

# the council

Vol. 43, No. 11

A REPORT TO THE MEMBER TRIBES OF TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

November 2018



## National Health Leadership tour

## TCC Region

In September, TCC hosted the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) leadership on a tour of our region where they saw firsthand the challenges and successes in delivering quality health and social services to our tribes and tribal members.

High-level officials such as Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan and acting IHS Principal Director Admiral Weahkee visited several of our rural communities

including; Allakaket, Alatna, Hughes, Koyukuk, Manley, Rampart, Tanana, Eagle, Tok, Nenana, and Old Minto. Tribal leaders and staff provided vital input during the visits as they explained the massive infrastructure needs including clinic replacements, water and sewer projects and the expansion of terrestrial broadband internet. A telemedicine and telepharmacy demonstration in Hughes and at Chief Andrew was an important highlight for

the trip. The DHHS leaders witnessed the interactions from both ends and Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan published an article on it "From a Physician Assistant in Fairbanks to a Vending Machine in Interior Alaska: Witnessing Tribal Health Solutions Firsthand".

Continued on page 3.



## Alaska's 2018 Elections

November 6 General Election

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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

Donald Honea Sr./Ruby  
*1st Traditional Chief*

Trimble Gilbert/Arctic Village  
*2nd Traditional Chief*

Victor Joseph/ Tanana  
*Chief/Chairman*

Julie Roberts-Hyslop/Tanana  
*Vice President*

Jerry Isaac/Tanacross  
*Secretary/Treasurer*

William "Chaaiy" Albert/Northway  
*Upper Tanana*

Nick Alexia Sr./Nikolai  
*Upper Kuskokwim*

Nancy James/Fort Yukon  
*Yukon Flats*

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,



I hope that everyone had a safe and happy Halloween! The holidays are upon us and I hope this letter finds you all doing well and enjoying time with your families.

Join us in celebrating 50 years with our Community Health Aides! In March 1968 Congress recognized Alaska's Community Health Aide Program. The program was developed in response to a number of health concerns in rural Alaska including tuberculosis, infant mortality, and unintentional injuries. A unique solution to ensuring access to care, the Alaska Tribal Health System and TCC recognizes the dedication of the past, present, and future Community Health Aides and Community Health Practitioners. To learn more about the history of the Community Health Aide program, see page 7.

TCC was honored to host the Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC). Tribal leaders from across our nation and agency leads from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) including Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan and IHS acting director, Admiral Weahkee attended the three day meeting. Deputy Secretary Hargan, DHHS agency leads, TCC Health Director Jacoline Bergstrom and I were able to visit Allakaket, Alatna, Hughes, Koyukuk, Manley, Rampart and Tanana. Tribal leaders and DHHS staff also visited Eagle, Tok, Nenana, and Old Minto. You can learn more about these meetings on page 1.

During the visit, Deputy Secretary Eric Hargan and SAMHSA, Assistant Secretary Dr. McCance Katz announced that TCC will be receiving two awards totaling \$5.7 Million in grants towards our wellness initiatives and opioid prevention.

Healthy Transitions Grant: TCC is receiving \$5 million over five years to provide severe mental health services among youth and young adults 16-25 years of age.

Tribal Opioid Response Grant: Over the next two years will be receiving just over \$700,000 to increase access to culturally appropriate and evidence-based treatment, including medication-assisted treatment for opioid disorders.

Last month, we finished our fall subregional meetings with the Lower Yukon in Holy Cross. Topics of discussion included transportation, BLM coastal land management plan, and intertribal courts. A special thank you to the hosting communities Minto, Venetie, Tetlin; Ruby, McGrath, and Holy Cross and those who planned and prepared for these successful meetings.

I would like to thank Governor Walker for all of the work he has done to improve the State and Tribal relationship as well as all he has done for the State of Alaska. Last month, he honorably stepped out of the race for re-election in hopes to put the needs of Alaskans first. I hope you all took this opportunity to vote.

Thanksgiving is right around the corner and I hope that you spend it surrounded by family and friends. It's important that we take this time to pause and reflect on all that we have to be thankful for and the blessings that have been granted to us.

As always, all of us here at TCC continue to work towards our vision of *Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes*.

Ana Bassee,  
**Victor Joseph**  
Chief/Chairman

# National Health Leadership tour TCC Region Continued...

While in Fairbanks they had the opportunity to tour FNA headquarters and headstart classes, and Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center, the Sobering Center, and our Community Health Aide training center.

TCC's Cultural Programs hosted a special showing of the Cultural Connection show, where Alaska Native youth performed and explained some of the traditional dances, jigs, and answered questions about their traditions, culture, and history.

A special potlatch took place at the Chief David Salmon Tribal Hall in Fairbanks to welcome the Secretary Tribal Advisory Committee tribal leaders, and the DHHS leadership and staff to the Interior. Native leadership,

TCC staff and other community members were joined at the hall by Governor Bill Walker, Lt. Gov Byron Mallott and DHHS Commissioner Valerie Davidson.

## HSS Provides Funding for Opioid Addiction Treatment

One of the highlights of the week was when Deputy Hargan announced that both Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Fairbanks Native Association were awarded grant funding through HHS's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to combat opioid addiction and improve access to treatment and support services for youth and young adults living with serious mental disorders.

