

Bringing Healthcare Closer To Home



Alaska Native elders in rural Alaska are often times required to travel long distances to receive essential healthcare services. Many are required to travel from their village to Fairbanks and to Anchorage to receive basic and specialty health services.

However, in July, much of this will change when Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) opens its doors to the newly expanded portion of the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center (CAIHC)

in Fairbanks. The expansion of the clinic will provide the opportunity for TCC to expand existing health service lines as well as add new services that are essential to the overall health and wellbeing of tribal members both in Fairbanks and in the villages we serve.

“One of our goals with the expansion was to bring healthcare closer to home for our patients,” says Chief/Chairman Brian Ridley, “This includes our rural patients who have the inconvenience

of traveling long distances to access care outside of Fairbanks.”

Many of the new services lines, which include an Ambulatory Surgery Center, Ophthalmology, Audiology and Hematology/Oncology, will reduce the need for patients to travel outside of Fairbanks to access those healthcare services and will improve their overall healthcare experience by receiving more of their care in one facility.

“We have heard numerous times about the challenges our patients face when traveling long distances for an appointment— specifically elders,” said Jacoline Bergstrom, Executive Director of Health Services, “Travel can be very taxing on our elderly population and many of our new service lines will lessen the need to travel long distances for healthcare.”

While the construction of the expansion project began in 2020, the planning for it started several years ago.

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June 21st, 2022 – Day of Prayer

In 2013, TCC Full Board Resolution No.2013-18, which directs TCC to set aside June 21st, 2022 at Noon as a time of prayer for the waterways, animals and people who use God's creation.

We ask that all communities and individuals throughout the region take moment on this date and time to unite our voice as one and to ask God for guidance.



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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.

Vision

Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes



TCC Executive Board Members

Trimble Gilbert/Arctic Village
1st Traditional Chief

2nd Traditional Chief

Brian Ridley/Eagle
Chief/Chairman

Sharon Hildebrand/Nulato
Vice President

Charlie Wright/Rampart
Secretary/Treasurer

Herbie Demit/Tanacross
Upper Tanana

Claude 'Joe' Petruska/Nikolai
Upper Kuskokwim

Nancy James/Fort Yukon
Yukon Flats

Eugene Paul/Holy Cross
Lower Yukon

Lori Baker/Minto
Yukon Tanana

Norman 'Carl' Burgett/ Huslia
Yukon Koyukuk

Peter Demoski/Nulato
Elder Advisor

Alex Hanna/Minto
Youth Advisor

Chief's Report

Dear Tribes and Tribal Members,

Last month, Tanana Chiefs Conference had the honor of hosting a meeting with U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. This was an amazing opportunity for our Tribal leaders to share the priorities of the Tribes with Secretary Haaland – specifically the decline of the Yukon River Salmon which has had a huge impact on communities throughout the region. You can learn more about our visit with Secretary Haaland on page 3 of this newsletter.

It wasn't long after our meeting with Secretary Haaland that we had the opportunity to meet with Department of the Interior Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Bryan Newland and his staff. This was another great opportunity for our tribes and tribal leaders to highlight their priorities and concerns which included increased energy costs, veteran native allotments, tribal courts, foster care and more. I am thankful for the Assistant Secretary and his staff for taking the time to truly listen to our Tribal leaders.

At the end of April, the Fairbanks Native Association hosted the annual Gathering of Remembrance - an event dedicated to the remembrance of the victims of unsolved homicides in the Fairbanks area. This year we were thankful to be able to remove one name from the list of unsolved homicide victims – Sophie Sergie. Sophie's case was solved nearly three decades after it occurred. This is why it is important that we continue to bring awareness to these cases so that one day – they too will find closure. I hope that each year we gather, the list of names get shorter and the families will gain closure.

