PRESERVING OUR Way of Life
# Table of Contents

**ADMINISTRATION pg.2-9**
- Finance & Accounting
- Legal
- Compliance
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Communications

**TRIBAL CLIENT SERVICES pg.10-29**
- Self-Governance
- Tribal Government Services
- Public Safety
- Village Planning & Development
- Housing
- Agriculture/Tribes Extension Program
- Transportation
- Employment & Training
- Education
- Elder Nutrition
- Child Protection/Child Welfare
- Vocational Rehabilitation/Developmental Disabilities
- Assistance to Individual Households
- Youth Services
- Wildlife & Parks
- Realty
- Archaeology
- Rural Energy
- Cadastral Survey
- Forestry

**HEALTH SERVICES pg.10-29**
- Letter from the Chief
- Finances
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Communications
- Legal
- Advocacy
Dear Tribal Members and Beneficiaries,

This convention marks one year since I was elected as Tanana Chiefs Conference President and I am thankful for the honor and privilege to serve the 42 members of our region.

During my first month of presidency, I outlined my initial objectives for the organization:

1. Improve the delivery of Customer Service; assuring that our tribes, tribal members, customers and business partners are highly satisfied with the services they receive.
2. Identify the must-do’s (Vital Few) to be accomplished within the year.
3. Develop a Community Resource Guide that will improve communication and awareness of services TCC provides to each community.
4. Develop a Five-Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020 that is in alignment with our tribes, executive board and administration.

To be more efficient and to assure success in achieving our strategic goals, we re-organized our non-health programs into one department. Today TCC has three departments: Administration, Health and Tribal Client Services (TCS) that work together to achieve the goals and directives of our tribes.

This year I travelled to nearly 30 communities in the region to meet with tribal councils and members to ensure that TCC’s planning remained in alignment with the tribes. In November, TCC held a special delegates meeting where tribal leadership met to review, revise and approve TCC’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan.

As part of the Strategic Plan, departments were asked to identify the Vital Few objectives that were to be completed by the end of the year. You can find the objectives identified by our departments and how they achieved them in the ‘Presidents Report: Significant Accomplishments of TCC’s Strategic Objectives’ booklet.
While it was important for us to identify our immediate goals, there were several reoccurring concerns brought up during my meetings with tribal leadership. A few of the main concerns included the king salmon decline, housing shortages, climate change, Land into Trust and more recently the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It’s important for us to address these issues in our strategic plan and prioritize them as a need for our communities.

In order for us to be successful we must work together to achieve the goals outlined by our leaders. We must continue to advocate for a meaningful voice in the management of our fish and game, the protection of traditional lands of our people, and the authority for our tribes to self-govern. This fight is long-standing, from when our Chiefs first met with Judge Wickersham to today. We must continue this battle on all fronts to ensure that our way of life stays intact while the increasing pressure of development on traditional lands is all around us and our sovereign authority is consistently challenged.

This July TCC will commemorate the centennial anniversary of the 1915 meeting of Tribal Chiefs with Judge Wickersham, where Interior native leaders fought to protect our land and way of life. It is important for us to honor this historic meeting, as it served as a catalyst that propelled TCC to where it stands today. Our tribal leaders came together to fight for a common goal.

This is why the theme for this year’s TCC Convention is Stronger Together for the Next 100 Years. It is through unity that we find strength.

I look forward to all that we will accomplish together in the coming years.

Ana Basee,

Victor Joseph
TCC President
TCC had a 62% Native Hire rate in 2016.

In 2016, TCC distributed a total of $5.6 million to our tribes.

Finance & Accounting

The Legal department provides legal services and guidance to TCC and its member tribes. The department handles a variety of legal matters including state and federal advocacy, contract review, real estate transactions, Indian law, employment law, health law, business development and negotiation, regulatory issues, and other legal needs.

The Anvik Tribal Council, with support from Legal, was the first tribe in the state to sign the historic Civil Diversion Agreement, requiring law enforcement officers to refer certain misdemeanor crimes and offenses to tribal courts for sentencing and restorative justice. We helped the Fort Yukon and Chalkyitsik tribes participate as cooperating agencies in BLM’s Eastern Interior Land Management Plan for the Upper Draanjik River Subunit; the final plan included significant environmental protections for subsistence and drinking water.

We implemented the Medical Legal Partnership (MLP) at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center and for all TCC tribes, allowing medical providers to refer patients to an AmeriCorps attorney for health-related legal needs. We filed a brief in support of Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Tribes, supporting sovereign immunity as a jurisdictional defense. We also supported the VPSO Tribal Caucus (VTC), guided our Washington, D.C.-based lobbyist to secure tribal court funding for FY16, held behavioral health and medical provider trainings, led efforts to purchase Coast Guard-owned land in Tok, AK for a unified health clinic, and testified before a House Appropriations subcommittee in Washington, D.C. to advocate for financial commitments to issues related to health care, climate change, tribal courts, and contract support costs.
The Compliance division was established by the TCC Executive Management Team in the fall of 2016. Compliance works closely with Legal and reports directly to the Chief/Chairman and the Executive Board. Compliance is responsible for administrative oversight of corporate compliance issues including risk management, records retention, HIPAA privacy and security investigations and reporting, enforcement of health and financial regulations, and policy management.

A major highlight for Compliance this fall was the development and implementation of a new corporate policy format, approval process and webpage. All of the policies are now standardized throughout the company and accessible to all employees and board members. A risk management committee was formed to review and discuss corporate risk and safety issues throughout the organization. We completed a privacy and security assessment with the assistance of an external contractor, and have already implemented many of the recommendations for security improvement within TCC, such as development of a business continuity plan, a data classification initiative, and updated information security policies.

The records retention manager worked with AK Archives to streamline TCC’s offsite storage. The records storage area in the Chief Peter John Tribal Building has been restructured, and the storage capabilities have been expanded by about 400 square feet of onsite space. We are implementing new software and partnering with QM and IT to begin tracking privacy, security, and safety incidents in an effective manner. Both Compliance staff members attended trainings in the last year to improve skills in the area of privacy,
Human Resources

The mission of Human Resources is to promote a safe work environment with fair treatment of staff, open communications, personal accountability, legal compliance, and trust and mutual respect. We seek solutions to workplace issues that optimize the operating principles of TCC. The Human Resources team will support the TCC vision by delivering superior customer service through recruiting, training, developing, and assisting our people in a caring, trustworthy, and timely manner.

For the second year, TCC was be able to pay a $1,500 flat rural relief payment to all village-based employees. To improve recruitment, we continued developing our rural recruiter position and added a professional/health recruiter position. We are developing a healthcare recruitment microsite with Communications.

TCC transitioned to a new insurance carrier (Premera Blue Cross) and broker (Marsh & McLennan Agency). These transitions will result in a cost savings of over $1.5 million. TCC HR developed and implemented a new monthly supervisor orientation program, open to both new and current supervisors.

The Oracle Learning Management System – where much of our training content is housed – has undergone an overhaul to improve user-friendliness and back-end functionality, and is live in Fairbanks and at rural sites.

An internal training survey identified other training needs throughout TCC. The jobs site was redesigned and launched in June; feedback has been positive. We hosted one intern in Legal and two in Tribal Development, and hope to help facilitate internship opportunities at rural sites in the future.

In 2016 HR processed 167 new hires with a native hire percentage of 68%. This is a 6% increase in Native hire over 2015.
Information Technology

The goal of the Information Technology (IT) division is to provide the best user experience possible with the computer and network services that support the TCC organization and the tribes.

IT’s successes this year include the creation of a TCC Systems Infrastructure Modernization program. Based on the standards that has been identified, the IT division then has been able to rapidly incorporate infrastructure that better secures the IT network, as well as making the network more resilient through redundant connections and improved data storage.

With help from DRS, the communities of Huslia and Hughes clinics are now connected to the microwave terrestrial network for broadband connectivity. TCC is currently working on logistics for bringing tribal offices to similar connectivity, as well as VPSO offices; once in place, telecommuting will become a more widely available option. IT has begun transitioning to a new ticket tracking system, Cherwell, to measure customer support metrics to better inform management decisions. For improved alignment between business objectives and IT support of those objectives, the IT Governance committee has been reformed to follow a framework of best practices.

IT continues to develop Service Level Agreements (SLA) with individual departments, to better identify areas of staff training need. As the IT division transitions to Cherwell, SLAs will be a metric that can effectively be tracked and managed. In the last year, IT staff have made a total of 48 visits to our rural communities, and closed a total of 11,654 work orders.

