared SCF’s will for self-determination in health care and desire to match the Tribal health care system to the needs and priorities of the Alaska Native Community. During her tenure, she provided leadership for Tribal relations and village initiatives for health care delivery to 55 rural communities, SCF’s Traditional Healing Clinic, Grants, Dental, Research, Raise and Elder Programs, Corporate Communications, Intergovernmental Affairs, and more. A strong collaborator, Sylvester has represented Alaska Tribes on many national committees and workgroups and served as a key liaison between varied councils, boards, and leadership teams.

Today, Sylvester is known across the nation as a leader in Alaska Native health care administration, a major contributor to health initiatives, a fierce advocate for youth and Elders, and part of the driving force behind the growth and innovation at SCF. She has built countless partnerships and meaningful relationships, leading to accolades nationally such as a National Indian Health Board Outstanding Service Award, an Indian Health Service Director’s Award for Fostering Relationships, and a Native Action Network Enduring Spirit Award, to regional recognition from the Anchorage ATHENA Society and YWCA Academy of Women Achievers.

“This job, and working for the Alaska Native Community, has been the joy and honor of a lifetime,” Sylvester said. “When I look back over the last 30 years at Southcentral Foundation, I marvel at SCF’s growth and what we have been able to accomplish across Alaska through relationships. I have been blessed to be part of an amazing team, working together to grow health and wellness programs, services, and the reach of this incredible organization.”

Sylvester has, both personally and professionally, been dedicated to helping Elders be in a position of health and wellness to be able to share their knowledge and experience. She has also worked with the next generations so they may know their traditional values and strengths and be able to align these with the delivery of services well into the future. In pursuit of these goals, she has brought many disciplines together to ensure wraparound support for physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness. For example, she partnered with SCF Medical Services to implement the first integration of primary care into a day program for Elders in the United States. Sylvester’s leadership within both the Elder Program and Raise Program has improved the quality of family and community life in Anchorage.

Speaking to the impact of the Raise Program, Sylvester said, “We provide our youth with a vision of what is possible; we tell them you’re our future leadership for our community ... it’s amazing what they’ll do with that.”

Sylvester has also contributed to many national, regional, and statewide health and Tribal advisory initiatives bringing the voice of the customer-owner and her decades of expertise to the boardroom. On the National Indian Health Board’s Tribal Public Health Workgroup Committee, she had a role in supporting



Southcentral Foundation Executive Vice President of Executive and Tribal Services Ileen Sylvester.

and advising the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As the primary representative for Alaska on the IHS Tribal Self-Governance Tribal Advisory Committee and an alternate delegate on the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services’ Secretary’s Tribal Advisory Committee, she provided expertise on policies, guidelines, and programmatic issues affecting the delivery of health care. On the U.S. DHHS Health Research Advisory Council, she helped advise the Department on Tribal perspectives on data sharing, community-based participatory research, and other health research priorities and needs.

Sylvester also built lasting relationships on boards, committees, and councils such as the Alaska Native Health Board, Alaska Tribal Health Directors, Alaska Native Medical Center Joint Operating Board, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Research Review Committee, American Indian and Alaska Native Health Research Advisory Council, Alaska Native Women’s Sexual Assault Committee, Village Service Management Team, Cook Inlet Tribal Council Board and with other partnering nonprofit organizations. Her collaborative work improved Tribal relations in times of complexity and challenge and advanced goals focused on family wellness, health care quality, and long-term sustainability.

“Ileen has played a key role in the success of the Nuka System of Care,” SCF President and CEO April Kyle said. “I appreciate her commitment and love for SCF, her care and compassion for Alaska Native Communities, her role in shaping Tribal health care, and her passion for supporting youth and caring for Elders. Ileen’s leadership will have impacts for generations to come. We wish her much joy in her well-deserved retirement.”

Sylvester plans to enjoy her retirement by spending time with her family at their property near Willow.

Leandra Ross, who has worked closely with Sylvester as SCF’s director of Intergovernmental Affairs, has been named vice president of Executive and Tribal Services. Sylvester will serve in an advisory capacity through 2025.

The Anchorage Native News is published by Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications.

If you have questions, comments, wish to submit articles, or be added to our mailing list, please contact the Corporate Communications department.

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

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

SCF Corporate Communications
4501 Diplomacy Drive
Anchorage, Alaska 99508
907-729-4953

SCFCorporateCommunications@SouthcentralFoundation.com

Learn more about the Anchorage Native News at:
southcentralfoundation.com



© 2025 Southcentral Foundation

Level Up Your Health Game: National Men’s Health Month

By Senior Marketing Specialist George Meyer



June is National Men’s Health Month and an excellent time to evaluate your health and take proactive steps to make improvements.