"Our ultimate goal is to bring services to the people in our rural communities through a 3 tiered approach, focusing on prevention efforts, substance abuse treatment and medication assisted treatment," said TCC's Deputy Director of Health Services, Marilyn Andon, regarding how TCC plans to use these funds, "Although we don't have an exact estimate of the number of people with an opioid disorder in our region, several indicators suggest it is 2% and has been increasing over the past few years. This funding is coming at a good time, we can try to get ahead of this opioid crisis before it hits our area hard. In 2017, of 581 patients that were tested, 88 (15%) has a positive screen for an opioid."



## Governor Walker visits Galena

On October 6, TCC staff traveled with Governor Bill Walker, Commissioner of Health and Social Services, Valerie Davidson, and Director of Transportation & Public Facilities, Ryan Anderson, Tribal Chiefs and TCC staff to Galena. This was a chance for the Galena community and Tribal Chiefs from Huslia, Koyukuk, Nulato, Ruby and Galena to discuss education, lack of housing in villages, airport and road maintenance, and water and sewer concerns with the Governor.





# Get your *Jig On* at the Gwich'in Athabascan Fiddle Dance

In 2010, Athabascan fiddler Bill Stevens and Traditional Chief Trimble Gilbert approached Tanana Chiefs Conference Cultural Program Director Dixie Alexander with a request—document the traditional Gwich'in Athabascan square dances so people will remember them.

Just like the loss of traditional art forms and languages, the dances that used to fill the tribal halls in the villages were being forgotten. Instead of simply filming the dances for historical purposes, Alexander did something better. She created the Gwich'in Athabascan Fiddle Dance at the Morris Thompson Cultural and Visitors Center, where the old-time dances are the highlight of the night. The dances are held in Fairbanks in March during TCC's convention and again in mid-

November.

Fiddle music was first brought to Alaska by fur traders who set up a trading post on the Yukon River in the 1840s. The music with roots in Scotland and French Canada, and the accompanying jigs, reels, and square dances, caught on quickly with the Gwich'in tribes who were the first to hear this "new" music. It was adapted and integrated into traditional Indigenous celebrations, and passed on to the next generation at village celebrations that lasted long into the night and until the sun came up.

"The musicians played so long that there was a permanent indentation from the strings on their fingers," says Alexander, "and the dancers jigged until they wore holes in their moccasins!"

Now that the dances have been rekindled, Judify Henry from Venetie comes to every one. Arriving fully decked out in a moose hide vest and caribou skin boots, he buys extra admission tickets for friends so he'll have a partner for every dance. Elder Elise Pitka doesn't dance, but she comes to watch the jiggers. She arrives when the doors open to claim her seat and enjoy moose soup and frybread; she doesn't leave until well past midnight when the clean-up crew is done.

The jig contest draws dozens of contestants who take the floor two at a time to show off their fast jig and beautiful moccasins. The perennial favorites are the youngest dancers, who spin around the floor with their parents, grandparents, aunties and uncles, ensuring that the dances will be preserved through the next generation.

## Gwich'in Athabascan Fiddle Dance

November 14-17









6:30pm - 1:00am

Morris Thompson Cultural & Visitors Center

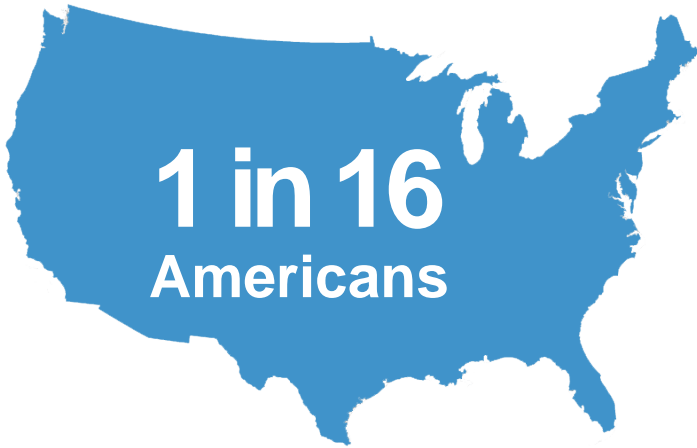
## CORRECTION IN OCTOBER COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

On page 9 of the October Council Newsletter, it should have read "Increased Education Funding" indicating the person supported or opposed an increase to the Base Student Allocation in FY19.

Please see the correct 2018 Legislative Scoreboard below.

SCOTT KAWASAKI	STEVE THOMPSON	ADAM WOOL	TAMMIE WILSON	DAVID TALERICO	PETE KELLY	CLICK BISHOP	GOVERNOR WALKER
							
DISTRICT 1 DEMOCRAT	DISTRICT 2 REBULICAN	DISTRICT 5 DEMOCRAT	DISTRICT 3 REBULICAN	DISTRICT 6 REBULICAN	DISTRICT A REBULICAN	DISTRICT C REBULICAN	INDEPENDENT
Increased Education Funding Supports	Increased Education Funding Opposes	Increased Education Funding Supports	Increased Education Funding Opposes	Increased Education Funding Supports	Increased Education Funding Opposes	Increased Education Funding Opposes	Increased Education Funding Opposes

# Learn the Facts About **LUNG CANCER**



**1 in 16** Americans will be diagnosed with lung cancer in their lifetime. More than 234,000 will be diagnosed this **year**.