Due to the heavy snowfall we experienced this winter, we knew that the risk of flooding occurring in one of our rural communities was higher than normal. Unfortunately, several communities within our region were impacted by flooding waters with several communities receiving a disaster declaration from Governor Dunleavy. As always, TCC acted as the first emergency response for many of these events by providing food, supplies, fuel and even offering evacuation for those medically fragile. Moving forward, we will continue to work with these communities to ensure that their needs are met as they recover from the impacts and rebuild their community.

Finally, I want to remind and encourage everyone to VOTE. We have several important elections in the coming months including the Special Primary Election on June 11th and the General Election on August 16th. Last month, I submitted my ballot for the Special Primary Election. It was so easy and only took me a few minutes – so if you haven't mailed in your ballot – please do so. Keep an eye out for more information on these elections in the coming weeks.

Mahsi' Choo,
Brian Ridley
Chief/Chairman



Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Day

On May 5th, Tanana Chiefs Conference joined the nation in recognizing Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day by wearing the color red. This day is an opportunity to remember the Indigenous people who we have lost to murder and those who remain missing.

TCC would like to remind everyone that there are still several missing indigenous persons here in the Interior. Help us show support for their family, friends and loved ones.



National Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Awareness Day
May 5th, 2022

TCC Leadership Meet With Secretary Haaland

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) leadership had the opportunity to host a meeting with Secretary Deb Haaland. Chief/Chairman Brian Ridley met with Secretary Haaland along with Vice-President Sharon Hildebrand, Secretary/Treasurer Charlie Wright, Chief Rhonda Pitka of Beaver, Chief Karma Ulvi of Eagle, Chief Nancy James of Gwichyaa Zhee (Fort Yukon) and Julie Roberts-Hyslop of Tanana.



The Chiefs focused on the Yukon River salmon crisis and offered solutions for Tribes and the government to work together for the salmon and their people. Federal subsistence management was another priority for the Chiefs and upholding the trust responsibility to provide for traditional ways of life.

Chief/Chairman Brian Ridley speaking with Secretary Deb Haaland.

Chief Ulvi relayed a vision of growing up along the Yukon River when the fish were plentiful and her people were well. She concluded her story by telling Secretary Haaland, “We haven’t been able to experience that for years.”

“TCC is honored that Secretary Haaland took the time to meet and listen to the concerns of our Tribal leaders,” says Chief/Chairman Brian Ridley, “Our tribes have high hopes for the remainder of the Secretary’s time in this position and look forward to continued relationships with Department of the Interior.”



What are Opioids?

By The Division of Wellness & Prevention

Opioids are controlled substances that act on opioid receptors in the brain for acute pain relief.

Medically they are primarily used for acute pain care, such as after surgery, dentistry, emergency medicine, and trauma. The medications often used to treat pain are morphine, codeine, methadone, oxycodone, hydrocodone, fentanyl, hydromorphone, and buprenorphine. They are often referred to as painkillers, or they can be illegal drugs such as heroin and illicit potent opioids such as fentanyl laced pills. Opioids are often used as medicine because they contain chemicals that attach to receptors in our body to help relieve pain and tension. Opioids can

also cause the user a sense of euphoria when the receptors in the brain become overwhelmed- which can lead to misuse or addiction. This can also lead to what is called brain sedation, which can lead to an overdose.

With the risk of addiction so high it is important to review any current medications with your doctor when discussing if an opioid prescription is right for you. If you have a personal or family history of substance abuse, you may be at an increased risk of becoming dependent on opioids. Be sure to ask your health care provider about any alternative treatments to find the best option for managing your pain.



Gathering Of Remembrance

On April 28th, Alaska Native leaders, law enforcement officers, clergy and community members gathered together on the Centennial bridge over the Chena River in Downtown Fairbanks for the Annual Gathering of Remembrance.

This year, Sophie Sergie's name was crossed off the list. Every year, the Gathering of Remembrance honors the murdered and missing in Interior of Alaska.



