

the Council

Vol. 43, No. 5

A REPORT TO THE MEMBER TRIBES OF TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

May 2018

GOVERNOR WALKER VISITS *Minto*



After mentioning public safety in Minto in his State of the State address this year, Governor Walker was happy to accept the community's invitation to visit earlier this year. Like many other communities in Alaska, Minto is concerned about public safety, and lack of law enforcement given their remote location. Governor Walker

listened to Minto's concerns, and talked about solutions, like the additional \$34 million for troopers – especially for travel to rural communities – in his Public Safety Action Plan.

Other topics also came up, including Alaska's opioid crisis: the Governor



thanked the community for their efforts to support drug treatment. He praised technical training that Minto residents were getting, saying he'd rather see people commuting from Minto and not Minnesota for jobs in Alaska.

Tanana Chiefs Conference is a

TOBACCO FREE FACILITY



Please be respectful and refrain from smoking on TCC campus.

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MISSION STATEMENT

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.

VISION

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

TCC EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

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Trimble Gilbert/Arctic Village
2nd Traditional Chief

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Eugene Paul/Holy Cross
Lower Yukon

Frank Thompson/ Evansville
Yukon Tanana

Norman 'Carl' Burgett/ Huslia
Yukon Koyukuk

Peter Demoski/Nulato
Elder Advisor

Jolie Murray/Beaver
Youth Advisor

CHIEF'S REPORT

Dear Tribes and Tribal Members,



Spring is here and the geese have arrived! With the warmer weather and breakup upon us, TCC's emergency response team is prepared. We ask that you be prepared too. If you are traveling by snow machine, watch for hazardous conditions. Also, please make sure your property is protected from flooding. Your safety is important to TCC, please review the safety tips located on page 4, have fun but be safe!

Congratulations to all of the 2018 graduates! Nothing is more essential in ensuring the success of our people than the education of our future leaders. If you are a 2018 graduate, please send us your graduation photos to feature in next month's Council Newsletter. Details on how to send your photo and information is located on the back cover after page 11.

I would also like to congratulate Shanice Albert of Northway, Karissa Carroll of Ruby, Sheena Tanner of Itinerant, and Daphne Williams of Hughes for completing Level 4 of the Community Health Aide training program. This is the second group of graduates to complete the Level 4 training through TCC's Community Health Aide Training Center, which opened its doors in 2016. Our intention of opening this facility was to provide the opportunity for Community Health Aide's to complete these programs at an accelerated rate and ensure that our rural communities receive a higher level of care. These four individuals will return to their communities and be able to offer the full services that a Health Aide can. More on the CHA program and photos from this ceremony can be found on page 6.

Last month, TCC senior management met with our Executive Board of Directors to review and update our 2015-2020 strategic plan and to incorporate the resolutions passed during our 2018 Convention. As in previous years, TCC leadership will continue to travel to your villages to get tribal input and guidance on our strategic plan and initiatives. This plan must be in alignment with our tribes.

The Alaska Rural Energy Conference was held April 10-12 in Fairbanks where all facets of the ongoing energy challenges were discussed and ideas were shared. This summer, our energy program will be busy helping with biomass projects in Huslia and Tanana, as well as solar PV projects in Hughes, Holy Cross, and Northway. We look forward to making our villages stronger, more sustainable places to live and work.

TCC's Health Department has updated their Strategic plan to improve patient experience. In 2017, a vast majority of complaints were related to concerns about communications and miscommunication. To better understand where we have opportunities to improve, we have started patient focus groups. More information on the patient focus groups and how we plan to improve patient experience can be found on page 11.

Lastly, we want to update you on the K9 project discussed the last few months and at our 2018 Convention. The Alaska State Troopers recently purchased a K9 that will be stationed at the Fairbanks post and serve interior Alaska. I would like to again recognize Kelly Fields, the generous donations of our tribes, tribal members, and city governments in Interior Alaska who made this possible. More on police K9's in the Interior can be found on page 7.

A lot is happening at Tanana Chiefs Conference to better serve you and our tribes and as always we are working towards *Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes*.

A special note to all of the mothers; Happy Mother's Day – we owe it all to you.

Ana Bassee,
Victor Joseph
Chief/Chairman

JUSTICE FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN: AWARENESS Walk

May 9, 2019
Walk begins at 12pm
Westmark Main Entrance

WEAR RED TO SUPPORT

If you'd like to honor someone you love, please contact
Janelle at janelle.chapin@aknwr.org or
Elizabeth at elizabeth@hnhcoalition.org



CHILD ABUSE HEALING Walk

June 15, 2018
Gather at 10am
Walk begins at 12pm
Pioneer Park Civic Center

The Child Abuse Healing Walk is sponsored by My Grandma's House, a child advocacy non-profit group, as well as various donations from around Alaska.

Cynthia Erickson, founder of My Grandma's House, is hoping to encourage others to let their voices be heard. She is asking for stories to be shared about what happened, its impact, how you learned from it, and how you overcame it.