“Like a car or bike, your body needs regular maintenance and routine evaluation by an expert to ensure it keeps running for a long time,” Southcentral Foundation Senior Physician Dr. Bruce Stockhouse said. “That is why periodic visits to your primary care provider are so important, even if you are feeling fine.”

However, if you have postponed scheduling a physical exam or addressing a health concern, you are not alone. A 2023 survey by the Cleveland Clinic found that nearly half of men do not get physicals regularly. Seeing a provider routinely is an important component of a healthy lifestyle.

Even if you feel healthy, a regular checkup with your provider is a good way to validate your current health, identify concerns, and discuss health care screenings you may need in the future. While broken bones, cuts, and bruises are relatively easy to see, not all health issues are obvious to spot. It is recommended that men under age 50 have a physical exam every 3-5 years; you are age 50 or older you should plan to schedule a physical annually.

“Many men see themselves as the protector or provider for their families,” SCF Exercise Physiologist Andrew Cunningham said. “It is easy to put off seeking preventative self-care when we are focused on others. If we want to have a more fulfilling and impactful life, it is important to take care of ourselves as well. Proper

exercise, nutrition, and regular checkups are important for our physical health; however, it is also important to address our mental and spiritual health as well.”

While physical health is important, it is only one part of the wellness picture. Whole-person wellness includes mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness. Over the course of our lives, we encounter many peaks and valleys — from the highs of falling in love to the lows of losing someone we care about — and that can take a toll on our mental health. You may find it challenging to be vulnerable enough to discuss your mental health, the courage to talk with someone is the first step to wellness. Behavioral health consultants are part of your integrated primary care team and are always available to listen and guide you through the healing process. Your conversations with them are confidential and there is no need for a referral. Appointments can also be scheduled directly through your primary care team.

In June, consider making other healthy lifestyle changes. Eating healthier foods, getting more exercise, and working to eliminate unhealthy habits are all positive steps you can take. When planning to make any change, it is important to remember that they do not have to happen overnight. Setting small, incremental personal health goals can prevent you from feeling overwhelmed. Spreading them out will help you stay on track as you successfully make healthy lifestyle adjustments. If your goal is to eat healthier, consider eating a wide variety of vitamin and mineral-rich foods such as fresh fruits, vegetables, and whole grains. If you want to increase your amount of exercise each week, try starting with 30-minute walks.

A lifetime of healthy choices begins by taking the first step. Be patient with yourself as you work to make healthy modifications to your lifestyle. If you would like support from peers and community members, check out virtual and in-person learning circles on the SCF website calendar. SCF also has many programs and services to partner with you during National Men’s Health Month and throughout the year.

Connect with your primary care team or visit southcentralfoundation.com to learn more about resources such as physical fitness classes, behavioral health support, family-focused learning circles, healthy cooking classes, the Quit Tobacco Program, and more.



Nuka Conference

June 23-27

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

15TH ANNUAL TRIBAL CELEBRATION AND HEALTH FAIR

Saturday, June 21 | 11 a.m.-3 p.m.
Alaska State Fairgrounds | Raven Hall | Palmer

Hosted in partnership with the Knik Tribal Council, Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, and Native Village of Eklutna. Join family and friends for drumming and dancing, craft vendors, health care advocates, fun family activities, traditional foods, barbecue, and more.

Admission
» is free «
and everyone is welcome to attend.





FOLLOW US!



facebook.com/SouthcentralFoundation
@southcentralfoundation
southcentralfoundation.com



Join a dedicated health care team, like the one featured above at McGrath Regional Health Center, and start your next adventure in rural Alaska.

Rural Career Opportunities in Southcentral Alaska

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

Have you ever dreamed of working in a health care setting in some of the most beautiful places in Alaska? Can you imagine having access to fishing, hunting, hiking, and boating from your back door? Southcentral Foundation has rewarding career opportunities that allow you to live and work close to nature while making a lasting difference in your community.

These positions range from entry level, skilled, and specialty positions at health care clinics across Alaska. Some job categories offer training opportunities while others require skilled experience.