TCC Applauds Passage of VPSO Bill By House of Representatives

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is pleased to hear of the passage of Senate Bill 81 (HB303), which was approved by the House of Representatives on May 5th. The Bill has already been passed by the Senate, but due to minor changes it will require a conference committee. The Bill codifies the recommendations of the joint bipartisan legislative Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) Working Group and makes critical changes to the decades old program to improve public safety for all of Alaska.

Throughout the years, TCC's Full Board of Directors has passed multiple resolutions requesting improvements to public safety for their communities. As a result, TCC has focused extensive resources to find ways to increase access to public safety throughout the region, including the operation of the VPSO program.

"Public Safety has been and continues to be a priority for our tribal communities," says Chief/Chairman Brian Ridley, TCC, "Tribes deserve the same level of protection as any other community in our state. Our hope is that this bill will be a positive step toward strengthening the presence of public safety in rural Alaska. The fact that this bill was passed on National Missing and Murdered Indigenous

Persons Day is a significant reminder of the importance of this legislation."

Prior to the legislative working group's formation, and starting in 2016, TCC recognized the need for a VPSO Contractor Caucus where all the VPSO grantees worked together to agree on proposed solutions to the VPSO grant contract and standard operating procedures. These meetings highlighted the need for the program to be reformed to provide flexibility, so the program can be reflective of needs at a local level to ensure the safety of our community members.

The legislative Working Group worked in partnership with stakeholders, including TCC Chiefs and tribal leaders to truly reform the program to the needs of rural Alaska.

"TCC is grateful for the time the VPSO Working Group spent with our tribal leaders and the effort extended to engage with our communities," says Chief Ridley, "This accomplishment is truly a tribute to the good work that can be achieved when Tribal consultation is a part of reform. We are thankful to Senator Olson and Representative Zulkosky for carrying this important legislation and look forward to seeing it on the Governor's desk soon."

Community Health Aide *Spotlight*

Nikkitta Smoke - Health Aid Instructor

By Linden Staciokas

Do you feel that your job is boring, repetitive or does not really make the best use of your talents? If so, you might want to consider becoming a health aide. According to Nikkitta Smoke, who has worked in various capacities in the TCC health aide program for over 12 years, there is seldom a dull moment in her job. "When I am out in the villages, I am an emergency responder, a pharmacy resource, a travel agent...whatever help someone needs to cope with a health issue, I figure it out and find a way to respond."

Born in Fairbanks but raised in her mother's home of Arctic Village, Nikkitta had always intended to enter the health field. However, her plans to become a nurse were put aside when she became a young mother and realized that going off to nursing school required a commitment of time and finances that were not compatible with caring for a baby. It was her mother-in-law Rosemary Wiehl, who had been a health aide for over 20 years, who convinced Nikkitta that becoming a health aide would be a way to achieve her dream of being a medical provider.

Nikkitta began her health aide career in Stevens Village, leaving periodically to attend the intense training modules. Two years later, the family moved to Fairbanks, where she became an itinerant health aide, going out to any village that needed someone to fill in for the regular health aide on leave or to help a community while they were in the process of hiring a new health aide. After that, the family moved again when she assumed the permanent position as the Rampart health aide. Finally, in 2016, it was back to Fairbanks, where she is now an instructor for the health aide program and also fills in as a health aide when classes are not in session.

This combination of teaching as well as continuing to do direct patient care, allows Nikkitta to retain her own health aide certification and also insures that she never forgets the daily challenges that village health aides face. The field

continues to change, and it is only by periodically doing the hands-on work of a village health aide that Nikkitta is reminded of the improvements, as well as the increased challenges health aides live with every single day.

One of the advances over the 12 years since she started working in this field, is the way electronics have streamlined and improved record keeping. When Nikkitta first started, health aides had to hand write all the information they gathered on a patient. Not only was this time consuming but sometimes it was hard to read the handwriting of a previous health aide. Other times a health aide in a hurry might not have the time to look up the correct spelling of medications or some illnesses, which could lead to later confusion. Finally, passing on records to providers who would be working with the patient when they were sent to Fairbanks or Anchorage, was time consuming. Now all it takes to insure a smooth transfer of information is a click of a button, saving time and reducing any possible errors.