This journey will continue to Minto, Manley Hot Springs, Tanana, Ruby, and Galena.

For updates, follow My Grandma's House on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

My Grandma's House
100 Front Street
Tanana, Alaska 99777
(907) 750- 9123
cynthia@mygrandmashouseak.org

FIREFIGHTER TRAINING

By Will Putman, TCC Forestry Director

In late 2016, TCC Forestry successfully negotiated a funding agreement with the BLM/Alaska Fire Service (AFS) that will enable TCC staff to administer RT-130 Annual Fireline Safety Refresher Training and Work Capacity Testing (pack test) for Emergency Firefighter (EFF) crews at villages under AFS jurisdiction in the Tanana and Galena Zones.

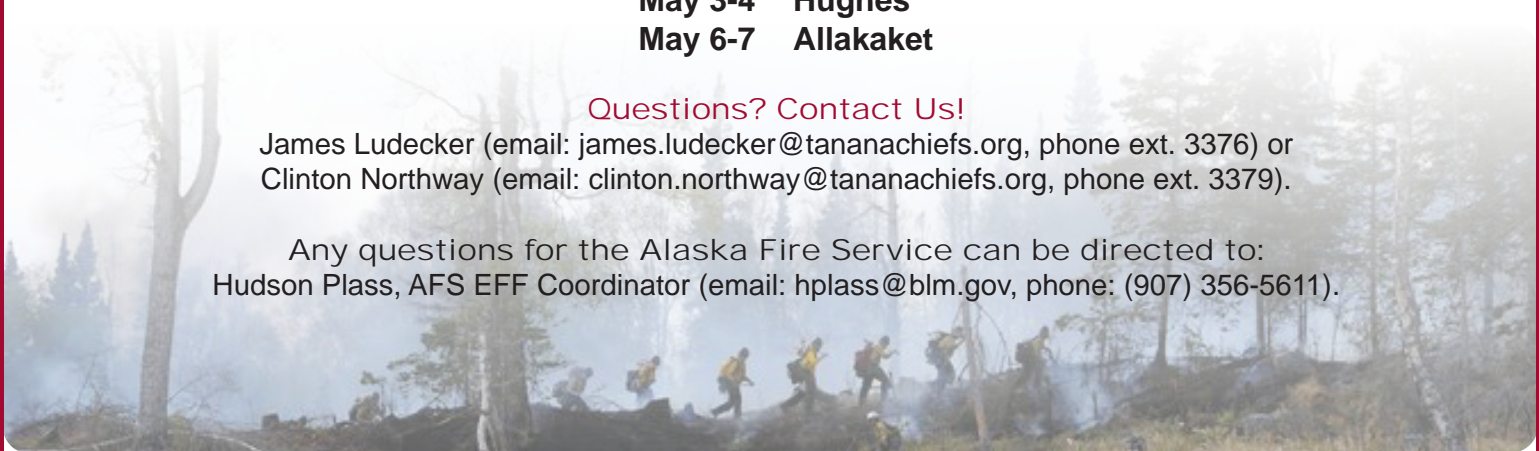
Village visits are being scheduled from late March to the end of April. The projected schedule for the village visits for this training delivery is subject to change and adjustment, but is currently set for the following:

April 30- May 1 Tanana
May 3-4 Hughes
May 6-7 Allakaket

Questions? Contact Us!

James Ludecker (email: james.ludecker@tananachiefs.org, phone ext. 3376) or
Clinton Northway (email: clinton.northway@tananachiefs.org, phone ext. 3379).

Any questions for the Alaska Fire Service can be directed to:
Hudson Plass, AFS EFF Coordinator (email: hplass@blm.gov, phone: (907) 356-5611).



SPRING TRAVEL SAFETY TIPS

SPRING IS HERE, WHICH THAT IT WON'T BE LONG BEFORE THE ICE MELTS, CREATING HAZARDOUS TRAVELING CONDITIONS. BEFORE YOU VENTURE OUT, REVIEW THE FOLLOWING TIPS TO ENSURE THAT YOU STAY SAFE WHILE TRAVELING.

Be prepared. If traveling by snow machine, make sure that it is in good condition with enough fuel to get you where you need to go and back. Tell someone where you are going, what route you plan to take, and when you plan to return.

Check the weather forecast. You must be prepared for any extreme weather that comes your way.

Bring a friend if traveling long distances. Traveling is safer when done in pairs and the most dangerous situations occur when a person is injured and alone. If you must travel alone, tell someone. If traveling long distances, be sure to check in at nearby communities and villages.

Avoid traveling across bodies of water when uncertain of ice thickness or water currents. Temperature, snow cover, currents, and springs can affect the thickness and relative safety of ice. Ice is seldom the same thickness over a single body of water; it can be 2 ft. thick in one place and 1 in. thick a few yards away. Check the ice at least every 150 ft. Drowning is the leading cause of snowmachine deaths in Alaska.