SCF offers paid training through the Community Health Aide Trainee/Practitioner Program in partnership with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Successful completion of the program can lead to a lifelong, rewarding career at SCF. The Community Health Aide Trainee/Practitioner Program was designed exclusively to expand services in rural clinics to include acute, chronic, emergency, and preventive care. Community health aides work under the direction of providers in Anchorage. Job opportunities in rural clinics also include advanced practice providers (nurse practitioner or physician's assistant) registered nurse case manager, behavioral health aide, and case management support.

“A rural Alaskan clinic isn’t just where health care happens – it’s where community voices are heard, relationships are built, and lives are improved,” SCF Administrator of Valley and Villages Group Brandy Gallagher shared.

In addition to working with an award-winning health care team and being a part of a tight-knit community, SCF offers amazing benefits including relocation support, additional paid time off, sign-on bonuses, and differential pay depending on the position. SCF also offers scholarships, academic leave, and more.

If you have been considering working in a rural community, now is a great time to work within the SCF Rural Anchorage Service Unit – with clinics spanning from St. Paul to Chitina.

To learn more about job opportunities at Southcentral Foundation, call SCF Human Resources at 907-729-4977 or visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/careers/.
For more information on the Alaska Community Health Aide Program, visit www.akchap.org.



Southcentral Foundation’s Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) office has moved.

WIC is now located in the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center lobby.

The WIC office is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to assist all Anchorage area residents who qualify for WIC services.

Southcentral Foundation WIC | 907-729-7277

Rehabilitation Therapies and Exercise



Southcentral Foundation Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Exercise department changed its name to Rehabilitation Therapies and Exercise department to reflect the wide range of services provided.

Stay tuned for announcements of new services available to you.



Visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/services/rehabilitation-therapies-exercise/ or scan QR code for more information.

► **Beginner Running Class**
Mondays
12:05-12:55 p.m.
June 2-Sept. 29

► **Outdoor Biking Class**
Wednesdays
12:10-1 p.m.
May 28-Sept. 24

Canceled Sept. 1 for Labor Day

Participants are asked to sign in at the Mt. Marathon front desk upon arrival.

Southcentral Foundation Rehabilitation Therapies and Exercise offers a beginner running class every Monday from 12:05 to 12:50 p.m. and an outdoor biking class every Wednesday from 12:10 to 1 p.m. Both classes start at the Mt. Marathon Building.

Mt. Marathon Building | Rehabilitation Therapies and Exercise
907-729-6683 | southcentralfoundation.com

Summer Safety: ATV Safety Tips

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

All-terrain vehicles offer fun and adventure, provide transportation, and are great tools for subsistence activities. However, without proper precautions, no matter the distance, riders can be put in danger, resulting in accidents and injuries. With long, sunny days around the corner, it’s important to remember every time you ride, to ride smart, ride safe, and ride sober.

Here are some ways you can ensure the safety of yourself and others on your next ATV ride:

Ride safe

- Always wear a Department of Transportation compliant helmet. A helmet should fit snug on your head and not shift when you move your head from side to side or up and down. You should not be able to squeeze a finger between the helmet and your forehead without difficulty. When you wiggle a fastened helmet with your hands, your cheeks should wiggle as well.
- Always wear protective gear such as eye protection, a long-sleeved shirt, long pants, over the ankle boots, and gloves.
- When possible, drive without passengers. Most ATVs are made for only one rider.
- Ensure children are driving an ATV that is appropriate for their size and age by following the manufacturer’s minimum age recommendation warning label on the ATV.

Ride smart

- Know your route and let someone know where you are going and when you will return.
- If possible, go on rides with a friend. Two heads and two vehicles are better than one.
- Know your limits and skills. Only operate at speeds at which you can control and approach curves, hills, and unfamiliar areas with caution.

Ride sober

- Never ride under the influence of drugs or alcohol.



Inspect before you ride

- Inspecting your ATV before riding minimizes the chances of being injured or stranded, ensures an enjoyable ride, and keeps all riders safe.
- Check oil and fuel levels, controls and cables, lights and electronics, tires and wheels, chain/driveshaft, and chassis.

Be prepared for the unexpected

- Carry what you need to handle an emergency or mechanical issue.
- Include spare items such as spark plugs, electrical wire, tow ropes, and flashlights.

Southcentral Foundation ATV Safety Initiative is visiting rural communities this summer to host ATV rodeos that teach safe riding skills in a controlled environment with a licensed ATV safety instructor. Participants practice starting and stopping, turning, negotiating hills, emergency stopping and swerving, and riding over obstacles.

If you are interested in becoming an ATV safety instructor in your community, or to view upcoming SCF Safety Rodeos in your area, scan the QR code.