Another area where electronics has significantly improved the lives of health aides is that the Community Health Aide manuals, once bulky and time consuming to thumb through, are now available online. This makes it easier to quickly find information and it is all up to date; when the manuals consisted of paper and binders, updates had to be mailed out and health aides had to remove outdated information and put in the new pages.

Asked what aspects of the job have become more challenging, Nikkitta said, "Just like other communities across the country, especially during the last few years of Covid, the alcohol and drug abuse rates have skyrocketed." She noted the particular pain of watching children she knew as toddlers, full of promise and joy, turn into teens who are struggling with addiction. The impact is not confined to the individuals under the grip of drugs or alcohol---it ripples out into the entire

village. Communities dwindle when the upcoming generations are having their talents and energy stolen before they reach adulthood.

Yet, despite those issues, Nikkitta loves her job. "I enjoy helping health aides through their trainings, helping them build their confidence and being there as a backup when they actually start doing the job. At the same time, I find myself eager to go out to the villages as a health aide. People are so thankful for your efforts. There are times patients and their families become frustrated when I cannot help them as quickly as they like, or the solution is going to take a lot more effort on my part as well as theirs. It can be hard to communicate that for some things, there is no magic pill to fix it. In the end, the patients have to do the work but health aides are there to help them."

Asked what she does in her free time, Nikkitta laughed. "I have four children, 14, 12, five, and four months, so there isn't much extra time. I bead and sew. When I go out to a village, I take my beading supplies with me because I can work on them in the evening. But in town, the oldest two are into basketball, so there is all the transporting to practices and games. I am happy to be involved with their basketball, though, because when the oldest boy and girl were young, I missed a lot. In the early years, my training and travel for my job meant long weeks of time away from them."

Nikkitta hopes that she is as good a mentor to her students as the ones she has had. "I want to mention Stephanie Christian. She was my clinical instructor and then became a regional instructor, so over the years she has supervised various aspects of my work. Without her guidance and support I would not have made it this long. But most of all, I want to give credit to my immediate and extended family, who provided not only emotional support but practical assistance like caring for my children when I had to leave town. I could not have done it without them."

Bringing Healthcare Closer To Home

The Beginning

In 2012, the newly built Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center opened its doors to the public. At the time, the sprawling 95,000 square foot clinic was large in comparison to the small portion of the Fairbanks Memorial Hospital where the clinic was previously housed.

The building was a huge accomplishment for Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and provided a space that patients could call their own.

The clinic was designed to meet the projected needs of TCC's patient population until the year 2020— but in 2017, TCC realized that they had hit that target earlier than anticipated.

"It was around that time that we really started planning for our next expansion," explained Bergstrom, "We wanted to make sure that we could provide our existing services to everyone who needs it as well as look at opportunities for expanded services."

TCC not only evaluated existing services, but studied anticipated population growth to determine what additional services were needed.

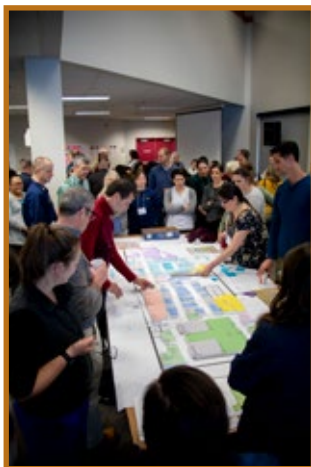
"Our population of elders is going to continue to grow— which means that there will be an increased need for elder services," says Bergstrom, "As people grow older, the need for certain services increases. This gave us a good idea of what services are needed in the future and how much space we would need."

The Design

"Early on in the planning stages we

worked with staff from various clinical areas on what their ideal workspace would look like," says Bergstrom, "Staff were able to look at scale models and make adjustments that would make the most sense for their workflows."