Slow down. Speed is a contributing factor in nearly all fatal snowmobiling accidents. Drivers should proceed at a pace that will allow ample reaction time for any situation. Drive at moderate speeds, and drive defensively, especially after sunset.

Pack for Survival by bringing:

- A knife, axe, or saw
- A flashlight, flares, or a strobe
- Waterproof matches
- High-Energy food or bars
- Electrical/Duct Tape
- An extra key
- GPS
- Thermal Blanket
- First-Aid Kit

Don't drink and drive! Drinking impairs your judgement and increases the risk of getting into an accident and getting lost.

Avoid traveling at night.

Traveling at night, dusk, dawn, or cloudy conditions can distort perception of ice conditions. The current can erode ice from underneath.

MAY IS *Mental Health* MONTH

There are approximately 1.2% or 4 million Americans who identify themselves as having some Native American or Alaska Native heritage or background in the United States. Among those Native American and Alaska Natives, a whopping **21% of that population had a diagnosable mental health issue in this last year.** That is approximately 840 thousand people in the United States who suffered from some mental illness! In comparison to other ethnic groups, Native Americans and Alaska Natives are at higher risk for some common

mental illness, such as depression, substance abuse, and anxiety than any other population. Disparities in wealth, education, access to care, have led to sickness and death, and stigma among mental health can be an enormous barrier in receiving mental health treatment. How mental health illness are identified, discussed, and managed are dependent on the way it is viewed within a culture. Through person-centered treatment, delivered by staff with a dedication

to cultural humility, Tanana Chiefs Conference strives to deliver the most effective and appropriate care for the region's greatly diverse populations. Mental health is much more than a diagnosis. Whether you are looking to make goals for yourself, manage difficult life situations, or build more positive relationships with the people you care for most, remember to take care of your mental health.

*Take
care of
your Mental
Health!*

7 SKILLS TO HELP A FRIEND IN NEED

- 1. CALMNESS** - comforts your friend in a time of need
- 2. HONESTY** - encourages your friend to trust you
- 3. NON-JUDGEMENTAL ATTITUDE** - creates a safe space for your friend
- 4. RESOURCEFULNESS** - gives your friend ideas on where to get help

- 5. EMPATHY** - shows that you really care
- 6. REASSURING** - makes your friend feel like things are going to be ok
- 7. ENCOURAGING** - helps your friend get help and support

United States Census Bureau, (2014). American fact finder. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration. (2014). Racial and ethnic minority populations. American Psychiatric Association, (2009). Mental Health in American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Community Health Aide Program 2018 *Graduates!*



On March 30th, 2018 Tanana Chiefs Conference held a Ceremony celebrating four rural health care staff for completing all four levels of the Community Health Aide (CHA) Program; Shanice Albert of Northway, Karissa Carroll of Ruby, Sheena Tanner Itinerant, and Daphne Williams of Hughes.

This is the second group of graduates to complete CHA Level 4 through TCC's Community Health Aide Training Center, which opened its doors in 2016. The intention of opening up this facility was to provide the opportunity for CHAs to complete these programs at an accelerated

rate. Prior to the opening of the CHA Training Center, CHAs would have to travel to Anchorage, Nome, or Bethel to complete their training, sometimes waiting up to two years just to be accepted into the program.

As of now, seven CHAs have completed Level 4 through our training center, ensuring that our rural communities receive a higher level of care. Community Health Aides/Practitioners provide primary, preventative, chronic care, and 24/7 emergency services in villages.



The Community Health Aide/Practitioner is a unique and invaluable link to ensuring health services in the TCC region. The opportunity to care for one's own community is honorable, takes a great amount of courage and promises to be one of the most fulfilling commitments of a lifetime.

These four individuals will return to their communities and be able to offer the full services that a Health Aide can. If you see them, be sure to congratulate them on their accomplishments!



INTERESTED IN BECOMING A COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE?

CONTACT TCC'S HEALTH AIDE PROGRAM AT (907) 452-8251 EXT. 3401 OR EMAIL LEDA CRUGER AT LEDA.CRUGER@TANANACHIEFS.ORG



POLICE K9 PURCHASED TO REDUCE DRUGS IN OUR *Communities*

In February, Tanana Chiefs Conference partnered with Kelly Fields' initiative Interior Villages Against Meth, who saw a need for drug dogs for Interior police agencies.