Every **2.2 minutes** someone is diagnosed with lung cancer

## 60%-65%

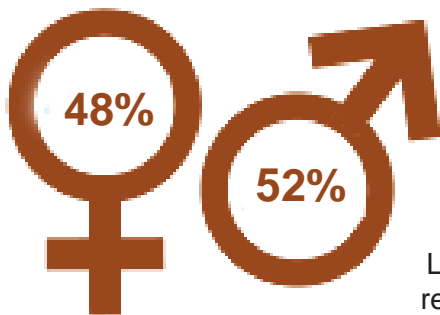
of all new lung cancer diagnoses are among people who have **never smoked or are former smokers**



**422** Americans will die of lung cancer today.

## 10%-15%

of lung cancer cases are in **never-smokers**



Lung cancer can affect **anyone** regardless of gender or ethnicity

Only **19%** of all people diagnosed with lung cancer will survive 5 years or more, but if it is caught before it spreads, the change for 5-year survival improves dramatically.

To find out more information or to get screened for lung cancer, schedule an appointment with your provider.

## Patient Navigation and Patient Services

*New Staff Announcements!*



### Meranda Clark, Patient Navigator

Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC), 1717 Cowles Street, Fairbanks, AK  
Meranda.clark@tananachiefs.org • (907) 451-6682, ext. 3484

*"My name is Meranda Clark, and I am from the Yupik village of Alakanuk, Alaska. I enjoy working for TCC because it's an excellent asset to our communities, and to our people. Patient Experience in particular serves as a great reminder that everything we do is for the patients, and ensuring the care received is improving their health, and also their lives."*

### Kristy Supsook, Patient Navigator

Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), 4141 Ambassador Drive, Anchorage, AK  
Kristy.supsook@tananachiefs.org • (907) 687-9193

*"I am originally from Fairbanks and the mother of three boys. I have worked for TCC-Health Services for over 8 years, previously working for the Behavior Health Department and then the Purchase Referred Care Department. I recently transferred to the Quality Management/Patient Experience Department as the new TCC-ANMC Patient Navigator, stationed permanently in Anchorage, Alaska. As the TCC-ANMC Patient Navigator, I will advocate and serve as a liaison between patients, family members, hospital and clinical staff to ensure both patient's and family's desires, expectations and needs are considered and met through Patient and Family Centered Care. I look forward to serving all of our communities and patients."*



**NO PHOTO  
AVAILABLE**

### Amanda Burgett, Lead Patient Transport Specialist

Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC), 1717 Cowles Street, Fairbanks, AK  
Amanda.burgett@tananachiefs.org • (907) 347-0765

*Amanda is a long standing employee, who is dedicated to high quality service in all that she does. Amanda has been with the Quality Management/Patient Experience Department for a few months and has already made an outstanding difference and our patients love her! We are glad to have her aboard!*

## Grayling Culture & Wellness Camp *Visit*

By Shelby Fisher-Salmon  
TCC Employment & Training Youth Program Assistant

On September 10th, we (TCC staff) and Emerging Leader, Thomas Roberts of Nikolai, arrived in Grayling to attend the 2018 Grayling Culture and Wellness Camp. The camp was located at '3 Mile Camp' which is a two hour boat ride from Grayling and three miles from the old village of Holikachuk.

For the next few days we participated in storytelling around a campfire, visiting and learning about the old village of Holikachuk, boat rides to go blueberry and cranberry picking, hiking, moose hunting down the Innoko River towards Shageluk, and making Indian ice cream.

Emerging Leader, Tristan Madros from the Yukon Kuskokwim Health of Kaltag, taught us how the Corporation.

people of the Yukon Koyukuk subregion make Indian ice cream using pike. In the Yukon Flats [where I am from], instead of pike we use moose fat. Learning how to use pike was a great learning experience for me.

On the fourth day, participants learned about the seriousness barrier crimes and gun safety from Chevy Roach, Tribal Police Officer in Shageluk, and importance of tobacco prevention



Thank you to the community of Grayling, Shannon Erhart (TCC Culture Camp Manager), and all those involved in planning this camp for making us feel welcomed and teaching us the history of Grayling and Holikachuk. I learned a great deal about the land, culture, practices, and beliefs. I am so thankful I was able to attend the Grayling Culture and Wellness Camp.



# 50 Years of Alaska's Community Health Aide Program!

By Crystal Stordahl  
TCC CHAP/CHC Director

In response to the tuberculosis epidemic and high infant mortality, the I.H.S. physicians of the day met with the I.H.S. Area Director to develop a community based solution to the health care needs in rural Alaska. In the 1960's they recognized there were never going to be enough physicians or nurses in Alaska to provide access to care. 1964-1968 the physicians worked with the volunteer community providers as a pilot project. In March of 1968 congress formally recognized community health aides/practitioners and provided congressional funding.

**Today there are over 500 community health aides/practitioners (CHA/P's) working in Alaska.** Selected by their local Tribal Council, the new hire will attend emergency skills certification training and attend basic session training at one of the 4 health aide training center [Tanana Chiefs Conference, Alaska Native Tribal Consortium, Norton Sound Health Corporation or Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation]. In 2016 TCC opened a certified health aide training center. At that time there

was a training crisis across state, some new hires waiting 2+ years for session I training. Through our training center we have reduced that wait time to months in some cases just weeks. This has significantly reduced the number of villages with no one or trainees only from 11 to just 2 clinics.