Not only did clinic staff participate, but members of TCC's Health Advisory Board were also present and provided a unique patient perspective for the layout of the new facility.



Clinical staff help map out the design of the clinic in February 2020.

"The Health Board was able to gain a better understanding of what happens behind the scenes at the clinic and gave input from the point of view of the patient," explained Bergstrom, "So it was helpful to capture both sides of how things could be designed to improve services."

Outside developing the layout of the clinic, TCC also developed a Cultural Advisory Committee which included elders from throughout the TCC region.

This committee worked closely with architects and designers to ensure that the clinic had design elements that represented Alaska Native culture to truly reflect the patients being served.

One of the unique new features of the expansion that the Cultural Committee advocated for was a meditation room. The committee wanted an area that served as a private space where patients could go if they needed

time to reflect, pray and find quiet time.

In addition to this, there will also be a cultural gallery that will showcase various Alaska Native artwork from artists throughout Alaska.

What to Expect

The expansion will add a 3-story 108,000 square foot addition to the existing health center. The third floor will be left unfinished to provide for future expansion of services.

Specialty Services, Laboratory, Radiology, and Urgent Care currently housed at the existing facility will be moved into the new expansion with more space to increase capacity.

"The expanded Radiology space will now include a CT scan," says Bergstrom, "Which means patients will be able to have a CT scan done right here at our clinic."

The laboratory expansion will allow space for two large analyzers that will allow for additional lab tests to be processed in-house.

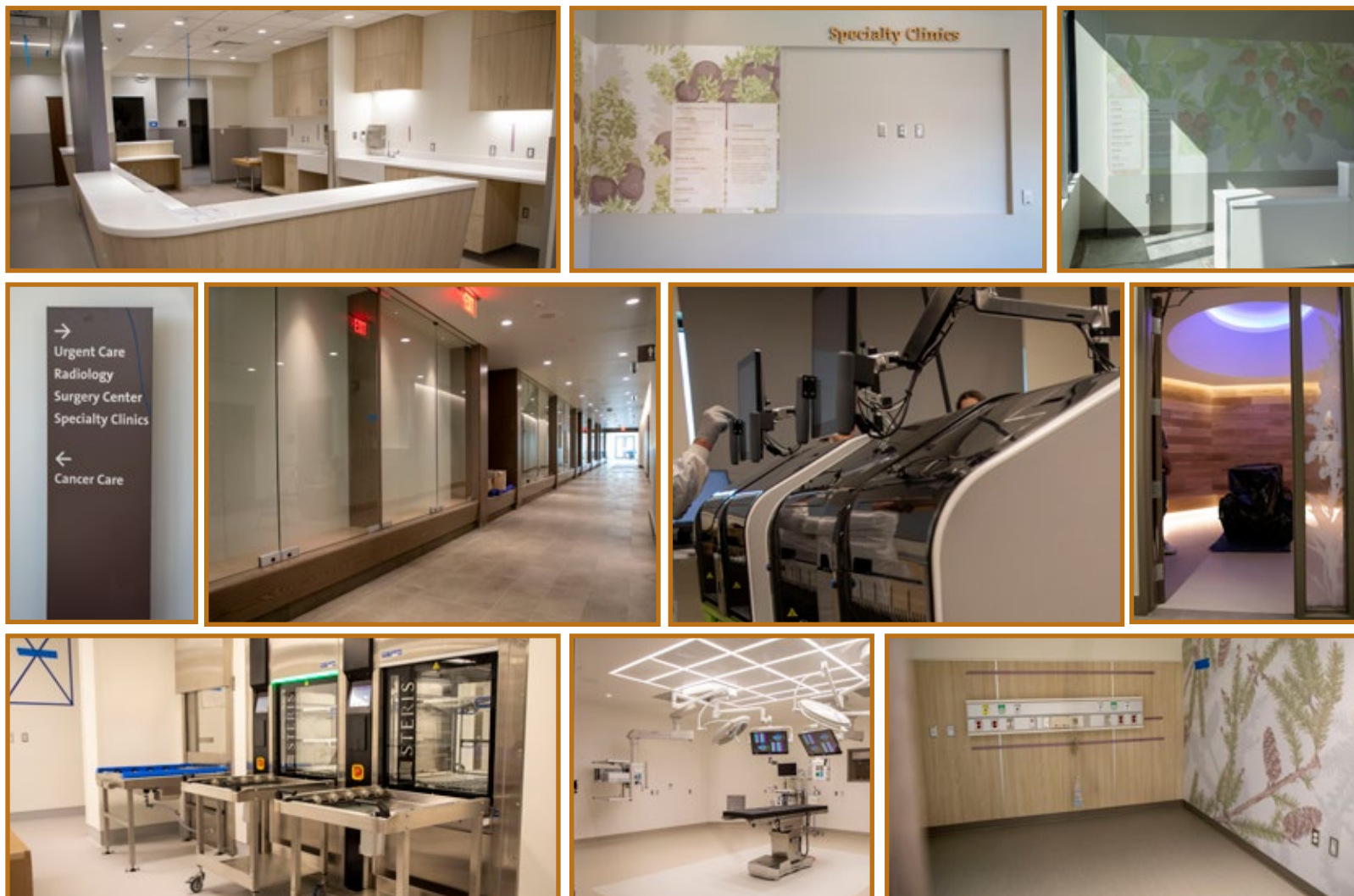
Probably one of the most exciting new features of the expansion will be a Cancer Care C and Infusion Center.