Communications

The Communications Department provides assistance to departments in conveying key messages and information about TCC programs and services to tribal members and beneficiaries. The Communications Department is responsible for both internal and external communications for TCC.

In 2015 we secured a National Park Service Tribal Heritage grant, which provides funding for TCC to interview elders from each of our six subregions to document language, culture, and history; through this funding, we have developed the Legacy of Our Elders project. This project will include several volumes of books and DVDs, each including interviews with 6 six elders (one from each subregion).

This year, TCC was awarded a grant from the Administration for Native Americans (ANA) to develop a Cultural Wellness Camp Program throughout the region. Through this grant, TCC will provide funding to tribes to implement culture camps in each subregion that include a Wellness and Prevention component.

We are developing a coloring book that will feature different animals from across the TCC region and their Athabascan names. An e-newsletter was launched in January 2016 to keep employees and tribes informed on what is happening at TCC. Communications has also launched quite a few new videos this year, including the “Inside Guide” series, highlighting available beneficiary services; “Medical Minute,” featuring health staff giving tips and how-to’s; and various other PSAs, event recaps, and informational videos.
A Message from the Executive Director of Tribal Client Services
Dear Tribal Members and Beneficiaries,

Welcome to the 2017 report of the Tribal Government and Client Services (TCS) department. A lot has transpired over the past 12 months. Please take time to review this collection of reports, data sets and program summaries compiled by our dedicated staff. A lot of important tribal issues may not have been covered on the convention floor, but our effort and progress on those issues can be seen within these reports.

There are many challenges from battling the state budget deficit to finding funding to establish a climate change program to preparing for the new presidential administration. The dedicated team in TCS has been keeping tribal priorities at the forefront in all they do. We at TCS are constantly aware that we exist because of you, the federally recognized tribal governments, and two Native Associations within our region, and being in alignment with your vision and directives is our highest goal.

Self determination has been a forefront of discussions this year in how TCS can help tribes in areas of economic development, traditional land preservation, hunting and fishing, and creating a stronger and unified voice for advocacy. As we engage the vision contained in this year’s convention theme, “Preserving Our Way of Life”, we realize more than ever how essential it is that we keep striving for Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes.

Ana Basee, 
Will Mayo
Executive Director of Tribal Client Services
TRIBAL CLIENT SERVICES

TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT

Self Governance

The Self Governance program helps ensure TCC and its member tribes are in compliance with TCC’s Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) compact. We do this by monitoring program expenses, providing training and technical assistance to member tribes, and by providing annual tribal administrator (TA) training to all TAs in the region. Self Governance also assists subregions with their subregional meetings.

In 2016 we filled all vacant tribal administrator positions. All 27 tribes that choose to have TCC-employed TAs (out of 35 total TAs in the region) now have people in those positions. We held our first annual Tribal Administrator Forum (TAF) during the annual TA training; TAF provides an opportunity for TAs to share experiences and exchange ideas. Feedback from TAs indicate it was a tremendous success. We graduated the first tribe in over five years into Contract For Services (CFS) status, reducing their BIA check requests down to four annually, instead of hundreds. Due largely to this one status change, in FY16 Self Governance processed 1,835 village check requests for a total of $5,483,824 – down 124 check requests from FY15.

We made progress on the strategic plan goal of providing dual supervision training to 10 councils and village staff by reviewing and working with Human Resources to update the language in the annual MOA. The document now reflects what’s happening on the ground. We also included this topic during our FY16 TA training and will review it again during our 2017 TA training.

Tribal Government Services

The AFN Board of Directors discussed expanding the definition of tribes to include ANCSA corporations to be better positioned for federal land resource management advocacy; an ad hoc committee will work on developing a white paper on the issue. The AFN Board also discussed the Trump transition process, the Small Business Administration AK District Office and the 8(a) contracting program, and the need for training at the village level.

An inter-divisional workgroup has begun meeting to develop a climate change program for TCC. The workgroup will remain ad hoc until funding is received. The group plans to reach out to UAF to partner on climate change-related grants and other efforts. Currently, the moist air incubation project is on hold. We are in discussions with the Gulkana hatchery, ADF&G permitting office, and with Representative Talerico to find a path forward. The Department of Interior (DOI) has finalized the plan to distribute the 2016 budget appropriation of $10 million for tribal courts to assess, design, and pilot tribal court systems; 15 TCC tribes have applied for needs assessments.

Tribal court activity in 2016 included facilitating 278 hearings. Ninety-six petitions to use tribal court were received, resulting in 18 cases transferring from state to tribal court. One hundred forty-two children are in tribal court custody and 29 children reunited with their parents.
Public Safety

The Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) program works in conjunction with the Alaska State Troopers to meet the public safety needs in rural communities. Known as “The First Responders in the Last Frontier,” VPSOs respond to emergency calls in Law Enforcement, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, and Search and Rescue.

TCC received a FY17 VPSO award of $2,360,682.20 from the State Department of Public Safety, which reflects statewide reductions. TCC was able to increase their budget by $200,000 to fund one additional VPSO position. Recruitment remains our biggest challenge, and we especially need Interior-based applicants. In collaboration with the TCC Communications department, the VPSO program has a recruitment commercial now airing. TCC is reviewing the State VPSO Contract and the Standard Operating Procedures (VPSO policies). TCC does not support a contract that places numerous unfunded mandates on tribes to use VPSOs to enforce State law under state criminal jurisdiction. TCC and other leadership advocated for true government-to-government partnership while at the Statewide VPSO Coordinator’s meeting in August.

We continue to examine the logistics of arming our VPSOs, per a TCC board of directors-approved agreement with the state. Steps still to be taken include ensuring community support via resolution, proper screening and training/certification, and ensuring TCC has sufficient internal policies in place to safely support the initiative. TCC’s 4th Annual Public Safety Youth Academy was a success. Youth attendance and participation was the highest yet. VPSOs played a significant role in mentorship, leadership and instruction.

Village Planning & Development

The Village Planning and Development (VP&D) Program provides technical assistance to tribal councils in the Tanana Chiefs Conference region to support sustainable community development for Interior Alaska’s Native people.

Our 2016 highlights included completing the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), securing a FY17 EDA planning grant, and initiating the TCC Marketplace. We also completed six community plans in full, and 95% of a seventh plan. We awarded twelve Grant Development Specialist contracts, three Grant Writer contracts, and one Grant Success Rate contract. We earned the American Planning Association’s Planning Team of the Year Award, and their Environmental Award.

In May, we distributed results of a training needs assessment survey (20 tribes participated, including 50 Tribal council members and staff). Through VP&D, TCC has maintained our ongoing partnership with UAF Interior Alaska Campus (UAF-IAC) to provide quality training to approximately 20 village-based employees and their supervisors with community planning and grant writing.
TCC Housing Program provides weatherization and new construction services throughout the rural interior Alaska region. These services are funded with grants awarded by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

We completed – under budget – eight weatherization projects in Fort Yukon. Permission was granted from Alaska Housing Finance Corporation to complete four additional homes by April 1st. The BIA Housing Improvement Program (HIP) construction project was finished in Kaltag, 20% under budget. Seventeen TCC-operated clinics have been assessed for deficiencies, and results have been sent to TCC’s Health Department. An additional nine clinics remain to be assessed throughout the TCC region. Seven elder-focused USDA Section 504 Home Repair grants have been completed in four different communities.

TCC is one of three Community Based Development Organizations (CBDOs) in the region. Minto, Tanana, and Rampart received Indian Community Development Block Grants (ICDBGs) and are working with TCC to complete their projects as the CBDO. This is helping TCC’s Housing Program build its resume. With these projects, TCC’s Housing Program will be able to advertise its services to tribes in need of project management. As the grant recipient, the Housing Program will be administering the ICDBG project in Tanacross for mold remediation in 20 homes.

TCC Housing’s main priority is supporting our communities; we strive to hire local laborers and contractors. Fort Yukon and Tetlin saw local hiring this year, and Northway and Tetlin tribes were written into contracts with TCC housing to supply local labor for upcoming USDA Section 504 Home Repair grant work.
Agriculture/Tribes Extension Program

The mission of the Tribes Extension Program at TCC is to educate, engage, and support the people and communities of both the TCC region and Alaska more broadly, connecting them with their university. We provide practical, data-driven information to members of TCC while bringing TCC members’ – and Alaskans’ – insights, interests, and challenges to the university. At this writing, we are wrapping up development of a mobile app called Grow&Tell that will help gardeners figure out which vegetable varieties grow best wherever they live. We delivered the Alaska Master Gardener Online Course to 30 students, and the Alaska Growers School content to 17 students. Enrollees were from both the TCC region and other areas of the state. We provided seeds for planting (by request from tribes) and grant opportunity information, and met with Ben Stevens and others to strategize an application for a $2 million agriculture re-grant program from the Keepseagle v. Vilsack Settlement.