Dr. Bruce Stockhouse Honored with Luminary Award

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

Dr. Bruce Stockhouse received the 2025 Legacy & Leadership Award, one of the three Luminary Awards presented at the Raven’s Ball at the Hotel Captain Cook.

Stockhouse was one of Southcentral Foundation’s first primary care providers. Over these last three decades, he has continually provided direct primary care and worked in close partnership with Alaska Native customer-owners, including leadership, and other clinical employees to ensure the success of the integrated care team, and establish medical protocols and treatment regimens. He was also among SCF’s first physician mentors, helping to develop the practice of onboarding providers, while supporting, mentoring, and connecting them with others. His dedication has made a significant difference in the lives and well-being of customer-owner families as a long-term partner supporting multiple generations in their health care journeys.

The Luminary Awards celebrate and recognize those who have made meaningful contributions to the Alaska Tribal Health System. The Raven’s Ball is hosted by the Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation, the charitable arm of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, as a fundraiser to support the health and well-being of Alaska Native people in three priority areas: healthy patients, healthy kids, and healthy communities.





BACK TO SCHOOL

HEALTHY BODIES, HEALTHY MINDS
Schedule your child’s annual appointments.

☒ Immunizations

☒ School physicals

☒ Dental exams

☒ Vision exams

Many Southcentral Foundation programs will be closed

Thursday, June 19

in observance of Juneteenth.
Services will resume June 20.

Friday, July 4

in observance of Independence Day.
Services will resume July 7.

IF YOU NEED IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION, PLEASE CALL 911.

Fueling for Summer: Carbohydrates, Colors, Protein

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

Summer is here and physical activities are in full swing! When you are participating in sports, chasing kids around, fishing, hunting, or gardening, your body will need nutrients for energy and recovery.

“Whether you’re picking berries on the mountainside or packing a moose out after a successful hunt, trust your body’s hunger cues and plan for increased activity by adjusting your meals,” Southcentral Foundation Registered Dietitian Marcel Hollis said.

Carbohydrates provide the energy your body and brain needs. The higher the intensity or the longer the duration of your physical activity, the more carbohydrates you can put on your plate or in your pocket for a snack. Foods high in starch give longer-lasting energy and often more vitamins and minerals than other carbohydrate sources. Foods high in starch include wheat, rice, oats, potatoes, and bananas.

Whole grains provide more fiber and help keep you fuller for longer. Fiber is great for healthy digestion and disease prevention but be aware of fiber intake before activities that may not have readily accessible restrooms. Sugar is the most quickly absorbed carbohydrate and easily used energy. It can be found naturally in fruit and milk but also in processed foods like cakes, cookies, and candy.

The colors on your plate come from fruits and vegetables. Each color offers different nutrients, vitamins, and minerals to help various processes in the body. For this reason, it is encouraged to eat the rainbow or a wide variety of colors of fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables also a great source of fiber.

Protein is made up of amino acids and is key for the growth and repair of muscles and critical for the repair of all body tissues. Since the body does not store protein, it is important to eat protein at every meal so the body can function properly. Proteins are sourced from plants and animals including meats, poultry, eggs, nuts, seeds, soy products, and legumes. Plant-based protein sources are incomplete, so it takes a little more planning to make sure the diet contains all essential amino acids.



A plate with carbohydrates, colors, and protein can provide your body with the nutrients it needs for energy and recovery.

Depending on the level of your activity, modify your plate to provide more carbohydrates on days with higher activity and more colors on the days with less activity.

“Timing your meals around physical activity is just as important. Starting an activity without eating, or not refueling afterward, can leave you feeling unwell and overly hungry, leading to choices that may not truly nourish and refuel your body,” SCF Clinical Specialist and Registered Dietitian Charlene DiFilippo said.

To learn more about how to adjust your meals to meet your activity level, connect with your integrated care team and ask about scheduling an appointment with a registered dietitian. Whatever phase of life you are in, a dietitian can support your personal nutrition and lifestyle goals. Dietitians at SCF hold a variety of credentials specializing in nutrition for all ages.

BUILDING EXPANSION ANNOUNCEMENT



ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING OF FUTURE BUILDING EXPANSION

Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center is Expanding!

Matanuska-Susitna Borough customer-owners can expect:

x2

Doubled facility size

★ ★

New programs and services

↔ ↔

Expanded programs and services



Scan the QR code for project updates.



SUMMER 2025

Mark your calendars July through August for this annual summer hiking challenge in Anchorage and Matanuska-Susitna Borough’s mountains. This fun, inclusive, and engaging challenge is a great way to get moving, hike, and win prizes!