"That was something that was a wish from many of our people," Bergstrom explains, "There will always be a need for patients to travel out of Fairbanks for specific cancers that require a certain level of specialty care, but we will still be able to provide increased care for the more common cancer types."



Deputy Health Director Marilyn Andon and Cultural Committee member Dixie Alexander review design samples

L-R: Nurse station • Lobby area of the Specialty Clinics • Cancer Care lobby area • Directory sign in the main hallway • Cultural gallery walkway • Expanded Laboratory • One of two meditation rooms • Surgical equipment sanitation area • Operating room • Surgery recovery room



Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center will still be working closely with Alaska Native Medical Center for cancer care and infusions, says Bergstrom. The close collaboration with the Oncologists in Anchorage will help to reduce the number of times a patient would need to travel to Anchorage for care.

New services at the clinic include:

- **Ambulatory Surgery Center.** This will provide the opportunity for patients to have surgeries and procedures performed safely in Fairbanks – rather than going to Anchorage or being referred outside of the Tribal Health System.
- **Ophthalmology.** This will provide diagnosis and treatment of different eye diseases in-house, and the ability to perform surgery when needed.
- **Audiology.** This will allow CAIHC to expand the audiology services that we currently provide through a

partnership with the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC). We will have more capacity in-house with advanced equipment for diagnostic testing and hearing aid prescriptions.

- **Hematology/Oncology.** This will provide CAIHC with the ability to offer some of the specialized cancer treatments and other type of infusions.

TCC will continue to partner with ANMC and other providers and coordinate services when patients are referred out for specialized services that we are not able to provide.

Looking to the Future

It wasn't long ago that TCC had finalized construction on the existing Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center and now TCC will be opening an even more robust facility – designed to meet the needs of our patient population well into the future.

“Reflecting back, you can see the healthcare journey that we are on as far as expansion of services and adapting those services to the needs of our growing and changing population. It's somewhat reflected in our expansion today– it's another step in the journey of healthcare delivery for now and the future,” says Bergstrom.

TCC will continue to evolve and grow to meet the increasing needs of our growing patient population.

“I am so proud of how far we've come in the past several years as we increase our healthcare capacity,” says Chief Ridley, “The overall health and wellbeing of our patients is one of our highest priorities and the expansion is just one more step towards our vision of Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes.”

The clinic expansion is set to open in July 2022. TCC will be providing more information to patients as the opening date draws near.