Health aide training occurs over 4 sessions each 3 or 4 weeks. After each session the health aide returns to their village clinic to provide services. Their training occurs in the order of weeks, not years as with other medical providers. It is with a standardized curriculum, community health aide manual and referral physician consultation that CHA/P's can provide a wide array of preventive services, primary, urgent and emergency medical response. The Community Health Aide model of training someone local worked so well it has expanded to behavioral health aide and dental health aides. The three disciplines together are commonly referred to as health aides and

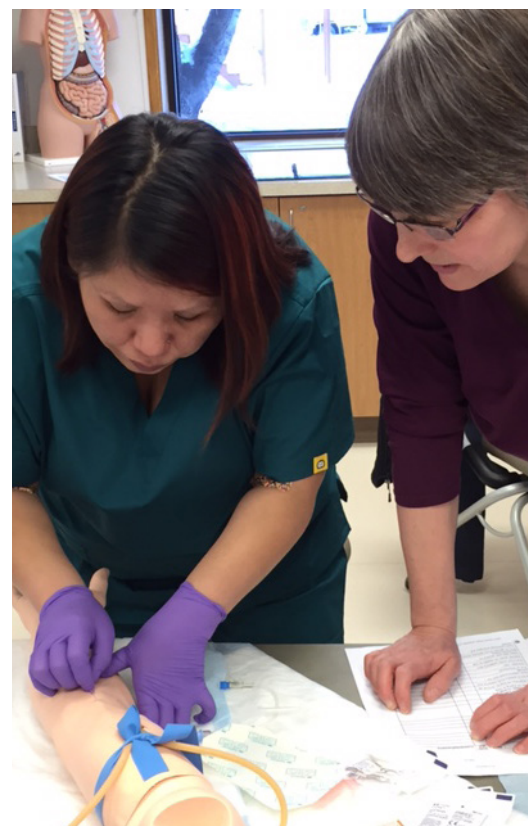
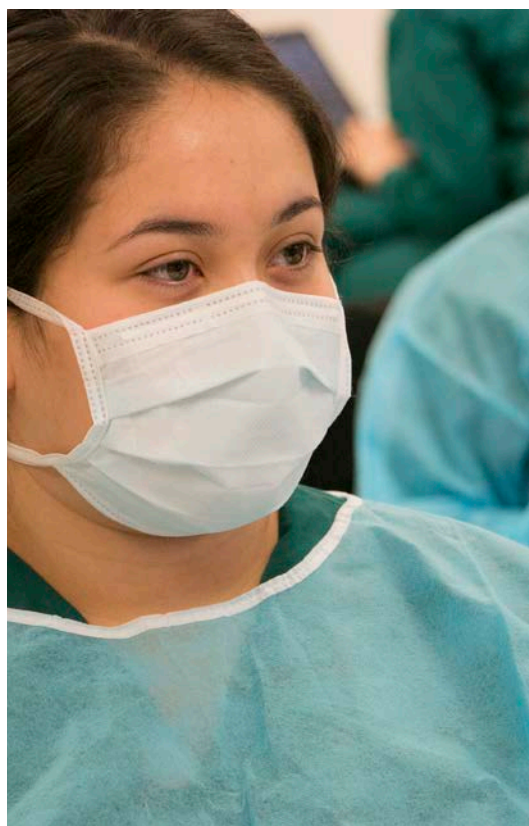
are certified under the federally authorized Community Health Aide Standards & Procedures Board.

Health aides are still today, the core of medical services in rural Alaska. 365 days a year, 24/7.

The expectations are high.

We ask them to remain on call in isolated areas, in most cases as the only provider, to ensure the clinic has all the supplies needed of patient care, to provide services even when sometimes they are ill themselves but are the only

provider, to ensure they completed the entire history and exam for every patient encounter and to get up in the middle of night after working all day and still provide quality care during an emergency. It is a unique job in a unique environment with challenges and incredible stories of great courage. We celebrate health aides and 50 years of a program that has provided an incredible solution to access to health care.







# NOGHEELENH

## Culture & Wellness Camp

Allakaket's Nogheelenh Culture and Wellness Camp was held July 19th-21st, 30-miles from Allakaket at Andy Simon Sr.'s Camp along the Koyukuk River.

There was over 100 participants ranging from 2 years old to Elders from the villages of Allakaket, Hughes, Fairbanks and Anchorage. Two teachers were in attendance as part of the Alaska Humanities Forum-Educator Cross-Cultural Immersion program; urban teachers apply to learn about culture around the state by attending culture camps. Both of the teachers were very involved in the camp, and their assistance was appreciated.

Attendees participated in wellness activities such as: bullying, suicide prevention, healthy families, making good choices and safety. TCC staff bring activities or create them on the fly, as the children enjoyed and obstacle course created by Health & Safety

Coordinator Marvin Roberts.

The camp's cultural focus was on native language provided by Elder Madeline Williams, as well as subsistence fishing. A fish net was put in and summer chums were being caught and each youth got a chance to go in the boat and set/check the net. Then they got back to camp and they got to participate in the setting up of fish racks and cutting of salmon. "Lessons" as the adults cleaned and dissecting salmon to look at their hearts, livers, brains, and stomachs. The youth enjoyed learning about these parts!

The camp started out rainy and cold, but ended with a nice sunny day and the men and boys went on a hike of GoGo Mountain, they were going to look for berries- sadly no luck. The rest of the campers stayed at camp and swam in the

river and played in the mud! The younger campers had a blast.

These camps help in giving our youth a strong foundation as they move forward in their lives and help to strengthen their self-identity.



Tribes throughout the region continue to host Culture and Wellness Camps funded through Tanana Chiefs Conference and the Administration for Native Americans. As we enter the final year of the grant- 12 more camps will be hosted; two in each subregion; with the

hope that locals will continue with camps. Through these camps, the participants spend time with their local Elders and learn about their families, culture, history, language, and learning to survive without electronics for a few days!