The Tribes Extension Program continues to work towards improved promotion of healthy lifestyles, cultural and traditional values, and education and wellness, as well as expansion and enhancement of essential services through improved information technology. Articulated goals include improved local food security in Interior Alaskan Villages, improved nutrition and lower rates of preventable disease, Interior Alaska Native villages thriving through economic opportunities provided by activities such as farming and ranching, and improved safety of traditional foods preserved at home.

Transportation

The TCC Transportation Program works with tribal governments to help develop and implement their Long Range Transportation Plans, which include tribal goals related to maintenance of existing roads and plans for future transportation projects.

Transportation currently contracts with the Federal Highway Administration, from whom we receive Tribal Transportation Program (TTP) funding for Grayling Tribal Council, Shageluk IRA Tribal Council, and Healy Lake Traditional Council. TCC’s Transportation Manager also manages the TTP for Takotna Tribal Council and Birch Creek Tribal Council, who contract with the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

We are currently working on a service package to better work with tribes on their specific needs. A Transportation Summit the first week of May 2017 will help us connect directly with Tribes on their immediate and longer-term transportation needs. In addition, The Alaska Tribal Transportation Assistance Program continues to host several trainings throughout the year, including the Summer and Winter Tribal Transportation Institutes.

The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act includes a Tribal Transportation Self Governance program that will be developed through a negotiated rulemaking process. A committee was formed made up of federal and Tribal representatives to create regulations for this new program. Alaska representatives are Denise Michaels, Director of Transportation for Kawerak, and alternate Gerald Hope, Transportation Director for Sitka Tribe. Transportation is developing a Regional Transportation Strategy that will consist of transportation goals and objectives for our region. TCC hired a student intern during the summer of 2016 to assist with distributing surveys to tribes and other duties.
Education

TCC remains committed to facilitating educational opportunities to its members, as well as deepening connections between TCC and other educational institutions throughout the region.

In 2016, Client Development program managers actively engaged local, state and federal program and policy makers to support tribal positions relating to the new Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Included in these efforts were discussions with school Superintendents and tribal leaders, as well as the facilitation of a special mid-year, ESSA-focused Interior Education Summit. Funding, technical assistance, and advocacy was provided to villages with low student enrollment counts to prevent school closures in Anvik, Beaver, and Chalkytsik; we also provided funding, technical assistance, and advocacy to local tribal leadership to assist in keeping the school in Rampart open and transferring its operation to the Yukon-Koyukuk School District.

We were able to support higher education opportunities throughout the year; we funded 29 of 41 applicants for Spring semester 2016, 26 of 39 applicants for Spring 2016, and 26 of 34 applicants for Spring 2017. Five tribal members completed their degrees and certificates during 2016.

We also supported adult vocational training in 2016. We funded one of four applicants for Spring semester 2016 funding, three of nine applicants for Fall 2016, and nine of 12 applicants for Spring 2017 (two of whom are continuing from the fall). We’ve also received 25 applicants for GED and other Adult Basic Education support, 7 of whom are actively pursuing their GED. We anticipate 4 graduates in 2016/2017.

Employment & Training

TCC’s Employment and Training efforts seek to reduce or prevent barriers to employment by assisting with tools, transportation, hotel, meals, training, work-related clothing purchases including firefighting gear, and technical assistance.

In 2016, we assisted with providing training, transportation, and related support to tribal members both in Fairbanks and in the villages. We sent an instructor to Fort Yukon for CDL Off-Road training for 18 tribal members. We assisted two tribal members with CDL Class A Training, and supported 12 tribal members from Birch Creek taking UAF’s Interior Alaska Campus (UAF-IAC) classes in facility maintenance, interior repairs, and flooring installation. We assisted nine tribal members from Northway, Tanana, Arctic Village, and Allakaket with UAF-IAC classes in Fairbanks, including the topics above as well as cabinet installation with countertops, intro to plumbing tools and drawings; and plastic and copper pipe and fittings. Two tribal members from Northway attended similar UAF-IAC classes in Tok. Finally, we assisted 13 tribal members from Anvik in attending UAF-IAC Wildland Firefighters Red Card training, and nine Nikolai tribal members completed the Firefighting training.

We assisted four tribal members who completed the 12-week Stone’s Throw Chef’s Training in Fairbanks. We also assisted 13 tribal members and 17 tribal youth earning their driver’s licenses. We provided 2,161 bus tokens to a total of 746 Interior tribal members in Fairbanks who were searching for work, as well as transportation costs for 82 tribal members attending trainings in Fairbanks. Finally, we provided 1,824 free computer lab sessions to employment seekers.

We assisted four tribal members who completed the 12-week Stone’s Throw Chef’s Training in Fairbanks. We also assisted 13 tribal members and 17 tribal youth earning their driver’s licenses. We provided 2,161 bus tokens to a total of 746 Interior tribal members in Fairbanks who were searching for work, as well as transportation costs for 82 tribal members attending trainings in Fairbanks. Finally, we provided 1,824 free computer lab sessions to employment seekers.
Elder Nutrition

Elder Nutrition continues to be committed to providing village-based meals to elders throughout the TCC region. In 2016, we were able to provide a total of 21,914 meals to 214 elders in 13 villages through five separate Elder Nutrition grants and the additional support of the Community Supplemental Food program. We employed part time cooks and maintained cooking facilities at the village sites through funding from the five program grants. Eight cooks and substitute cooks completed the annual cook training in Sanitation, Nutrition, Portion Control and Menu Design, which was held on December 14, 2016. Elder Nutrition program cooks – along with all full-time and half-time TCC village-based staff – received $1,500 as part of TCC’s recently initiated Rural Relief package to better align their wages to the higher cost of working and living in rural communities.

Five applications were submitted for a new three-year grant cycle for the Title VI Elder Nutrition programs administered by TCC; these grants are expected to be funded at current levels through FY 2020. The Elder Nutrition program and Home Health Care staff submitted applications for five separate $1,000 grants for tribal Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) for each of our five subregions. The MIPPA grant is intended to assist tribal organizations in reaching out to elders on Medicare with a limited income who may benefit from assistance securing a Medicare Part D (prescription) plan which otherwise would entail a high monthly premium. The MIPPA Grant also aims to positively impact Medicare buy-in.
A total of 467 Children State Cases were served by an Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) advocate; of these, 281 children are in an ICWA or relative’s home, and 166 children are in non-ICWA homes. A total of 142 children in Tribal custody were served by a Family Support Specialist.
Vocational Rehabilitation/ Developmental Disabilities

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Developmental Disabilities programs assist individuals with documented physical or mental disabilities. Vocational Rehabilitation aims to prepare these individuals to obtain or retain employment in a competitive workforce, either through self-employment or by performing subsistence activities consistent with their individual strengths, capabilities, priorities, and informed choices. Developmental Disabilities provides case management and advocacy, as well as oversight for other entities such as Family Directed Respite Care providers.

In 2016, the Vocational Rehabilitation program served 51 clients, 16 of whom became employed. All clients received counseling and guidance, clothing for employment or subsistence, and job related equipment. The Developmental Disabilities program served 33 clients or families; three clients are receiving services through the Home Community Based Medicaid Waiver program. Eleven independent contractors are working in the villages and Fairbanks, providing family-directed respite care to families with children who experience intellectual developmental disabilities.

Four staff received monthly teleconference training with Statewide Tribal Veterans representatives and Rehab Services Administration. The Developmental Disabilities coordinator received training in CORE Competencies for Senior and Disabilities Grantees; in 2017, staff will offer training to 11 Fairbanks- and village-based Respite Care providers, tribal foster care parents, and tribal child care assistance providers.

The June 2016 event Notr’enedeyakh te Denateya’ Khoolan – “When we heal, we have strength” – provided skill-building, recreational, and social experiences to clients and their families. The event included a day trip to Chena Hot Springs and three days at Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center for cooking, dancing, beading, and improving socialization skills.

Assistance to Individual Households

Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) Laboratory provides diagnostic testing services for the TCC region. All laboratory testing comes to this laboratory, and any testing not able to be performed will be referred to Quest Diagnostics. CAIHC Laboratory also provides material support for laboratory testing supplies and technical support to address compliance, training, and related concerns for the village clinics in the TCC region.