June Head Start News

We would like to give a huge shout out to our staff and students! Our kiddos have made great gains from fall to winter in all developmental domains. We cannot wait to see what the spring checkpoints will bring us! As you can see, as a staff we discuss our children's needs and use data to guide us where we need to strengthen our lesson planning. It has paid off in the data and more important in the Minds of our Magnificent Children!

TCC Head Start has teamed up with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library!

Every month enrolled children from the ages of birth to 5 will get a free age appropriate book! Reading together is a wonderful way to build a lifelong love for reading with children and promote family time. If you do not have a local Head Start educator, please call Tanya. She's happy to assist.

Please contact Tanya Yatlin at 907-452-8251 or 800-478-6822 ext. 3469 for ways to sign up.

Head Start is doing another summer program, this program is running May 30th-July 15th.

Staff will have weekly gardening, STEAM activities, as well as opportunities for parents to lead activities.

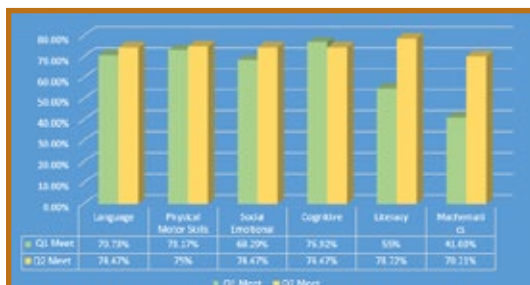
The program is looking for parents to assist the local educators in community gardens, recycled materials, cultural activities, and so much more.

Head Start has open enrollment for children birth-4 year olds.

Please contact Tanya Yatlin at 907-452-8251 or 800-478-6822 ext. 3469 for more information.

Head Start has positions open in the following villages:

Allakaket, Grayling, Huslia, Minto, Nenana, Northway and Nulato. The positions available are Lead Preschool Teacher, Preschool Assistant Teacher, Infant/Toddler Teacher, Family Visitor and Substitute Teacher/Assistant Teacher. We also have an ERSEA position open in Fairbanks. Please visit our website at www.tananachiefs.org/careers to see what's open in your area or call Kristi Walmsley at 907-452-8251 or 800-478-6822, ext. 3015.



Tanacross class "painting" with egg shells



McGrath Kids eating lettuce they grew with their Aerogarden

Q3:

S&E: 93.75 meeting

Physical: 95.83% Meet

Lang: 85.42% Meet

Cognitive: 87.23% Meet

Lit: 84% Meet

Math: 75.61% Meet

Bolting— The Challenge with Growing Spinach in the Land of the Midnight Sun

By Heidi Rader, Tribes Extension Educator for Tanana Chiefs Conference

I love fresh spinach so that's why, even though much of the spinach I plant bolts (in other words, goes to seed), I always try again next year. One of the true pleasures of spinach is how quickly it grows. It is one of the first things I plant in the spring, as soon as the ground is workable, and the first thing I eat.



In my experience, bolting is THE challenge with growing spinach in Interior Alaska. Warm temperatures and long day lengths are mostly to blame, but big temperature swings and cold

temperatures can also play a role in bolting as well. This article (<https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/bolting-in-spring-vegetables>) does a good job of explaining how cold temperatures trigger bolting (flowering) in spinach and other crops.

Spinach is usually direct seeded. It's possible that transplanting spinach could help mitigate bolting, but trials are needed to assess this. Direct-seeded spinach should be thinned to four to six inches, or whatever spacing is specified on the seed packet. In my garden, I

often do not get around to thinning my spinach, which might increase bolting rates, although Glenna Gannon, the director of the vegetable variety trials at the Fairbanks Experiment Farm (http://afesresearch.uaf.edu/publications/?&s=*&pt=*&cat=27), says that proper spacing did not reduce bolting rates in trials. Consistent watering also can help prevent bolting in spinach. Spinach leaves can be snipped with scissors and allowed to regrow for successive harvests until it bolts, making it inedible.