Since partnering with Kelly, we have assisted her project through working with the Alaska State Troopers on purchasing a Belgian Malinois dual purpose dog. In April, the Alaska State Troopers purchased Naja, a two

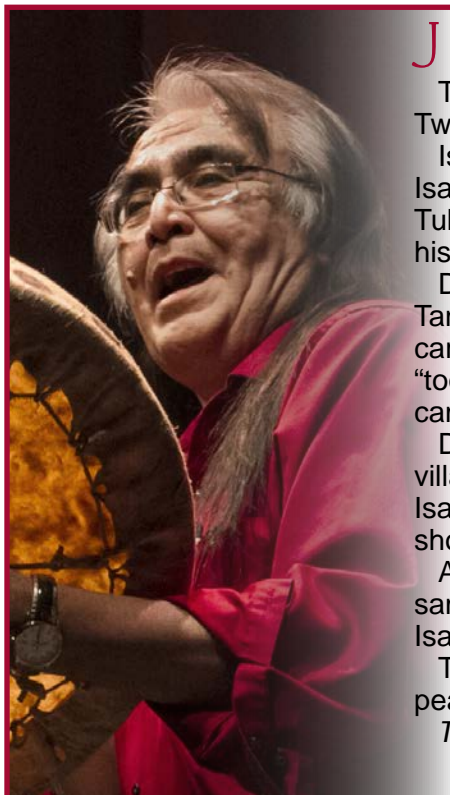
and a half year old K9, for Fairbanks based D Detachment drug unit trooper investigator. The K9 will be stationed at the Fairbanks post and will serve Interior Alaska. Naja and her trooper handler will be going through training together this spring and will begin working early summer. TCC will be working with AST and keeping our tribes informed on the K9 and its training.

With the generous donations of

our tribes, tribal members, and city governments in Interior Alaska, \$35,000 has been raised for this initiative. Thank you to those who made this possible.

We will continue to work with other police agencies to get more K9's into our region.

For updates and more information follow "Interior Villages Against Meth" group on Facebook.



JERRY ISAAC, TANACROSS

This month's Legacy elder is Jerry Isaac of Tanacross, who was featured in Volume Two of Legacy of our Elders series.

Isaac was born in Tanacross in 1953. His parents were Martha and Oscar Isaac. Isaac experienced trauma at a very young age when his mother had a severe case of Tuberculosis and was sent to a sanitarium in Anchorage causing her to be absent from his life.

During this time, Isaac lived with his grandparents, Joe and Selina Joseph in Tanacross. His grandmother was a staple in his life and helped him feel safe and taken care of through his years in the village of Tanacross. Isaac and his older sister, Arlene "took care of each other" and he came to emotionally rely on her. When Isaac's mother came home, he was fearful that he didn't really know her anymore.

Despite the trauma he suffered during his childhood and watching other people in the village abuse drugs and alcohol, he began to find himself falling into that same pattern. Isaac's children were a huge factor in his path to sobriety. Isaac lost his son to suicide shortly after. "Those are the pains that I have to live with," he says.

Arlene helped Isaac push himself to become a leader in the Native community. The same year that Arlene passed away in a tragic car accident was the same year that Isaac stepped into his role of becoming member of his local tribal council.

Through many hardships Isaac says one this is for sure: "At the end, [...] I am at peace."

To hear Jerry's full story, visit www.tananachiefs.org

TCC's Legacy of our Elders series documents the lives and stories of Athabascan elders throughout the TCC region. Their interviews are compiled into volumes that include a DVD movie as well as an accompanying book. The books and DVDs highlight the elders and the stories that they want to share. These videos are available on our website at www.tananachiefs.org
Funding for Legacy Project made possible by TCC & The National Park Service.

How has Harvesting *Changed* in the TCC Region?

By Orville Huntington, Brooke Wright, & Krista Heeringa
TCC Hunting & Fishing Task Force

Hunting and fishing practices are central to our traditional way of life and wellbeing. There are many factors that affect hunting, fishing, trapping, and gathering. Cost of fuel, climate change, regulations, fish and game abundance, and even things like having access to equipment for hunting and fishing have big impacts on sustaining our way of life. The TCC Department of Wildlife and Parks and Hunting, Fishing, Gathering Task Force, have partnered with UAF Community Partnership for Self-Reliance to document and better understand what factors are currently having the greatest impacts on TCC communities harvest activities.

Between March and June of 2017, 433 individuals from 33 communities from the TCC region responded to a survey on the Health of Traditional Harvest Practices. In this survey traditional harvest practices was defined as the the sharing of fish,

game, and other resources and the ceremonies, which accompany these practices that together provide for the social, cultural, spiritual, and economic wellbeing and survival of our people and communities. Healthy traditional harvest practices include all of the things in this definition in addition to access and abundance of fish, game, and other wild resources.