In 2016, we started deployment of Abbott Xceed Pro glucometers to sub-region clinics, and purchased an upgrade to the Clinitek Status urinalysis analyzer that will be installed at sub-regions if it passes connectivity tests. We also purchased a BD Affirm and Illumigene by Meridian BioScience for various bacterial tests. We contracted with Millenium Health for urine drug screen testing.

The dollar value of the work performed in 2016 was $8,770,806, of which we have, at this writing, collected $2,972,786.94. One new position was approved for the laboratory to help address the continual increase in workload. A new bench technician was hired in June, and the new CAIHC Laboratory director started October 10. In addition, the Point of Care (POC) testing program responsibilities were transferred to the clinical section, and two medical assistants previously working in the POC rooms have been brought into the lab to assist with workload. The POC Lead made several trips to villages for training and to assist with compliance issues.

Goals for the future include continuing to increase services offered to the TCC region by reducing referral laboratory expenses and increasing revenue generated by CAIHC Laboratory. We also aim to continue adding testing capacity to our in-house operations, and to provide more services in a timely manner.
Youth Services provides short-term work experiences, GED assistance, career exploration, leadership training, educational incentives, funding for tutoring, career camps, and supportive services for youth between 14 and 24 years of age.

In 2016, Youth Services was able to facilitate the financing of 135 summer subsidized work experience jobs for youth in 22 villages and Fairbanks. Private sector funding from Wells Fargo Bank financed ten additional subsidized employment jobs for youth in three villages this winter (2017). Additional funding was provided during 2016 to afford more youth the opportunity to participate in regional and state-wide meetings; 50 youth from 16 villages attended the Alaska Youth Academy, eight youth (from Fort Yukon, Nikolai, Grayling, and Holy Cross) were funded to attend the annual Denakkanaaga Elders & Youth Conference in Hughes, and six youth (from Anvik, Fort Yukon, Huslia, Nikolai, and Grayling) attended the annual First Alaskans Institute Elders & Youth Conference hosted in Fairbanks.

Supportive services for youth totaled $46,626 for interview clothes, work clothes, driver education, travel, stipends, and supplies. In addition, 13 youth attended the North Star Driving School and obtained their driver’s license.

Resolution No. 2016-15 calls for creating youth centers in TCC region villages. Youth Services and Tribal Development staff were not successful in identifying additional funding to support this resolution, but we continue to research state, federal, private, and combined funding opportunities. We are also creating a survey to collect data to prioritize villages that might already be well-positioned to support teen centers.

TCC net position continued to increase in 2015 by $33.4 million or 47%.

Energy Assistance

The state legislature and the governor eliminated funding for the Alaska Heating Assistance Program. Because of this households at between 151-250% of poverty will lose all assistance benefits in FY17, and households with income up to 150% of poverty will receive approximately half of the amount of energy assistance which they have been receiving annually over the past five years. This equates to a total loss of program revenue to TCC of $1.3 million dollars.

The impact of the budget cut was offset for the winter of 2017 by a $1.6 million dollar supplement which was distributed to households in August 2016. A record level of funding was obtained and provided to assist over 1,103 tribal households in 43 communities in meeting their home heating energy needs. Without securing a similar supplement during FY17, it is anticipated that the full impact of the budget cut will be felt in the winter of FY 2018 when no supplemental funding will be available.
Early Childhood Development

The Head Start, Early Head Start, and Infant Learning programs of TCC, together with the region’s families and communities, comprise the Early Child Development program. We continue to strive to foster positive, successful experiences for children, and to incorporate local values and beliefs into the programs. In 2016, Early Head Start enrolled 104 children in 122 funded slots, a considerable improvement over 77 enrollees for the same number of spots in 2015. Head Start enrolled 87 children in its 107 funded slots. Head Start and Early Head Start served 13 village sites in 2016.

Resolution No. 2016-21 directed that efforts should be supported to secure transportation to the Head Start in Northway. However, the Office of Head Start issued new Head Start Performance Standards, and no new funding announcements have been issued that support transportation for Head Start programs. Our Early Childhood Development program manager is pursuing alternative options to address this resolution.

Our staff participated in several training opportunities in 2016, including Head Start Performance Standards Orientation in Phoenix, AZ; the National Indian Head Start Director’s Leadership Conference in Washington, DC; the Early Childhood Mental Health Institute and CACFP Administrator’s training, both in Anchorage; Family Visitor training in Fairbanks; and others.

We are currently working to increase enrollment for the Early Head Start program, improve the daily attendance for children enrolled in the center-based programs, and increase parent involvement in home visits and in the classroom.

An application to increase service duration was submitted for Head Start and Early Head Start. If granted, this will provide an additional $147,831 for Early Head Start and an additional $131,757 for Head Start.
The Wildlife and Parks Program (W&P) oversees fishing, hunting, trapping, and gathering activity within the TCC region. This includes monitoring of fish and wildlife populations, and participation in regulatory activity and work with other managers.

We strive to: 1) promote tribal sovereign rights to hunt, fish, trap, and gather; 2) represent TCC; 3) advocate; and 4) build capacity for and through cooperative management efforts.

Our department has been working cooperatively with the Hunting and Fishing Task Force Director securing long-term funding and continuing the W&P summer assessment work. The W&P Director is in his second term with the Alaska Board of Fish, working with State and Federal partners. We supported summer fishery advocacy with the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission and State of Alaska, and continued to track development projects like the Tanana Road and proposed Ambler Road. We actively monitor fish and wildlife population studies and climate change impacts. W&P’s Partner’s Program has been funded for the next three years by the Office of Subsistence Management, and provides consistent fishery research. The National Science Foundation project with the University of Alaska will also be funded for the next two years to assess climate change impacts to our tribes in Interior Alaska. Our work with federal partners in the Migratory Birds Co-Management Council continues to work for our tribal hunters. The Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, in its fourth year, guides fishery research and management efforts.

Henshaw Creek Science and Culture Camp’s 2016 season was successfully operated. Elders Simon Pollock Sr., Elsie and Kenneth Bergman, and language instructor Susan Paskvan were instrumental in making this camp a success.
Realty

The Realty program oversees 2,700 Native allotments and 500 Native restricted town sites in the TCC/Doyon region. We process client real estate transactions, probate packages, and work to recover Native allotments in adjudication. The Realty director also serves as the Natural Resource director and oversees all Natural and Cultural Resources departments.

As advocates for tribal members, our work often includes projects outside of regular realty work. In coordination with Legal, we hired an outside litigator who successfully protected the legal property rights of the Purdy allotment at Chicken. Realty staff have been instrumental in advocating for village concerns about the State of Alaska land use plans for the Yukon-Tanana and Eastern-Tanana planning areas, and worked with Legal on BLM land use plans. The Alaska Tribal Realty Working Group persuaded Congressman Don Young to introduce H.R. 2387: Alaska Native Veterans Land Allotment Equity Act. Fieldwork on a Native allotment near Rampart resulted in the discovery of extremely well-preserved salmon remains dating to around 1,000 years ago. Further research may reveal ancient DNA to better understand the history of Yukon River salmon. Realty and Archaeology were able to acquire over $400,000 late in FY15, which carried over into 2016 and helped to balance the Realty budget. In early 2016, an additional $300,000 was acquired, as well as an additional $65,000 in discretionary funds. Some funds are set aside to conduct a review of agency and tribal land-use planning in the TCC region and on practices of the National Environmental Quality Act (NEPA).

Archaeology

Archaeology and Environmental Quality is part of the Realty program that manages over 3,000 Native allotment parcels and 500 Native restricted town sites in the TCC region. The restricted land base totals approximately 263,000 acres across the region. Our work with cultural resources includes identification and documentation of heritage sites, geographic place names, and camps of historical use and occupancy. We also work on environmental policy, particularly monitoring federal land-use planning and large development projects that follow procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act.

Our archaeologist conducted field investigations on several Native allotments and assembled compliance documentation on land transactions. A field camp was held with secondary students at Deadman Lake in cooperation with Northway Natives, and we initiated a project to manage Native place-names recorded by Fr. Jules Jetté during the early 20th century in the middle Yukon River area.

Staff has coordinated with Tribes in the region on state and federal land-use planning. We monitored and became more engaged in the federal land planning process in the Central Yukon planning area. We supported and submitted a short documentary film on traditional land-use and ecological knowledge to a Native American film festival.