For more information on upcoming camps, visit our website at [www.tananachiefs.org/culture-and-wellness-camps](http://www.tananachiefs.org/culture-and-wellness-camps)







## 2018 TCC Culture & Wellness Camps:

### YUKON TANANA

- Allakaket - July 9th - 13th
- Nenana - Date TBD

### LOWER YUKON

- Grayling - Sept. 10th-14th
- Shageluk - TBD

### YUKON KOYUKUK

- Ruby - July 30th-August 3rd
- Huslia - August 6th-11th

### YUKON FLATS

- Chalkyitsik - July 9th-13th
- Venetie - May 30th - June 2nd

### UPPER KUSKOKWIM

- Nikolai - March 19th-23rd
- TBD

### UPPER TANANA

- Northway - July 18th-21st
- Tetlin - June 18th-23rd



# FINANCIAL MATTER\$

## ANSWERING YOUR QUESTIONS ON BILLING, TRAVEL, AND MORE

**Q: What happens behind the scenes between when I see my provider and when I receive a bill or an Explanation of Benefits (EOB)?**

**A:** Many things happen involving what is known as the Revenue Cycle. After you have provided your information at Registration and check in, you are taken to have your vital signs checked and then you see your provider. Your

provider enters information about your health condition and treatment into our electronic health record, Athena. You don't need to worry about your information in the system though, as TCC has very strict policies about privacy of patient information. In many cases, sharing personal health information is also against the law.

After the visit the provider will enter "codes" into the system. These codes

are related to your visit and treatment, and have a monetary value. After the codes have been reviewed by Coders and Billers, the information is sent to your insurance company for review. Insurance can be Medicaid, Medicare or private insurance like Blue Cross. Once the review is complete, the insurance company pays TCC for your visit and the care you received.

### What is Financial Matters?

Financial Matters is a new, monthly column from TCC Health Services Finance (HSF) to answer your questions regarding anything from billing issues to concerns about travel and registration.

The HSF Division includes Registration, Alternate Resources, Coding, Billing, Health Information, Purchased/ Referred Care, and Patient Travel.

Questions and/or suggestions for the column can be sent to TCC Communications Division and will be routed to the Health Services Finance (HSF) Director for consideration.

Communications Division

[Communications\\_dept@tananachiefs.org](mailto:Communications_dept@tananachiefs.org)

### NANCY JAMES, FORT YUKON

This month's Legacy elder is Nancy James of Fort Yukon, who was featured in Volume Two of Legacy of our Elders series.

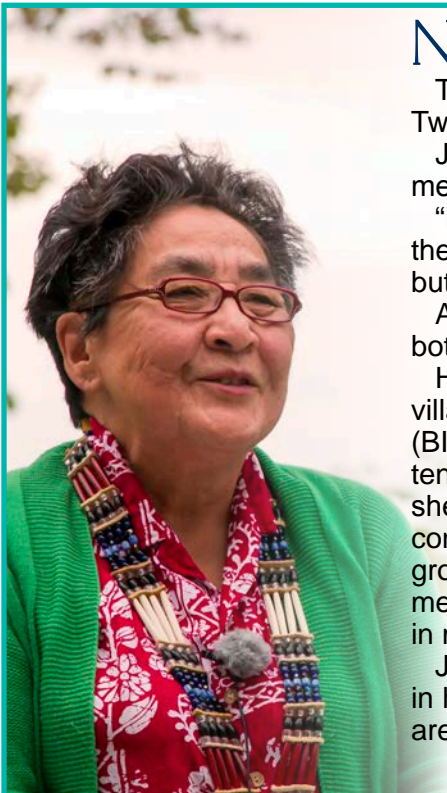
James was raised in the small village of 16-mile. She was one of twelve family members, three of whom remain living as of 2016.

"I come from a strong traditional family" James says. Her Uncle David Salmon was the inspiration for many other elders in her generation, helping them not only physically but spiritually.

According to James, her father taught all of her siblings the importance of sharing, both with their family and their tribe and community.

Her family grew up hunting and fishing off of the land and eventually moved to the village of Fort Yukon. It was then that many missionary and Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) schools began popping up. The Fort Yukon community became divided as racial tensions rose with many prejudices her tribe had to endure. "There [were] two schools," she says. "One was for the Natives and the other for the non-Natives." Her choice to continue to speak in her Native language, and one that she was proud to speak and grow up learning, was supported by her family, in particular her father. "My dad taught me," she says, "he told me that I need to learn English but I needed to continue to speak in my language because, he told me, you will never be a white person."

James has been a strong advocate for Gwich'in people. According to James, the spirit in her has always been strong and steady. "I'm Gwich'in, I'm a fighter. That is what we are."



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](http://www.tananachiefs.org)

Funding for Legacy Project made possible by TCC & The National Park Service.



# November is National **DIABETES AWARENESS** Month

National Diabetes Awareness Month is an annual observance held in November to highlight the importance of early detections and symptoms. All of us here at Tanana Chiefs Conference want to provide you with some great educational materials that could **SAVE YOUR LIFE**. One in ten Americans have diabetes - that's more than 30 million people. Diabetes is one of the leading causes of disability and death in the United States. It can cause blindness, nerve damage, kidney disease, and other health problems if it's not controlled.

To find out more information or find out if you are at risk for having diabetes, schedule an appointment with your provider.

## SYMPTOMS

The following symptoms of diabetes are typical. However, some people with type 2 diabetes have symptoms so mild that they go unnoticed.