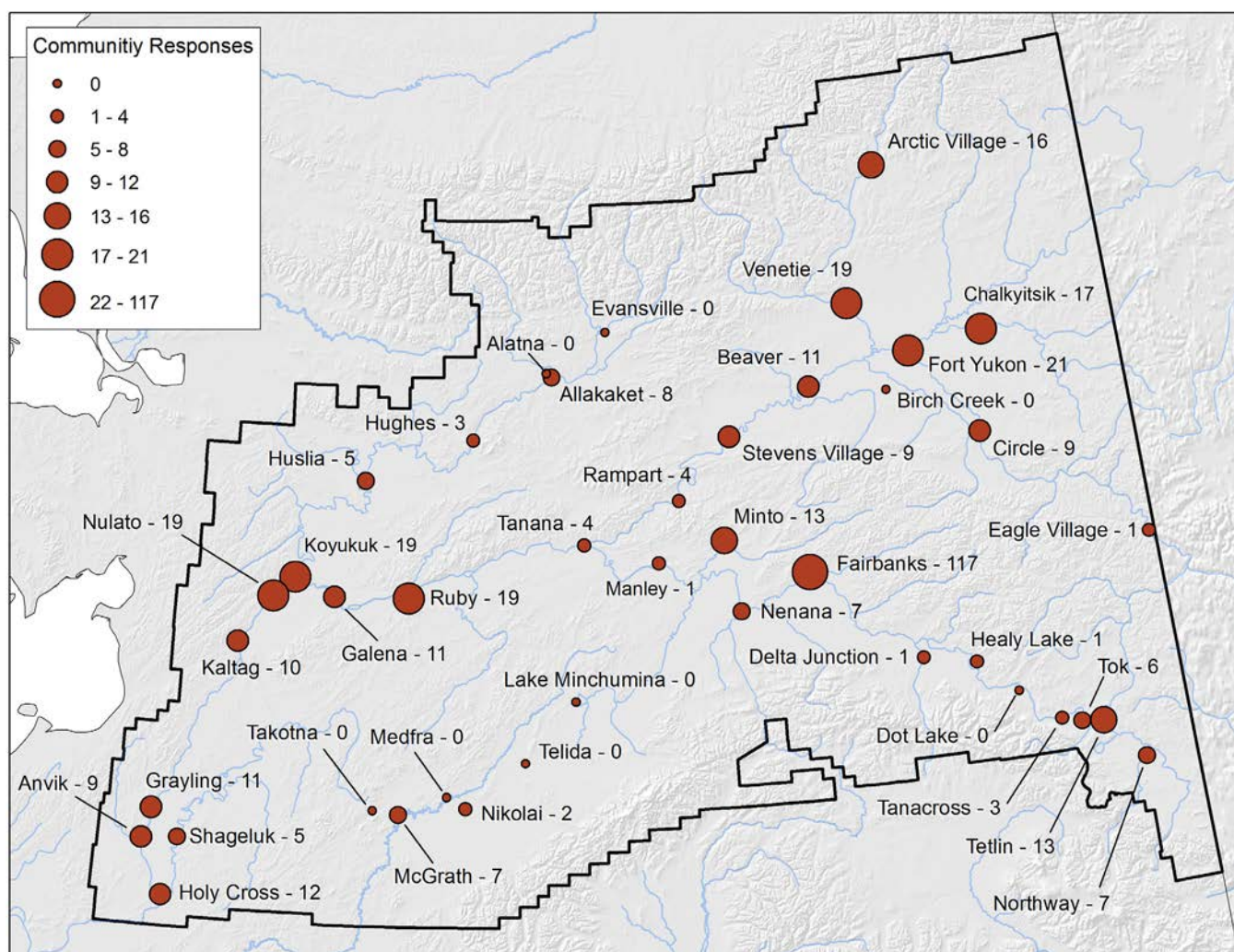
What stood out from this survey? 49% or people who filled out this survey felt that their household's traditional harvest practices had declined or significantly declined over the last ten years. Fuel (gasoline) costs (86%), commercial food costs (80%), changes in fish and game population size (77%) were ranked as having the most significant impact on harvest. This survey also asked how long fish and moose harvests lasted in a typical year and if households felt like they met their harvest needs. While it can be difficult to calculate the

economic value of harvest activities, this survey asked participants to estimate the number of hours they spent hunting, fishing, trapping, or gathering and if the time they spent hunting and fishing has changed over the past 10 years.

This information helps us better see and communicate the current issues impacting harvesting in the region and provides us with an information tool when developing strategies that support current and future access to hunting, fishing, and gathering.

To check out the full and poster summary of survey results, visit the Hunting, Fishing, Gathering Task Force webpage at <https://www.tananachiefs.org/sustainability/hunting-fishing-gathering-task-force/>

Feedback is welcome, please let us know what you think about the results and what they mean for current and future policy and program decisions.



FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT WWW.TANANACHIEFS.ORG

2018 Tanana Chiefs Conference **FULL BOARD RESOLUTIONS**

These resolutions were passed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors during our 2018 Annual Convention in March. To view all of our resolutions, visit our website at:
www.tananachiefs.org/resolutions/2018-full-board-resolutions/

- **No. 2018-01** Removal of “Alaska Nahasda Rider” From Future Appropriations Bill
- **No. 2018-02** Youth Centers In The TCC Region Villages
- **No. 2018-03** Feasibility Study For Lower Yukon Health Care
- **No. 2018-04** Request for Assistance in Purchasing Native Land Allotments for Sale
- **No. 2018-05** To Increase Client Appointments with Physicians at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC)
- **No. 2018-06** Oppose the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project / Road
- **No. 2018-07** Advocacy and Support for Permanent Reauthorization and Compact Funding for Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI)
- **No. 2018-08** Ensure ADF&G Advisory Committees Adequately Meet – Their Legal Requirements, Local Hunting and Fishing Needs; and ADF&G Tribal Consultation Policy
- **No. 2018-09** Protection of the Indian Child Welfare Act and Implementing Regulations
- **No. 2018-10** Alaskan Tribal Communities Deserve Public Safety, Justice and Adequate Services
- **No. 2018-11** Bringing Cell Phone Service to Tok-Alaska Border Highway Region
- **No. 2018-12** Establish a BIA General Assistance Program for the Native Community in Tok
- **No. 2018-13** TWDS / Fee Agent Position in Tok
- **No. 2018-14** Oncologist at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center
- **No. 2018-15** TCC Reinstate the JOM Program in Tok
- **No. 2018-16** Canyon Village Traditional Land Selections
- **No. 2018-17** Support for Updating Alaska Habitat Laws to Protect Salmon Spawning and Rearing Areas
- **No. 2018-18** Obtain Full Health Funding and Protect Medicaid Funding for the Alaska Tribal Health System
- **No. 2018-19** Protect Our Tribal Members from Sexual Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Substance Abuse
- **No. 2018-20** Request to Amend Article Seven of the TCC Bylaws
- **No. 2018-21** Tribal Stewardship Plans for Traditional Territories
- **No. 2018-22** Urging Support for Marvin Roberts, Eugene Vent, George Frese and Kevin Pease in Seeking Just Compensation for Their Wrongful Convictions
- **No. 2018-23** Provide a Cancer Awareness Support Event to Honor Our People Affected by Cancer
- **No. 2018-24** Support For Tribal Transportation Unity Caucus (TTUC) Discussion Draft Bill, “John P. Smith Tribal Road Safety And Transportation Infrastructure Act Of 2018”
- **No. 2018-25** Native People to be Aware of the Signs and Symptoms of Cancer
- **No. 2018-26** Equity for the Criminal Justice System and Alaska Natives
- **No. 2018-27** Family Treatment Center in Tanana
- **No. 2018-28** Conduct Feasibility Study to Increase Chena Bingo Profits
- **No. 2018-29** Protect Transboundary Watersheds
- **No. 2018-30** Reaffirm Commitment to the Protection of Indian Children and Native Hire
- **No. 2018-31** Lower Yukon Sobriety Camp
- **No. 2018-32** Prevent Outside Hunters from Trespassing and Intruding on Native Traditional Hunting Grounds
- **No. 2018-33** Participate in the Alaska Tribal Unity
- **No. 2018-34** Requesting Support of TCC to Assist in Planning and Implementing Mens Gatherings in the Interior Region (Yukon-Koyukuk Subregion) Villages
- **No. 2018-35** Lower Yukon Health Services

JOIN THE FORCE

Become a Village Public Safety Officer

Relocation Expenses Paid
Training Expenses Covered
Excellent Benefits
Free Housing (in certain locations)
Paid throughout training

Apply online at www.tananachiefs.org/careers



Make a CHANGE for life!

The Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center's Diabetes Prevention Program has an opportunity for those with prediabetes to gain control of their health and prevent the development of Type 2 Diabetes.

Abridged DPP

The Abridged Diabetes Prevention Program (or Abridged DPP) is a program that includes 4 weekly, 2-hour group session, following by frequent contact throughout the year.

What will I learn during the program?

Participants will learn how to lose weight, eat healthier, be more physically active, and manage stress, all of which will reduce the risk of Type 2 Diabetes

Who is eligible to join?

Eligibility requirements include;

- You must be 18 years or older
- Have a BMI of >25
- Have a diagnosis of prediabetes



Prediabetes is a serious condition affecting 1 out of 3 American adults - that's **86 million people.**

How do I find out more information?

You can contact the CAIHC Diabetes Program at 907-451-6682 ext.3768

Why Alaska needs more FOSTER HOMES



In January 2018, **2,916 children** were reported in Out-of-Home Placement and in custody of the State of Alaska, Office of Children's services. *More than 50% are Alaska Native or American Indian (not all are identified).*



This does NOT include the **157 children** that are placed in Out-of-Home placement through Tribal custody in the Tanana Chiefs Conference region.

2,916 + 157 = 3,073 children in out-of-home placement in Alaska

This means that it would take the population of each of these communities COMBINED to have enough homes for every child in Out-of-Home Placement.

Fort Yukon	Tanana	Eagle
Huslia	Ruby	Tanacross
Galena	McGrath	Minto
Nulato	Allakaket	Kaltag

We need more safe foster homes for children.

We need YOU.