Other highlights of last year included the discovery of 1,000-year-old salmon remains at an archaeological site near Rampart, and the recruitment of an advanced researcher who is conducting ancient DNA analysis on the McGrath Tochak family. We also had a scientific publication issued on the archaeology of Healy Lake in the Upper Tanana region.
The TCC Energy Program assists rural communities with the burden of high heat, electricity, and other energy costs. Our long-term vision is to help our communities improve their energy sustainability, primarily through the reduction of imported diesel costs. This is accomplished through technical assistance, project manage assistance, grant writing, and project implementation.

In 2016 we assisted Holy Cross, Ruby, and Galena with $1.4 million in energy grants that were funded through the Remote Alaskan Community Energy Efficiency (RACEE) Competition. TCC received $1 million in funding over the next five years to hire a position and fund the Interior Athabascan Energy Capacity Building Network (IAECBN). TCC received $380k from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) in summer 2016, finally allowing construction to move forward on the biomass building in Anvik; building construction is complete and work is now focused on mechanical.

Chalkyitsik was awarded $215k in generator replacement funding through the EPA DERA program, and we are implementing this program summer 2017. An electrician has done an inspection and submitted a work proposal as part of Chalkyitsik’s residential electrical rewire project, but further funding remains a hurdle. Fort Yukon was able to find funding through the USDA for $250k to complete the biomass project. The building has been constructed and work has shifted to boiler hookup. We hope to lobby the BIA for more secure funding into the future, to pay for a dedicated energy position similar to the BIA archaeology and forestry programs.

Cadastral Survey

The Cadastral Survey Program provides professional land surveying services to both government and private clients. Focusing on the survey of tribal land boundaries throughout Interior Alaska, the program has 24 years of experience performing GPS control surveys, Native allotment surveys, ANCSA 12(a), 12(b) and 14(c) selection surveys, and the survey of subdivisions both in villages and at remote locations. The program is also involved in assisting cities and village corporations with 14(c) maps of boundaries, as well as village expansion projects and general land planning.

The Cadastral Survey staff have completed over half of the 42 township plats and field notes that remain on the BLM Doyon East Cadastral Survey Project. Plats and field notes should be completed by the end for February and submitted to the BLM, along with the invoice for the remaining 25% of the platting cost ($173,485.00) Minto 14(c) final plats (12 pages) have been submitted, and BLM will be invoiced for the remaining 50% of the platting cost, totaling $3278.

Our Mertarvik Subdivision contract (Award #003027) expired on January 1, 2017. Cadastral Survey asked in September for a contract extension, but one was not granted. We continue our work for rural clients (Award #002031), including plats for subdivision projects for Ruby, Beaver, Nikolai, and circle, as well as additional work for Northway and others.

Due to a lack of large BLM contracts, Cadastral has downsized to one fulltime person, and we are unable to continue providing rural services as we have been without additional funding.
Forestry

The TCC Forestry Program provides forest and wildfire management services and technical assistance to a variety of clients, including Native allottees, Tribal councils, ANCSA village corporations, and other customers through contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and compacted trust services. We were awarded Native Allotment Continuous Forest Inventory (CFI) project funding through BIA; plots were installed over 7 weeks in summer 2016. The project uses forest-monitoring plots to update Native allotment forest inventory and monitor environmental changes and trends. We performed and submitted an updated Forest Management Plan (FMP) at Metlakatla’s request. Forestry is assisting Cultural Resource staff with a geodatabase for Native place name map data and related information. Work with Dr. James Kari has resulted in new compilations of data stemming from numerous sources. Although not directly supported by any funding stream, work continues as time permits.

Village hazardous fuel reduction work, funded through a BIA contract, was completed at Tanana; an additional project was completed at Anvik, and funding is secured for a third in Tetlin. We hope to acquire funding to assume responsibility for Emergency Fire Fund (EFF) refresher training and work capacity testing in 12 TCC villages in the Tanana and Galena Zones; we’re currently awaiting final approval from Department of the Interior.

Due to state funding issues, a large portion of 2016’s Advanced Wildland Firefighter Academy came from TCC Forestry ($40,000), using BIA funds with matching funds from TCC Employment and Training; 40 wildland firefighters graduated, many from TCC villages.

The 2016 fire season was light in Alaska in 2016, but the TCC Fire Crew was involved with lengthy deployments to California in late summer, along with some deployments of village EFF crews.
HEALTH SERVICES
Dear Tribal Members and Beneficiaries,

It has been a pleasure to continue to work towards meeting our strategic goals for 2016 to enhance the services to and in our communities. I’d like to share some updates with you on our 2016 initiatives.

2016 marked a year of achieving re-accreditation for all services provided at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center and first time accreditation for the Edgar Nollner Health Center in Galena and the Mary Demientieff Clinic in Nenana. Lab and radiology services achieved special accreditation status of their services, as well. Accreditation shows that we have policies and procedures in place to provide services that meet or exceed national guidelines and requirements.

One of the surveyors commented “Just from the smaller clinics that I saw, I would have no hesitation in going to those clinics for care, even emergency care, just from the way those clinics are set up. It is a place I would love to work, which is great reflection on you guys.”

We are grateful for the compliments and the recognition but we also know that we are not at the 100% perfection level all the time, yet, so we will continue our efforts to further improve our services.

Medical providers are now scheduled to visit all the villages where we provide health services every other month and will increase use of telemedicine visits for follow-up appointments.

Services in the Upper Tanana region were expanded through a successful hire of two physicians, located in Tok. We also hired a child-psychiatrist who will start in the summer of 2017.

The dental clinic increased village trips to a record high of 109 weeks and the waitlist for routine services has decreased significantly to less than 3 months for children and about 8 months for adults. We are looking forward to welcoming the three Dental Health Aide Therapists (DHAT’s) who are in training, back home in the summer of 2017. After training in Anchorage and Bethel, they will complete their final training at CAIHC, before moving back to Tok and Galena.

A 3rd Physical Therapist and a Chiropractor were hired as new staff to the Physical therapy clinic. The physical therapists have started routine trips to Galena, Nenana and Fort Yukon and will further expand village services in 2017 through in-person visits and through telemedicine.

Homecare was recertified in 2016 to provide Personal Assistant services (PCA) and 7 new homecare staff members were hired in 6 villages.
It has been a pleasure working with Allakaket on the design and construction of their new clinic. The clinic has been operational since November 2016. Full funding for a new clinic in Circle has been secured and construction is planned for 2017.

Village Based Clinic Lease funds, that pay the Tribe or city for the utilities & maintenance cost of the village clinics, received an increase in FY16 for the first time in decades, thanks to continued advocacy of TCC leadership in collaboration with the Alaska Native Health Board and Senator Murkowski.

A cancer care committee was implemented in 2016 to review every new diagnosis of cancer. About 50% of those who were diagnosed with a type of cancer that can be found early through regular screenings did not have these screenings done routinely. We have now implemented that TCC will pay for travel and lodging for cancer screenings (mammograms and colonoscopies) if there is no other insurance that pays. We are also deviating from the national guideline of starting colonoscopies at age 50 and are recommending colonoscopies starting at age 40 because of the higher rates of colon cancer at younger ages in the Native population. We have increased our capacity to perform scopes in Fairbanks and have also hired a general surgeon.

Wellness and Prevention Division has focused on increasing awareness for healthy lifestyles and healthy behaviors and has provided many training opportunities for youth and adults in our communities to increase awareness and coping skills; for example, about 900 participants in 22 communities received tobacco prevention education; 127 participants in the Upper Tanana received education on meth and inhalants; 174 youth from TCC communities participated in Sources of Strength training; 103 adults in 11 villages participated in suicide prevention trainings; many others attended wellness gatherings either in Fairbanks or in the villages; 32 attendees in 3 communities participated in grief recovery groups.

The TCC Regional Health Board meets at least quarterly and I appreciate our Board members continuous efforts and advocacy on your behalf, for improvements to our health care system. The Tribal Advisory Council provides guidance to the Reclaiming our People initiative, Wellness and Prevention and Behavioral Health Services.

Our focus for 2017 is on further expanding and improving prevention, elder services, behavioral health and substance abuse services, while continuing to advocate for preservation of services and funding in a changing political and fiscal environment. Thank you for allowing me to continue to work with you on strengthening the health and wellbeing of our communities that will help preserve a healthy way of life.

Ana Basee,

Jacoline Bergstrom
Executive Director of Health Services
Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) provides comprehensive outpatient services. Services include family medicine, internal medicine, orthopedics, pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, WIC, women’s health, laboratory, radiology, dental, optometry, and pharmacy.