- Urinating often
- Feeling very thirsty
- Feeling very hungry - even though you are eating
- Extreme fatigue
- Blurry vision
- Cuts/bruises that are slow to heal
- Weight loss - even though you are eating more (type 1)
- Tingling, pain, or numbness in the hands/feet (type 2)

**Early detection** and treatment of diabetes can decrease the risk of developing the complications of diabetes.

Women with gestational diabetes often have no symptoms, which is why it's important for at-risk women to be tested at the proper time during pregnancy.

## COMMON MYTHS

**Myth:** If you are overweight, you will eventually develop type 2 diabetes.

**Fact:** Being overweight is a risk factor for developing this disease, but other risk factors such as family history, ethnicity, and age also play a role. Most overweight people never develop type 2 diabetes, and many people with type 2 diabetes are at a normal weight or only moderately overweight.

**Myth:** Eating too much sugar causes diabetes.

**Fact:** Type 1 diabetes is caused by genetics and unknown factors that trigger the onset of the disease; type 2 diabetes is caused by genetics and lifestyle factors. The American Diabetes Association recommends that people should avoid intake of sugar-sweetened beverages to help prevent diabetes. Sugar-sweetened beverages include: regular soda, fruit punch, fruit drinks, energy drinks, sports drinks, sweet tea, etc.

**Myth:** Diabetes is not that serious of a disease.

**Fact:** Diabetes causes more deaths a year than breast cancer and AIDS combined. Having diabetes nearly doubles your chance of having a heart attack. The good news is that good diabetes control can reduce your risks for diabetes complications.

**Myth:** Fruit is a healthy food. Therefore, it is ok to eat as much of it as you wish.

**Fact:** Fruit is a healthy food. It contains fiber and lots of vitamins and minerals. Because fruits contain carbohydrates, they do raise blood glucose (also called blood sugar) and need to be included in your meal plan. Talk to your dietitian about the amount, frequency and types of fruits you should eat.

Contact our **Diabetes Program** at (907) 452-8251 or visit

[www.tananachiefsf.org/health/medical/diabetes](http://www.tananachiefsf.org/health/medical/diabetes) to learn more about patient education, village visits, school visits, classes such as Express Class, Comprehensive Class, or individual education, and more!



# Meet the Staff of the Upper



The staff at Upper Tanana Behavioral Health has worked hard to improve all services available to the Upper Tanana communities. Part of this has included professional development to increase competency and efficiency. There are two clinicians located at UTBH, Shana Mickenham and Kaytlin Crawford, a substance abuse counselor Lorelei Nelson, intake coordinator Candice Jacobs, Wellness Project Prevention Coordinator Juanita Wilson, and office manager Kimberly Jimerson. In August 2014, upon the closure of Tok Area Counseling Center (TACC), TCC hired the staff of TACC, which included Victoria Kildal, Kaytlin Crawford, Lorelei Nelson, and Candice Jacobs. Victoria Kildal had been the clinical supervisor of UTBH and was promoted in early 2018 to the position of Behavioral Health Clinical Director and relocated to CPJTB.

## Candice Jacobs

**Candice Jacobs** originally began at TACC in fall 2012. When hired by TCC she was promoted to her position Behavioral Health Consultant, while also filling the role as of office manager while working towards earning her certification in Chemical Dependency Technician (CT). Once she earned her CT she continued working towards earning her Chemical Dependency Counselor I (CDC-I) which she earned in March 2018. She has worked as a Behavioral Health Consultant while continuing to work towards certification as a Behavioral Health Counselor (BHC). In fall 2017 she was promoted to Behavioral Health Intake Coordinator assisting new clients with entering treatment. Candice has filled many roles and countless needs with her wide range of knowledge, and consideration for each individual and circumstance.

## Kimberly Jimerson

**Kimberly Jimerson** joined the team in May 2015 as a receptionist and was promoted to office manager in May 2018. Kimberly has been such a beneficial addition to the team proactively identifying any area of need both for staff and clients and working tirelessly to meet those needs. She provides support, not only to staff in the UTBH office, but also supporting the regions Behavioral Health Aides. The office increasingly runs more efficiently because of Kim's hard work.

## Juanita Wilson

**Juanita Wilson** transferred from her position as a Health Administrative Assistant at Upper Tanana Health Center to her new position as the Wellness Project Prevention Coordinator at UTBH in March 2018. We are very glad to have her join our team and look forward to being able to provide more services to the Upper Tanana region.



# Tanana Behavioral Health Clinic

Lorelei Nelson

**Lorelei Nelson** began for TACC in 2013 as a temporary Youth Services Worker and resumed work at TACC as a Receptionist in fall 2013. In February 2014 she began working towards earning her certification in Chemical Dependency Technician (CT) as a substance abuse counselor. She earned her CT in January 2015 and continued working towards earning her Chemical Dependency Counselor I (CDC-I) which she earned in June 2017 and her Behavioral Health Counselor I (BHC-I) which she earned in August 2017. Lorelei has completed all the requirements and will receive her CDC-II and BHC-II within the month. Lorelei passed her National Certified Addiction Counselor Exam (NCAC) exam for her CDC-S (Chemical Dependency Counselor Supervisor Certification) and is working towards earning this certification over the next year. Lorelei was one of the first substance abuse counselors when the Intensive Outpatient Substance Abuse program was developed by Victoria Kildal in spring 2016. Lorelei has continually worked very hard to assist substance abuse clients with sobriety, regardless of location through VTC substance abuse treatment groups.