For more information on the Foster Care Licensing Process contact
Niisha Walsh
Foster Care & Adoption Specialist
907-452-8251 ext.3367

May is National **STROKE AWARENESS** Month

May is National Stroke Awareness Month and all of us at Tanana Chiefs Conference want to provide you with some great educational materials that could **SAVE YOUR LIFE**. Understanding why strokes occur, what causes them, and how to prevent them are incredibly important. Stroke causes more than 133,000 deaths annually, an alarming number considering **80% of strokes are PREVENTABLE**, mainly by monitoring your blood pressure.

If you are worried about your blood pressure or want to know more about your risk of stroke, make an appointment with your provider.

STROKE RISKS

There are many stroke risk factors, however, many of them are ones that you can **control, treat and improve**. If you want to keep your stroke risks low, schedule regular checkups with your provider and seek treatment for any of the below conditions if you have them.

- **High Blood Pressure** - If you have high blood pressure (or hypertension), know your numbers and keep them low. High blood pressure is the leading cause of stroke and the most significant controllable risk factor for stroke.
- **Smoking** - If you smoke cigarettes, take steps to stop. Recent studies confirm that cigarette smoking is another crucial risk factor for stroke.
- **Diabetes** - If you have diabetes (Type 1 or 2), keep blood sugar controlled. Diabetes Mellitus is an independent risk factor for stroke. Many people with diabetes also have high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and are overweight. This increases their risk even more.
- **Diet** - If your diet is poor, eat foods that improve your heart and brain health. Diets high in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol can raise blood cholesterol levels. Diets high in sodium (salt) can increase blood pressure.
- **Physical Activity** - If you're physically inactive, starting moving and being more active. Physical inactivity can increase your risk of stroke, heart disease, becoming overweight, developing high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol and diabetes, heart disease and stroke.
- **High Blood Cholesterol** - If you have high blood cholesterol, get it under control. People with high blood cholesterol have an increased risk for stroke. Large amounts of cholesterol in the blood can build up and cause blood clots, leading to a stroke.

Other risk factors include; Carotid artery disease, peripheral artery disease, atrial fibrillation, other heart disease, and sickle cell disease.

WARNING SIGNS



F FACE DROOPING

Does one side of the face droop or is it numb? Ask the person to smile. Is the person's smile uneven or lopsided?



A ARM WEAKNESS

Is one arm weak or numb? Ask the person to raise both arms. Does one arm drift?



S SPEECH DIFFICULTY

Is speech slurred? Is the person unable to speak or hard to understand? Ask the person to repeat a simple sentence, like "The sky is blue." Is the person able to correctly repeat the words?



T TIME TO CALL 911

If someone shows any of these symptoms, even if the symptoms go away, call 9-1-1. Time is important! Don't delay, and also note the time when the first symptoms appeared.

Sometimes, other symptoms appear, separately, in combination or with F.A.S.T. signs, such as;

- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding speech.
- Sudden numbness or weakness of face, arm or leg. Especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination.
- Sudden severe headache with no known cause.

Improving the Patient Experience, Listening to our *Patients*

By Jacoline Bergstrom
TCC Executive Director Health Services

Recently, two patients shared the following comment after a visit with one of our doctors. The first patient wrote: "This doctor is amazing. With each and every visit she gives you her full attention, listens to what you say with no judgement and finds ways to assist you, taking on your medical issue." The second patient wrote: "she was so very caring, understanding and generally excited to help me meet my needs and goals! I felt heard and cared for. I was comfortable opening up and she was so easy to talk to. Her nurse was excellent as well & very encouraging."

This is what we would like all patients to experience, compassionate care at every step of the way.

We have received feedback from many patients regarding their experiences with Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center over the years. Looking at our patient satisfaction surveys, the overall satisfaction with services in 2017 ranged from 85 to 95% in various surveys, which shows that we have room for improvement.

In 2017 we have received a total of 156 grievances and complaints. The vast majority of these complaints were related to concerns about communication / miscommunication and /or lack of communication around referrals and challenges with coordination of care. In addition to the complaints, we received 655 compliments, thank you cards and kudo's from patients. Reviewing those, many patients comment on "that they felt heard, felt cared for. This is an indication of what is important to the people that we serve, to experience compassion and feel cared for, in other words, compassionate care. We are ac-

tively working on several trainings for all our staff that will strengthen their ability to provide compassionate care.

The need for compassionate care is also what we heard loud and clear from participants in a special focus group that was initiated by Chief Joseph in January. A group of cancer patients, cancer survivors and their immediate family shared with TCC and ANMC staff and leadership their experiences going through the diagnostic process, their treatment and coordination of care challenges and their experiences with other care settings. As a result of this focus group we have now hired a dedicated Cancer Case manager, Louise Thurmond (RN), who will support and assist cancer patients throughout their diagnostic and treatment journey.

Another concern that we have heard over and over from especially our elderly patients, is the challenges with navigating appointments and lodging in Anchorage. To better assist our patients while they are in Anchorage we are now in the process of hiring a TCC patient navigator at ANMC.