CAIHC continues to work toward improving the patient experience, improving health outcomes, reducing cost/increasing revenue, and creating a well workforce (our “Vital 4”). We are now re-accredited with Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC).

We initiated regular Cancer Case Review meetings to review all new cancer diagnoses. (HIT) Director and the Electronic Health Record Steering Committee have narrowed the new health record system choices down to two vendors. The IT department continues to work on developing a comprehensive network revision plan. We began Integrated Care Team meetings, and a Central Scheduling team was hired and trained. We are an approved Centering Site for Centering Pregnancy and Centering Parenting programs.

Two goals going forward include strengthening the roles of the core leadership team (CAIHC Director, CAIHC Deputy Director, Medical Director, two Deputy Medical Directors, Family Medicine Department Manager, and Specialty Clinics Department Manager), and continuing to grow the integrative medicine program, newly available to patients.

Training this year included telephone etiquette for 56 total participants, VIDYO training for 92 participants, and Nexplanon training for internal and outside providers and staff.

Dental Services

TCC Dental is the oral health service provider of choice for Native beneficiaries throughout the Interior of Alaska.

This last fiscal year we successfully participated in our triennial AAAHC review and attained reaccreditation. This was significant due to the first-time inclusion of several rural clinics in the review process. Additionally, our clinic patient visits and third party collection metrics reached all-time high volumes during this period. These in turn helped us to decrease our customer wait times to their lowest values since wait lists were initiated approximately 10 years ago.

In addition to earning AAAHC re-accreditation, we received a $500,000 grant from the Indian Health Service Division of Oral Health to train and help fund a pediatric dental program. We have continued to decrease patient wait-list times overall, and wait-list times for children’s appointments were almost eliminated by the end of the fiscal year. Wait time for exams will likely increase throughout the winter months, as the Dental staff become highly involved in providing rural care during that time. Our rural village visits increased slightly in total amount of time for the year, to a new record high of 109 weeks.

We continue to be involved in dental assistant training with UAF. We provided six weeks of preceptorship training to approximately ten students throughout the year. This training is the final step of their year-long training program. We typically end up making job offers to around half of these trainees.
The nursing program at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) strives to provide quality care to our patients by employing the highest level of credentialed employees that are dedicated to our patients’ needs and culture.

The wound care clinic is doing well, with an average of 10 patients a week. Our Centering programs now include both Pregnancy Centering and Parenting Centering; in October they graduated their first group that has gone through the entire course cycle together. Central scheduling is operating at full power now, averaging 300 calls a day; we have had many positive comments from patients.

Nursing continues to encourage health and wellness within the teams. Each team has come up with a monthly health goal. Family Practice is increasing VTC appointments with a goal of 30 per month. We are implementing an extensive onboarding schedule for all new clinical support staff, and developing a pathway to increase leadership internally by providing opportunities for staff to attend trainings, such as Phlebotomy and Medical Assisting, with local resources including UAF, UAF’s Community and Technical College (CTC), and UAS.

A new RN for urgent care began in January, after which we brought on the new case manager for team Deneege. A certified medical assistant (CMA) was hired to fill a float position. Recruiting or interviewing is currently underway for several CMA/LPN, CMA, and RN positions. A Prior Authorization position has been filled, and several employees have earned national certification, CMA status, or IV Certification.

Based at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC), the medical service program provides multi-specialty comprehensive outpatient preventive, acute, and chronic medical care. The Program is responsible for: delivery of primary care health services to patients at CAIHC; delivery of obstetrics/gynecology specialty health services to patients at CAIHC; performance of limited specialty services at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH); periodic travel of primary care providers to all villages to provide primary care or backup at village sites; and 24/7 on-call physician support of the community health aides.

The VA expanded from 200 to 600 patients. Pediatrics, Family Medicine, and Immunizations held a health fair in August 2016, which provided education, school supplies, school physicals, and immunizations. A comprehensive physician assistant (PA) collaborative periodic review plan was implemented at CAIHC. Recruitment and retention of medical staff is proceeding at pace, in collaboration with Communications and the development of several recruitment videos. We’re establishing routine village travel schedules for providers to enhance reliability, and improving the quality of our services through other collaborations and process improvements.

This year a provider and support staff were in villages for 322 days and saw 1,330 patients. There were eight new hires in FY16. An additional two new hires are secured so far in FY17. In collaboration with the Communications Program at TCC, two Medical Minute videos were developed for the public: Immunizations, and Preparing for Your Medical Visit.

The Pediatrics Division plans to manage a full pediatrics call at FMH, include newborns and pediatrics.
Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center

Laboratory Services

Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) Laboratory provides diagnostic testing services for the TCC region. All laboratory testing comes to this laboratory, and any testing not able to be performed will be referred to Quest Diagnostics. CAIHC Laboratory also provides material support for laboratory testing supplies and technical support to address compliance, training, and related concerns for the village clinics in the TCC region.

In 2016, we started deployment of Abbott Xceed Pro glucometers to sub-region clinics, and purchased an upgrade to the Clinitek Status urinalysis analyzer that will be installed at sub-regions if it passes connectivity tests. We also purchased a BD Affirm and Illumigene by Meridian BioScience for various bacterial tests. We contracted with Millenium Health for urine drug screen testing.

The dollar value of the work performed in 2016 was $8,770,806, of which we have, at this writing, collected $2,972,786.94. One new position was approved for the laboratory to help address the continual increase in workload. A new bench technician was hired in June, and the new CAIHC Laboratory director started October 10. In addition, the Point of Care (POC) testing program responsibilities were transferred to the clinical section, and two medical assistants previously working in the POC rooms have been brought into the lab to assist with workload. The POC Lead made several trips to villages for training and to assist with compliance issues.

Goals for the future include continuing to increase services offered to the TCC region by reducing referral laboratory expenses and increasing revenue generated by CAIHC Laboratory. We also aim to continue adding testing capacity to our in-house operations, and to provide more services in a timely manner.

Laboratory Services performed 57,045 specimen accessions and 10,363 phlebotomies; we also engaged with 2,771 village patients.
HEALTH SERVICES

Eye Clinic

TCC Eye Clinic provides optometric care for the TCC region, Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (CATG) region, and the villages of Anaktuvuk Pass and Tanana. Last year, care was provided to 4,947 optometry patients over 5,728 visits, and 1,652 optical patients over 516 visits. This includes 393 patients seen on field visits to Minto, Hughes, Anaktuvuk Pass, Galena, Rampart, Chalkyitsik, Kaltag, Allakaket, Minto, Hughes, Arctic Village, and Fort Yukon. Administration approval was received at end of March to increase support staff by one employee. Finally, an additional dispensing table was added to the optical dispensary.

Pharmacy

Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) Pharmacy provides pharmaceutical services in a safe, cost effective, timely and friendly manner for all patients receiving prescriptions through Tanana Chiefs Conference Health Services Department. To meet this goal, pharmacy staff members partner with patients, families, communities and other health care providers to improve the overall health and well-being of individuals receiving pharmaceutical services through CAIHC Pharmacy.

CAIHC Pharmacy was assigned resolution 2016-06 from the Ruby Tribal Council addresses coordination of care for lab work and prescription refills for village-based patients on chronic medications requiring regular lab work and for village-based patients on complicated medication regimens. Pharmacy staff is collaborating with the CHAP Department and with TCC RN Case Manager Nursing staff to better coordinate prescription refills and lab work for village-based patients. Pharmacy is now sending out a letter to patients with their prescription refills, noting that they are on a medication that requires regular lab monitoring, along with other details. A copy of this letter will be cc’ed to the health aide and to the patient’s team RN case manager. Pharmacy has been able to hire Native applicants for most positions in FY16. One of our staff earned certification as Board Certified Pharmacotherapy Specialist (BCPS). Pharmacy provided two formal trainings during the Fourth Quarter of FY16: use of Respimat inhalation devices and use of insulin pen delivery devices. Additionally, pharmacy staff trained three new CAIHC providers and five new rural providers in one-on-one training sessions.

Pharmacy has exceeded our quarterly cash collection goal by over $260,000, or 27%.
HEALTH SERVICES

Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center

Radiology

Radiology Services provides medical diagnostic imaging, which includes digital plain imaging, mammography with tomosynthesis, ultrasonography, bone densitometry, and retinal optical scanning. Radiology also provides assistance to subregional imaging sites ensuring images are performed and interpreted in accordance with TCC policies and procedures.