.....

For more information, contact peakoftheweek@scf.cc.

A Healthier Future Starts Now: Most Youth Who Vape Want to Quit

By Marketing Specialist Shamika Andrew



Spending time outdoors with family and friends supports strong connections and healthy choices.

Most middle and high school students who vape say they want to quit. This reflects an important awareness and readiness for change. Most tobacco use, including vaping, starts and is established during middle and high school.

Flavored tobacco and nicotine products hide the taste, making nicotine addiction easy and fast. Children and young adults may not realize how addictive nicotine is and that vaping can deliver higher levels of nicotine than traditional cigarettes which can lead to a lifetime of nicotine dependence.

All vaping devices have the potential to contain nicotine and numerous unknown chemicals. When the vape is heated by the battery, small particles of metal are emitted and can be inhaled into the persons lungs. There are no regulations or manufacturing standards for vapes. Often the chemicals used in the e-juice or e-liquid are generally regarded as safe for food additives but have unknown health effects when aerosolized and inhaled.

Are vape products safe? No tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vapes, are safe, especially for children, teens, and young adults. Risks of use include exposure to toxic chemicals, lung injury, poisoning, and burns. Vaping devices may not meet safety standards, leading to a risk of fire or explosion, and cause severe burns, other injuries, or death.

Nicotine can harm brain development, which continues until about age 25. Youth and young adults are at risk for long-term, long-lasting effects from exposing their brains to nicotine. They can start showing signs of nicotine addiction quickly, sometimes even with occasional use. Using nicotine during adolescence can harm the parts of the brain that control attention, learning, mood, and impulse control.

Adolescents who use nicotine may be at increased risk for future addiction to other drugs. Youth who vape may also be more likely to smoke cigarettes in the future.

“In my role as a health educator, customer-owners who vape tell me they vape all throughout the day. Often, they really do not know how much nicotine they are getting in a day. Customer-owners also tell me the habit of reaching for the vape as often as 20- or 30-minute intervals is very difficult to change,” SFC Health Educator Stephanie Rockford said.

Health benefits of quitting tobacco may include:

- Better vision
- Brighter teeth
- Improved lung function
- Lower blood pressure
- Increased dopamine production
- Decreased risk of heart disease
- Lower risk of cancer. After 5-10 years of quitting tobacco, you reduce your risk of developing certain cancers.
- Stronger muscles and lower risk for bone fractures
- Faster healing time and improved immune system

Talk to your child or teen about why vaping is harmful to them. Ask them to stay away from all tobacco products, including vape products, because none are safe. It’s never too early or too late to start these conversations.

If your child vapes, encourage and support them to quit. Southcentral Foundation’s Quit Tobacco Program is an effective, evidence-based, tobacco-cessation treatment program that offers coaching, medications, and nicotine replacement therapies. The program is available for both youth and adults. Customer-owners can receive referrals from their primary care provider.

To learn more about resources to quit vaping or connect with support, contact your primary care team, or call Southcentral Foundation’s Quit Tobacco Program in Anchorage at 907-729-2689 or in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough at 907-631-7630.

Urgent Maternal Warning Signs: Recognizing and Responding to Complications

By Senior Marketing Specialist Emma Irish

Pregnancy and childbirth are life-changing experiences. Southcentral Foundation has resources to support mothers and parents in every stage from prenatal to postpartum and beyond. Specifically, the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Clinic is a comprehensive practice that serves Alaska Native and American Indian women and their families who have high-risk pregnancies. MFM providers offer compassionate care for pregnant women with chronic health conditions and unexpected problems during pregnancy while their body changes and their baby grows. The clinic collaborates with the expecting mother, her family, and her medical team to achieve the best possible outcome.

While most pregnancies progress without complications, some women may experience situations that require immediate medical attention. Recognizing the signs to seek medical care when something is off is critical to preventing outcomes that may include long-term health issues or even become life-threatening to mother and baby. Education and awareness around these signs can save lives.

Urgent maternal warning signs are symptoms that may indicate a serious complication during pregnancy, childbirth, or in the postpartum period. These warning signs can develop suddenly and may progress quickly. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, maternal mortality in the U.S. remains a serious concern. The good news is that many negative outcomes are preventable with early recognition, and timely intervention.

One of the most critical warning signs is a severe headache that does not go away, especially if it is accompanied by blurred vision or swelling. This could be a sign of preeclampsia, a potentially life-threatening condition involving high blood pressure that can lead to organ damage. Chest pain or shortness of breath are other urgent symptoms which might signal a pulmonary embolism — a blood clot in the lungs that can quickly become fatal if untreated.