Shana Mickenham

**Shana Mickenham** joined the team originally as an intern in fall 2016 working towards her Master of Science in Clinical Counseling which she earned in March 2017. She brought with her years of experience as a Chemical Dependency Counselor with a CDC-S (Chemical Dependency Counselor Supervisor Certification) and had also been a Behavioral Health Aide in the past. Upon graduating she was hired as a outpatient rural behavioral health clinician. Shana has brought a fresh approach and extensive skill set working with all clientele, but especially well with comorbid clientele who are experiencing both substance use disorders and mental health issues. Shana additionally shares the responsibility of crisis intervention within the Upper Tanana region and has been an invaluable asset to the team. Shana has begun traveling to the villages of Healy Lake, Northway, and Tetlin and will be supporting the Behavioral Health Aides within those villages.

Kaytlin Crawford



**Kaytlin Crawford** originally began as a Behavioral Health Clinician at TACC in January 2013. In January 2018 Kaytlin earned her CDC-I and in September 2018 earned her LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker). In fall 2015 Kaytlin began working towards certifications as a Registered Play Therapist and Certified Animal Assisted Play Therapist. The requirements of these have been met and are anticipated to be obtained within the next few months. She began providing Filial Therapy to families in spring 2016 and is finishing requirements for becoming a Certified Filial Therapist. In fall 2016 Kaytlin became a certified AutPlay therapist, expanding specialized play therapy services to children with developmental disabilities. Kaytlin has provided a wide range of services to all clientele and these specialties in play therapy have expanded the services available to the Upper Tanana region. Kaytlin shares the responsibility of crisis intervention and having interned in a psychiatric hospital in 2011-2012 has a passion for assisting individuals with severe mental illnesses. Kaytlin has begun traveling to the villages of Eagle, Dot Lake and Tanacross and will also be supporting the Behavioral Health Aides within those villages.



## Tribe's Statement: Brackeen v. Zinke Decision

On October 5, 2018, the Federal District Court for Northern Texas ruled that the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is unconstitutional in the case Brackeen et al. v. Zinke et al. The lawsuit was brought by three states: Texas, Louisiana, and Indiana, as well as three families seeking to adopt Indian children. The defendants are the U.S. Government and various federal agencies. The Cherokee Nation, Oneida Nation, Quinalt Indian Nation, and Morengo Band of Mission Indians have intervened as legal parties.

Other groups, from both sides, filed amicus briefs with the district court to ensure it made a fully informed decision. TCC, along with other American Indian and Alaska Native groups and tribes, signed on to a brief in support of ICWA. The federal government and various tribal advocates argued forcefully to defend the unique obligations the federal governments have to tribes as sovereign entities, the importance of children to tribes' continued survival, and the historic backdrop against which ICWA was passed. These arguments fell on deaf ears.

**The district court's decision would invalidate all of ICWA. The court arrived at its decision in several ways:**

1. The district court ruled that "Indian Child" is a "racial" classification, not a "political" classification like tribal citizenship, because "Indian Child" is defined to include children who are merely eligible for membership in the tribe. It states

that heritage is a stand-in for race.

2. It determine ICWA causes "Indian children" to be treated differently from other children based on their race, which means that ICWA is unconstitutional.

3. The court rules that allowing tribes to re-order ICWA's placement preferences violates the constitution because it allows tribes to substitute their judgement for what would otherwise be binding federal law.

4. The court rules that ICWA violates the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution because it forces states to carry out federal laws in an area traditionally governed by state law – child custody and welfare.

5. It rules that the ICWA Regulations issued by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) are invalid because they are based on an unconstitutional law, and because the BIA originally stated it did not have authority to issue anything but guidelines.

Beyond the holdings on ICWA, the court makes commentary that could have broad, disastrous effects on federal Indian law, if the ideas were made into law:

1. That anything other than "membership" in a tribe is a "racial" classification that would be closely analyzed and would likely be found unconstitutional; laws and regulations based on lineage, rather than political "membership" could be struck down.

2. That the federal government is not permitted to legislate Indian affairs in areas that are traditionally matters of state law.

3. That tribal sovereignty may be limited to ability to make law in "Indian Country", which largely does not exist in Alaska.

This case is likely to be reviewed by higher federal courts. First, it will be heard by a federal circuit court. From there, either side could appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, which can choose whether or not a case should be reviewed. The confirmation of Justice Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court makes an appeal to the court more dangerous for tribes. Prior to becoming a federal judge, Justice Kavanaugh had suggested that Native Hawaiians were a racial, rather than political group, and may be open to this interpretation of the law.

Absent a clear ruling from the U.S. Supreme Court, other state and federal courts may look to this ruling as a guide on whether to continue to apply ICWA in cases arising in their jurisdictions, but they are not required to follow the ruling. Each holding made by the district court can be independently accepted or rejected by other federal or state courts.

The only way that the holdings in this case will be binding in Alaska is if the U.S. Supreme Court hears this case and rules that some or all parts of ICWA are invalid, or if the Alaska Supreme Court, on consideration of the decision, also adopts these findings. It is something to be vigilant of, though, as some lower courts could be persuaded by the Brackeen court's rulings.

## 2018 Subregional Meetings

TCC Chief Victor Joseph and other TCC leadership have been busy attending subregional meetings throughout the region. These meetings are important, as they provide TCC the opportunity to hear about the needs and concerns of our tribes, and figure out ways we can assist.

The meetings include important discussion on transportation, housing, health services, employment and training, and other topics important to our communities.

Subregionals held so far include the Upper Kuskokwim in McGrath, Upper Tanana in Tetlin, Yukon Flats in Venetie, Yukon Tanana in Minto, and Yukon Koyukuk in Ruby.

The Lower Yukon in Holy Cross completed the Subregional meetings for 2018.