Patients have also expressed that they want to be better informed about their treatment options. Informed decision making is another aspect patients are asking for, to be part of the decision making process and be respected if they choose a treatment option that may not have been the provider's first choice.

We have also heard from patients that they "don't want to get anyone in trouble" and therefore they are not always saying anything if they are not happy with our services. This might be the reason that we

are not receiving a lot of feedback about patient experiences in the village clinics.

To better understand where we have opportunities to improve, and to give patients a voice who may not want to "complain" otherwise, we have started patient focus groups in the villages. The first focus group was recently held in Nulato. This first village based focus group was instrumental in helping us shape the right questions to ask, to start the conversation about what the ideal patient experience should look like. Kymberley Miller, TCC's Patient Experience manager is spearheading this effort. Kymberley and her team have scheduled visits to Allakaket, Hughes and Rampart and will hold additional focus groups during health fairs in other communities throughout 2018.

But, you don't have to wait for Kymberley to come visit your community if you have current concerns or suggestions for improvement. Kymberley can be reached by email Kymberley.miller@tananachiefs.org or at 907-452-6682 ext. 3143.

These are some of the improvements that we are putting in place as a result of feedback that we have received from our patients. We will continue to seek feedback from you through focus groups and surveys. Thank you for trusting us to be your health care provider, and thank you for taking the time to give us the feedback that helps us to continuously improve and provide you with the best care possible.

We will provide regular updates in the Council on our improvement efforts.

Now Accepting

NEW BIA HOUSING APPLICATIONS

Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Housing Improvement Program (HIP) is a Grant Program to help eligible American Indians/Alaska Natives in the TCC region renovate existing housing or build new homes!

HOW TO APPLY:

1. Pick up an application at your local Tribal Office
2. Provide a copy of your Tribal Enrollment Card
3. Provide proof of income for entire household
4. Proof of ownership of land or obtain a 25 year lease agreement
5. If you are claiming disability, provide a letter stating disability from clinic
6. Return all documents and applications to your local Tribal Office

DEADLINE TO APPLY IS DECEMBER 15, 2018

THE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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Letters to the Editor, other written contributions and photo submissions are welcome. However, space is limited and program-oriented news has priority. We reserve the right to edit or reject material. Letters and opinions are not necessarily the opinions of Tanana Chiefs Conference.



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

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WWW.TANANACHIEFS.ORG

Village Vacancies

- Behavioral Health Aide (Chalkyitsik, Rampart)
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner (Dot Lake, Circle, Chalkyitsik, Healy Lake, Alatna, Tetlin, Stevens Village, Rampart, Manley Hot Springs, Ruby)
- Elder Nutrition Cook (Allakaket)
- Family Visitor (Northway, Allakaket)
- Squad Boss (Tok)
- Tribal Family Youth Specialist (Healy Lake, McGrath)
- Tribal Workforce Development Specialist (McGrath)
- Village Public Safety Officer (McGrath, Fort Yukon, Venetie, Tanana, Circle, Ruby, Grayling, Nulato)
- Wild Land Firefighter Type II Crew Member (Tok)

Fairbanks Vacancies

- Addictions Behavioral Health Clinician
- ANMC-TCC Patient Navigator
- Behavioral Health Administrative Assistant
- Brownfield Technician
- Cancer Care RN Case Manager
- Certified Medical Assistant II
- Clinical Supervisor: Outpatient Services
- Community Planning Intern
- Coordinator/Instructor Mid-Level Practitioner
- Diagnostic Ultrasound Technologist
- Early Intervention Services Clinical Supervisor
- Health Services Deputy Director
- Human Resources Intern
- Legal Intern
- Nurse Practitioner - Urgent Care
- Patient Shuttle Driver
- Physician - Women's Health
- Physician Assistant - Primary Care
- Psychiatrist
- Senior Case Manager
- Staff Dentist
- Tribal Government Specialist I

Region- Wide Vacancies

- Tribal Transportation Intern
- Itinerant Clinician - SOC
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner - Itinerant

JOB LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF April 23, 2018

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

FIREFIGHTER REFRESHER TRAINING & PACK TEST
May 2-3 • Hughes, AK

FIREFIGHTER REFRESHER TRAINING & PACK TEST
May 4-5 • Allakaket, AK

ATHABASCAN DRUM MAKING WITH KENNETH FRANK
May 5-6 • Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitor Center

JUSTICE FOR MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS
WOMEN: AWARENESS WALK
May 9 • 12:00pm • Westmark Hotel • Fairbanks, AK

PROTECTING OUR FUTURE: SUICIDE PREVENTION WALK
May 14 • Arctic Village, AK

TCC CLOSED
May 28 • Memorial Day

SEEKING 2018 GRADUATES

We want to feature our 2018 graduates!

We need your:

Name

Tribal Affiliation

School of Graduation

You can also include:

Name of Parents

Name of Grandparents

Send your photo and information to
Communications_Dept@tananachiefs.org
by June 8th, 2018!