Severe abdominal pain that does not improve or worsens may point to a ruptured uterus, ectopic pregnancy, or placental abruption — all of which require immediate medical intervention. Similarly, heavy vaginal bleeding, particularly if it soaks

through more than one pad per hour or contains large clots, is another red flag. This could indicate postpartum hemorrhage, a leading cause of maternal death.

Women should also seek help if they experience thoughts of harming themselves or their baby; potential signs of postpartum depression or another perinatal mental health condition. Mental health is as important as physical health, and any changes in mood, behavior, or mental state should not be ignored.

Other important symptoms include high fever, seizures, persistent vomiting, difficulty breathing, and sudden swelling of the hands, face, or legs. These signs could be related to infections, gestational hypertension, or other serious issues that need prompt evaluation.

If you have any of these symptoms during or after pregnancy, contact your primary care team right away. If you are not able to reach your provider, go to the nearest emergency department. Remember to share that you are pregnant or have been pregnant within the last year. Early detection can result in better health outcomes for both mother and baby.



Southcentral Foundation supports mothers and parents in every stage from prenatal to postpartum and beyond.

Understanding urgent maternal warning signs is essential for protecting maternal health. If you or a family member have concerns about symptoms during pregnancy, contact OB Triage at 907-729-4142, or visit your nearest emergency department.

Spotting Signs and Symptoms of Alzheimer’s Disease and Dementia in a Loved One

By Senior Marketing Specialist Lyla DeTavernier

“My dad knew it was happening before I did,” Dustin Reynolds, a customer-owner from Anchorage shared. “He started taking notes and leaving himself reminders around his house. When the notes stopped helping him, I knew his illness was progressing through the stages of Alzheimer’s.”

June is Alzheimer’s and Brain Awareness Month and offers the opportunity to learn about prevention, signs, symptoms, and the critical role of early detection. Recognizing symptoms of dementia or Alzheimer’s disease in a loved one can feel scary. Your team at Southcentral Foundation is available to walk the journey with you.

Reynolds was the primary caregiver for his late father who was diagnosed with early onset Alzheimer’s at age 58. Alzheimer’s disease, the most common type of dementia, is a progressive condition impacting memory, thinking skills, and behavior. Dementia describes a wide range of cognitive deficits that affect the brain.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association of Alaska, Alzheimer’s disease affects around 12,500 Alaskans and is a top cause of death in the United States.

While forgetfulness is a natural part of aging, it should not affect daily life. Early signs of dementia and Alzheimer’s disease may include:

- Memory loss that affects daily life
- Increase in poor judgment
- Difficulty performing normal tasks
- Sudden behavior or mood changes
- Difficulty with language
- Changes in personality
- Disorientation during the day

If you are concerned a loved one may be showing signs of Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, a care conference with your primary care provider can be a helpful start.

“Early detection is essential. It is crucial for accessing treatment, planning for the future, improving quality of life, managing comorbid conditions, and receiving education and support,” SCF Medical Director Allison Critchlow said. “Primary care services at SCF can assist through screening and utilizing resources available on the Alaska Native Health Campus.”

Having these conversations helps customer-owners voice their medical wishes and share their values. This can be helpful if a customer-owner becomes unable to speak for themselves.

“There was no way to plan for what dad’s experience would be like, but we developed an advanced care directive early on,” Reynolds shared. “We knew there would be a point in time when he would not be able to make his own decisions and choices. Knowing his wishes and requests helped us make the best choices for him.”

While there is no cure for Alzheimer’s disease or dementia, lifestyle modifications can reduce the risk or delay onset.

“Customer-owners can reduce their risk for dementia by staying physically active, controlling chronic conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure, avoiding excessive alcohol use and smoking, preventing head injuries, and treating hearing loss,” Dr. Chris Piromalli, an SCF integrated palliative medicine physician shared.

Your family’s primary care team can connect you to resources throughout SCF that support brain health.

Reynolds reflected on his experience and offered encouragement to those in a caregiver role, “Remember it’s not your fault. Celebrate and remember the great days and times. Don’t let the painful and bad ones break you down and forget all the good parts.”



Connect with your primary care team to learn how to reduce your risk of Alzheimer’s disease or dementia.

For questions, concerns, or to learn more about brain health, connect with your primary care team directly, or visit southcentralfoundation.com.

Sources: Alzaska.org, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



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 Heath 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