# MEN'S GATHERING

By Marvin Roberts  
TCC Health & Safety Coordinator

For two days in August the community of Koyukuk hosted the first ever Men's Gathering. The goal was for men to meet and discuss the challenges facing our communities today. There was an open invitation to men of all ages. Jason Johnson and Marvin Roberts, employees of TCC's Wellness and Prevention Div., went in support of the event.

Day one began with most of the men cutting up and distributing fresh meat to the community. The night before, with approval, hunters went out and "got lucky" with a large animal. The hall was full of teamwork and purpose as the men worked together. The stoves were fired up as fry meat was on the menu.

After lunch, Jason and Marvin conducted a QPR training. QPR (Question- Persuade-Refer) is a basic course that helps prevent suicide and self-harm. The importance of this issue led to a heavy, emotional discussion that lasted until the end of the day. Many

shared their personal experiences and all agreed that more QPR training is needed in the region.

In the evening there was a community potluck at the Hall. It should be noted that the women were instrumental in making the "Men's Gathering" possible. In addition to the planning aspect of it, a number of women cooked and prepared for the Gathering and Potlucks.

At the first Potluck men and women alike spoke on the significance and potential of the Gathering. Stories were shared and jokes told. Good food, great company, and laughter all around.

The last day turned out to be just as busy as the first. The men realized there were numerous

issues to talk about and tried to address them accordingly. Some of the topics covered were substance abuse prevention, employment/education opportunities, and wildlife preservation. It was another great day of discussions that lasted into the evening.

After the meeting adjourned it was time for the closing potluck. Everyone was tired but there was a feeling of accomplishment in the Hall. A few people took the opportunity to share how they felt about the last few days. Some talked about the importance of Gatherings to build up our Culture. Others gave thanks to those who contributed. It was also announced that any future events would include the women as participants. The men, earlier that day, recognized the need to have a woman's voice at the table.

The goal is to have a Men and Women's Gathering together. Possibly meeting separate for the first day and then joining as one group for the final day. There is no date or community set for next year's conference but it is in the works.

Thank-you to the City and Traditional Council of Koyukuk for hosting this monumental event. And special thanks to the people who played a part in its success. It was a great time for networking, sharing ideas, and coming together to strengthen our people.





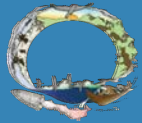
# THE COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

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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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## JOIN THE TCC FAMILY

### Village Vacancies

- Behavioral Health Aide (Chalkyitsik, Rampart)
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner (Alatna, Rampart, Tetlin, Chalkyitsik, Kaltag, Ruby, Dot Lake, Stevens Village, Healy Lake, Circle)
- Community Health Aide/Practitioner – Itinerant (Circle)
- Community Health Representative (Galena)
- Community Outreach Specialist (Circle)
- Family Visitor (Grayling, Huslia, Kaltag, McGrath)
- Physician Assistant-Upper Tanana Health Center (Tok)
- Village Public Safety Officer (Ruby, Venetie, Nulato, McGrath, Circle, Grayling, Fort Yukon, Tanana)

### Fairbanks Vacancies

- Addictions Counselor I
- Behavioral Health Assessment Clinician
- Behavioral Health Clinician
- Behavioral Health Consultant
- Billing Technician II
- Certified Behavioral Health Coder II
- Certified Medical Assistant II
- Certified Nurse Midwife
- Coding Manager
- Coordinator/Instructor Mid-Level Practitioner
- Employee Health RN
- Health Applications Manager
- Itinerant Behavioral Health Clinician
- Nurse Practitioner - Float
- Old Minto Family Recovery Camp Traditional Counselor
- Paul Williams House Residential Care Coordinator
- Pharmacist
- Physician - Women's Health
- Regional Instructor
- Remote Maintenance Worker
- RN
- Sobering Center Technician
- Tribal Development Program Coordinator
- WIC Coordinator and Clinical Dietician

### Region- Wide Vacancies

- Rural Medical Director
- Itinerant Clinician - SOC

JOB LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF October 23rd, 2018

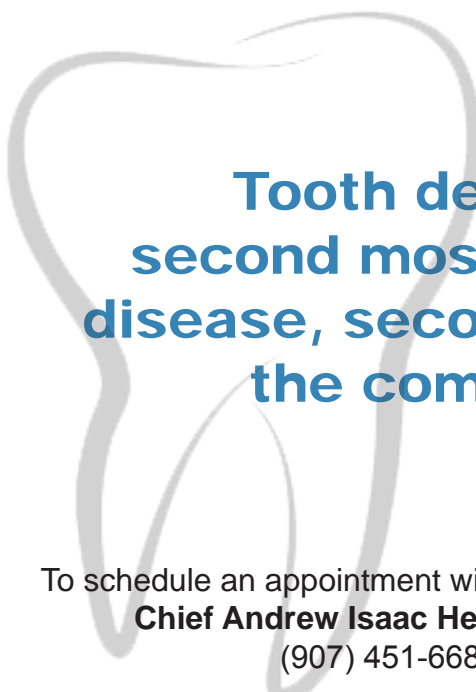
## UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

TCC Closed  
November 22nd-23rd, 2018

BIA Providers Conference  
November 26th-29th, 2018 • Anchorage, AK

3rd Annual Alaska Tribal Unity Gathering  
November 27th, 2018 • Anchorage, AK

TCC Closed  
December 24th-25th, 2018



Tooth decay is the  
second most common  
disease, second only to  
the common cold.

To schedule an appointment with Dental, contact:  
**Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center**  
(907) 451-6682