In 2016, Ultrasound performed their first echocardiology exams, Radiology successfully performed their first Hysterosalpingogram procedure with an OB/GYN physician, and we provided 3 weeks of on-call radiology coverage at the UTHC-South due to staffing shortages. Mammography acquired 3-year recertification with the American College of Radiology. An ultrasound technologist acquired a nuchal measurement certification (NTQR), enabling CAIHC to begin offering Nuchal Fold Measurements in April 2016. In addition, an ultrasound technologist acquired a Breast Ultrasound Specialty Designation. We submitted a proposal to enable RNs to perform x-rays on a limited basis; this would especially benefit the Tok and Galena sites, where they sometimes have more acute patients.

CAIHC Radiology now oversees the Radiation Dosimetry program for all TCC sites. This was accomplished through prior IHS national contract. Benefits of this change include exposure rates will now be monitored and evaluated within the TCC Employee Health Program, promoting stricter compliance with OSHA standards.

Revenue and workload continue to rise. In 2016, we had 170 more billable CPT encounters than same time period in 2015. Radiology completed 2826 ultrasounds, 4374 plain imaging studies, and 1369 mammograms. Village Radiology performed 693 studies, and integration of UTHC-South has resulted in a significant boost to Village Radiology workload.

Diabetes Program

The Diabetes Program provides quality, holistic, permission-based diabetes education and prevention to beneficiaries across the TCC region, including care coordination and ongoing support as needed in a culturally-appropriate, community-driven manner. We oversee the Hozelleeh Denh Fitness Center, which provides a free place to exercise for beneficiaries and TCC employees in Fairbanks. We also manage a Wellness Strategies for Health (WSH) grant through ANTHC and CDC to work on a policy, system or environmental change addressing risk factors associated with chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes.

In addition to ongoing outreach, TCC’s Diabetes Program partnered with the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) Diabetes Program in October to create an educational display for the public regarding diabetes education. Staff also joined the VA Clinic for Vet Stand Down in October to perform foot exams and referrals. The Fitness Center continues to operate with reduced hours due to staffing. However, we interviewed several candidates for the Physical Activity Attendant and are optimistic we will find a successful candidate.

Our DM coordinator traveled to Sitka in November to meet with the SEARHC Diabetes Program to learn and share insights. WSH grant staff transitioned from a Fairbanks based-community stakeholder group to an internal TCC committee focused on passing a TCC Healthy Food resolution and policy. The Diabetes Program began partnering with Centering Pregnancy in February 2016 to provide disease prevention education to participants at each session. We also partnered with Alaska Flour Company to highlight the health benefits of Alaska-grown barley.
The TCC WIC program provides nutrition assessment, nutrition education counseling, community referrals, and nutritious foods for pregnant women, breastfeeding women, post-partum women, infants, and children up to their 5th birthday. The WIC program works cooperatively with the team members of the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) Specialty Clinic, serving families from the Fairbanks North Star Borough and 48 Interior villages.

Last year we visited the village communities of Venetie, Ruby, Kaltag, Nenana, Healy, Salcha, Delta Junction, Fort Greely, Tok, Northway, Tanacross, Dot Lake, Arctic Village, Eagle, Huslia, and Nulato. We attended several health fairs, including Thrive Head Start Fairbanks, North Pole Health Fair, TCC Convention Health Fair, and other health events in Nenana, Healy, Salcha, Eagle. We now provide two newsletters: one for families that purchase WIC foods at their local store, and one for families that receive food boxes in the villages. Outreach letters were mailed to 1700 Denali Kid Care and Medicaid recipient families, 100 pregnant women utilizing CAIHC medical services, and 120 WIC participants in the TCC region currently accessing RCPC services.

We loaned 39 Electric Breast pumps to TCC WIC participants and provided four personal nursing systems, free nursing bras, and other materials and education efforts to new or expecting mothers. Staff attended the two-day Alaska Breastfeeding Symposium. Moving forward, some of our goals include visiting 42 villages this fiscal year; performing vendor monitoring for Venetie, Ruby, and Fort Yukon; and staff completion of the Lactation Educator Certification program.

Biomedical Equipment Services

Biomedical Equipment Support repairs and maintains about $7 million in medical equipment. We also provide operator training and assist in selection of new equipment purchases.

Accomplishment highlights for 2016 included maintenance, acquisition, and installations across the region. A new dental air compressor was installed in Galena. Infusion pumps were sent to all regional clinics as requested by Pharmacy. All Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) clinics now have the same modern suction machine. Inspection of all the medical equipment in Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center CAIHC was completed in January. Inspection of all dental equipment at CAIHC was completed in February.

Staff traveled to Fort Yukon in April and repaired their x-ray machine. In May, staff traveled to the Koyukuk Clinic for annual maintenance, then traveled to Galena and installed three dental sink cabinets and LED overhead exam lights. Annual maintenance was also completed in Circle, and the new clinic in Tanacross had all medical equipment inspected. Staff traveled to Eagle and repaired an exam table and telemedicine cart, and completed annual maintenance. Staff also traveled to Tok for various repairs, and traveled to Evansville in June for annual maintenance.

We acquired an ECG worth $15,000 from government surplus, along with a dental panoral x-ray machine that will go to Galena once it is repaired. We remained within budget for 2016, and filled a clerk position. We continue to work on a priced inventory; Currently 94% of our 2853 medical devices are priced, totaling $8,722,819.41.

With more staff recently hired, we will be able to reduce our repair time to keep clinics running efficiently.
Behavioral Health

The Division of Behavioral Health primarily provides integrated mental health and substance use services through a wide practice including prevention, outreach, residential care, and outpatient services.

A major highlight of the last year was surpassing our financial goal of $3 million. We hired a crisis intervention clinician, located at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Services, who is able to immediately intervene at a Masters level. We hired a clinical associate in the Upper Tanana sub-region. This individual travels to villages to provide clinical services and works closely with the behavioral health aides.

We were awarded a large, competitive grant from Systems of Care from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administrations (SAMHSA). This 4-year grant aims to expand children’s mental health services in the Yukon Koyukuk sub-region; our hope is to develop and expand these grant-piloted services to our other communities in the future.

We started a grief support group, which has been successful. We plan to start similar groups throughout rural communities.

We expanded the Substance Use Outpatient Program, based in Tok and Fairbanks, with additional telehealth service capacity to compliment local behavioral health aide care. We continue to work towards eventual elimination of the waitlist for comprehensive assessments for mental health services.

Behavioral Health staff are being trained by leading experts on the prevention of Alcohol Exposed Pregnanacies (AEP) through the use of Motivational Interviewing Skills and the use of CHOICES (Choosing Healthy Behaviors to Avoid Alcohol Exposed pregnancies), an evidence-based intervention.
Wellness & Prevention

The Division of Wellness and Prevention works to increase wellness and health promotion throughout the TCC communities. We strive to provide education, information, and services to prevent issues from developing, to prevent existing issues from worsening, and to empower TCC beneficiaries to practice strong health promotion skills. We have services and grants that focus on substance abuse prevention, community wellness, health promotion, injury and disease prevention, domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, promotion of healthy relationships, coping skills, grief recovery, and suicide prevention.

The Tribal Advisory Council now has a full membership and has a Reclaiming Our People strategic plan that will be presented at convention. Home Care was recertified for Consumer Directed Personal Care Services, Home & Community Based Chore/Respite, and Care Coordination.

The State of Alaska is exploring new options for health care through Medicaid and 1915(k) Inclusive Community Choices; the latter would allow the state to help people remain in their home and communities for various services, and would allow the state to draw down 6% more federal dollars and reduce General Funds expenditure. A sexual abuse survivors’ support group is being held in Fairbanks, and grief recovery community presentations have taken place (all well-received) in three of our communities and four more are scheduled. TCC signed Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) with the Yukon Koyukuk School District and Galena City School district to offer suicide prevention programs to staff and students.

Community Health Aide & Community Health Aide Training Center

The Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) and Community Health Center Program (CHCP) provide clinical staffing, training, supervision, and support to rural medical providers for the purpose of delivering excellent primary and emergency health care services. In February 2016, the Community Health Aide Training Center (CHATC) passed RAC review and in October it was awarded certification by the CHAP Certification Board. Other highlights from 2016 included continued implementation of primary, urgent, and emergency care in UTHC, as well as participation in UTHC and ENHC facility renovations and repairs. We passed the Accreditation Association of Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) survey, which included the Galena and Nenana clinics. We participated in an October Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) site visit. Construction and move-in were completed for the Allakaket clinic, and the Tanacross clinic saw clinical operations move to their new facility. The CHA program was nationalized, and we participated in education efforts towards protection of Alaska’s established program and funding.

We have begun active recruitment for the Healy Lake clinic, and hope to turn next to facility repair. Last year there were 4942 CHA/P patient visits and 7203 CHC provider visits. There were 25 new local hires in villages, 47 staff members received training, and we hosted 27 trainings. We are advocating for a state plan amendment that would secure Medicaid reimbursements, as well as for continuation of CHATS grant funding, currently in jeopardy. Loss of CHATS funding would mean an annual TCC loss of $98,000.
Housing First

Housing First is a permanent, supportive housing program serving the chronic inebriate homeless. Housing First programs throughout the nation, including our own, have demonstrated it is easier to work on substance abuse and mental health issues when clients have stable housing. We have also shown a decrease in the use of emergency services by tenants when housed safely.

In 2017, Housing First provided 47 tenants safe housing with meals, resulting generally in improved physical and mental health. Case management has resulted in tenants applying for Medicaid, Alaska Housing vouchers, Social Security, and obtaining advocacy services including financial management. Currently 38 tenants have Medicaid, with 17 receiving onsite services. Many tenants reduced their intake of alcohol, and 11 tenants have maintained extended periods of sobriety.

Four tenants completed culinary arts training through our partnership with Bread Line.

Our finances are stable. Medicaid billing has greatly improved. Other revenue streams continue, including our Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) and Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grants, and rent payments by tenants and AHFC.

Five residential support technicians obtained their counselor technician certificates, and all others are working towards certification. Our case manager and four residential support technicians attended The State of Alaska Annual School of Addictions training. Motivational interviewing, DSM 5, and American Society of Addiction (ASAM) training were taken by most staff, sponsored by TCC Behavioral Health. In addition, CPR and First Aid training were available to all staff. Two staff received suicide prevention training, and others received Medicaid documentation training.

TCC assisted the City of Fairbanks in writing a grant to fund a coordinated entry position for homeless services. This will greatly reduce duplication of services and hopefully increase housing opportunities for the homeless. The City of Fairbanks will be filling this position in early FY17.
Office of Environmental Health

The Office of Environmental Health (OEH) is a comprehensive program that monitors and responds to environmental health issues in the villages and at TCC’s Fairbanks facilities, with the overall goal of protecting public health. OEH staff travel extensively and provide both routine and project-related environmental health services. Our customers include Tribal Councils, village sanitation utility owners and operators, and TCC partner programs, among others. OEH also manages a robust training program.

Highlights from the last year include planning work for TCC’s village natural disaster emergency preparedness plans for breakup flooding and wildfires, bedbug education and planning initiatives in various contexts, completion of 25 consumer confidence reports (CCRs) for community water system owners to be submitted to Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC), completion of village surveys needed for CARF accreditation, and hosting of a summer intern through the National Environmental Public Health Internship Program. We also revised and updated the OEH website, with assistance from IT, to provide requested resources and a mobile-friendly format.

The OEH training program improves the safety of drinking water in villages by training operators, utility managers, and council members on safe operation and maintenance, budgeting, and management. Courses from 2016 included Intro to Small Water Systems Provisional/Level 1, Financial Management for Rural Utilities, Utility Management for City-Tribal Elected Officials, Introduction to Utility Management, Small Community Emergency Response Plan, Solid Waste Management. OEH staff travel extensively to support Tribes with successful sanitation facility operation and maintenance in addition to multiple sanitation facility emergency responses.

Laboratory Services

Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC) Laboratory provides diagnostic testing services for the TCC region. All laboratory testing comes to this laboratory, and any testing not able to be performed will be referred to Quest Diagnostics. CAIHC Laboratory also provides material support for laboratory testing supplies and technical support to address compliance, training, and related concerns for the village clinics in the TCC region.

In 2016, we started deployment of Abbott Xceed Pro glucometers to sub-region clinics, and purchased an upgrade to the Clinitek Status urinalysis analyzer that will be installed at sub-regions if it passes connectivity tests. We also purchased a BD Affirm and Illumigene by Meridian BioScience for various bacterial tests. We contracted with Millenium Health for urine drug screen testing.

The dollar value of the work performed in 2016 was $8,770,806, of which we have, at this writing, collected $2,972,786.94. One new position was approved for the laboratory to help address the continual increase in workload. A new bench technician was hired in June, and the new CAIHC Laboratory director started October 10. In addition, the Point of Care (POC) testing program responsibilities were transferred to the clinical section, and two medical assistants previously working in the POC rooms have been brought into the lab to assist with workload. The POC Lead made several trips to villages for training and to assist with compliance issues.

Goals for the future include continuing to increase services offered to the TCC region by reducing referral laboratory expenses and increasing revenue generated by CAIHC Laboratory. We also aim to continue adding testing capacity to our in-house operations, and to provide more services in a timely manner.
Health Information Management Services

The Health Information Management Services (HIMS) program provides high-quality medical records management and coding services, including scanning, coding, auditing, and training for providers and clinical support staff.

On October 1, 2015, ICD-10 went live. This was a major endeavor and strategic initiative that we successfully completed due to a joint effort between many groups and individuals. ICD-10 was successfully implemented at TCC with minimal issues. Two previously uncertified coders received extensive training and passed their certification exam. Other coders attended the training and hope to attempt the exam in the future. A request for proposal (RFP) was put out to six potential vendors to be TCC’s contractual partner for coding and billing services. Healthcare Resource Group (HRG) was awarded the contract.

In FY16, we processed 4,066 releases of information. The total amount of fees collected for copying records was $7,655.50. The coding queue was reduced from roughly 6,500 to 7,000 on average at the beginning of the fiscal year to between 2,000 and 4,000; that has held steady since summer 2016. The HIMS director noticed discrepancies between different departmental budgets due to staff positions not pointing to the correct awards. Actions were taken to correct those discrepancies.

Alternate Resources

Alternate Resources assists patients with their eligibility in programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, Tribally-Sponsored Health Insurance Program (T-SHIP), and private insurances. Alternate Resources can assist in the entire health insurance program process, from enrollment to renewal.

Alternate Resources has been traveling to our rural communities since January 2015. In 2016, Alternate Resources traveled to 23 Villages and completed 2,607 Medicaid Applications, 46 T-SHIP enrollments, and 26 VA applications. In line with our strategic plan, Alternate Resources will begin a provider incentive plan to refer patients to Alternate Resources after their appointments to be screened for health insurance programs.

A total of 11,417 Alternate Resource screening forms were collected by Registration staff and prescreened by Alternate Resources. We have submitted 4,996 visits ($2,994,625) worth of back billing for Medicaid and insurance claims to the business office. A total of 182 newborns were enrolled into Medicaid, and 268 T-SHIP information letters were mailed. Alternate Resources has received $60,543.08 from the state of Alaska for the Tribal Medicaid Administrative claims.

Alternate Resources is on budget for FY16. Federal grant funding has been secured for 3 years; this will help us increase the amount of travel we do for outreach and enrollment, and ensure that patients know we are here to help them utilize the resources available to them.
The Coding Audit and Compliance program provides training on coding to data entry staff, clinical staff, and certified coders; audits coding staff to ensure accuracy; reviews provider documentation to support Medical Necessity and to provide feedback for improvement; reviews, researches and assists documentation, templates, and codes for new health services and procedures; and reviews new lines of service for Documentation and Coding compliance.

In 2016, more providers were pulled back to be coded in-house, reducing dependency on our contractor. Two data entry staff passed their CPC exam and are now certified coders. The coding queue is well controlled at around 2,500 monthly. Accuracy for certified on-site and certified home coders is 93%. Productivity is up and close to 60 encounters a day for certified coders, and 65 a day for data entry staff. Changes were made to the template to increase documentation compliance for the following: Incident to, Supervising Physician, Immunization, Injections and Wound Care. Updates for 2017 ICD-10-CM were loaded in the system mid quarter with minimal issues; those issues that did arise were resolved promptly.

TCC Coding Program Policies and Procedures are currently under review, the paper process has been eliminated for General Surgery, and Scopes procedures were performed at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital (FMH) and The Surgery Center.

For 2017, our many goals include the following: to continue gaining towards a minimum goal of 96% accuracy, to achieve a minimum 80 encounters per day per coder, and to develop a Clinical Documentation Improvement (CDI) program.

Behavioral Health staff are being trained by leading experts on the prevention of Alcohol Exposed Pregnanacies (AEP) through the use of Motivational Interviewing Skills and evidence-based intervention.
OUR VISION
Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes

OUR MISSION
Tanana Chiefs Conference provides a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior Alaska Native people.