Johnny's Selected Seeds has a nice comparison list of spinach varieties,

comparing how fast they grow and how fast they bolt. Of those compared, Fairbanks growers will of course want to choose the slow bolting varieties. The ones listed as slow bolting are Corvair, Lizard, Seaside and Red Tabby. Not included in this comparison chart is Escalade. When Ada Snyder, a commercial grower sales representative for High Mowing Seeds, trialed spinach, she found that Escalade held (did not bolt) about two weeks longer than other varieties. She thought Kiowa, Lakeside, Seaside, Space and Lizard will be the most conducive to growing conditions in Interior Alaska.

Unfortunately, the faster maturing varieties are more susceptible to bolting, but all spinach varieties are susceptible to bolting in our long days. In 1967, J.E. Parlevliet found that the rate of flower formation/rate of bolting in response to photoperiod disappeared at photoperiods of 20 hours and began to level off for some varieties closer to 16 hours. The rate of bolting still differed between varieties, but not in relation to the photoperiod. Fairbanks has a photoperiod/day length of 16 hours April 22 to Aug. 19 and a photoperiod of 20 hours May 27 to July 15.

In other words, for most of the Fairbanks summer, the critical day length is so long that whether or not you plant the spinach early or late, it doesn't really matter. On the other hand, if you have a high tunnel or row covers and can plant before mid-April or after

Aug. 19, this could make a difference in the likelihood of the spinach bolting. Warmer temperatures in mid-summer could make the spinach more susceptible to bolting, but temperature swings can also make it more susceptible to bolt. Although spinach is tough in that it is cold hardy, it's also a bit of a goldilocks vegetable where it likes the weather not too hot and not too cold and the day lengths not too long.

Gannon explained that while more data from additional growing seasons will better inform recommended varieties for the Interior, early results from two years of spinach bolting trials suggest that Escalade, Space, Renegade and possibly Palco and Lizard hold best across both summer and fall plantings. Seaside and Oceanside are delicious varieties, but do not appear to hold as well in the field. Red Tabby and Kiowa, both considered varieties that are slow to bolt, have not been trialed yet.

Corvair, Space, Melody, and Tyee are recommended by Extension for Interior Alaska by Extension (http://cespubs.uaf.edu/index.php/download_file/1157/), but according to Gannon, Melody and Tyee seeds are difficult to find and likely the varieties have been improved. Terry Reichardt

(<https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/2020/04/08/one-familys-extraordinary-commitment-to-grow-gather-hunt-and-fish-for-their-food-and-to-help-others-do-the-same/>), Fairbanks gardener extraordinaire, prefers Kookaburra spinach. It is a semi-savoyed spinach which means it's also a little less ten-

der than spinach proper and might be best cooked than raw. New Zealand spinach, which is not actually in the spinach family, is prolific and doesn't tend to bolt. When cooked, it is a good spinach substitute, but when eaten fresh, it is tougher than many spinach varieties.

Best bet? At this point, I would suggest Escalade or Space for fresh spinach as top picks. Palco, Red Tabby, Kiowa, Corvair, Lakeside, Seaside, and Lizard may also be good ones to try. Hopefully future trials will identify varieties and production methods best suited to the Midnight Sun. If you plan to cook your spinach, try semi-savoyed Kookaburra or skip spinach all together and try New Zealand spinach, kale, or Swiss chard. Make sure your spinach is well watered, spaced appropriately, and try growing it under a row cover or low tunnel.

Questions about gardening or the Tribes Extension Program? Visit www.uaf.edu/ces/TCC Contact Heidi at hbrader@alaska.edu or 474-6620. For more articles like this, go to: <https://itgrowsinalaska.community.uaf.edu/>



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FEMA Burial Assistance

FEMA is offering financial assistance for individuals who have incurred funeral expenses on or after January 20, 2020 from COVID-19. The website with full information is:

<https://www.fema.gov/disaster/coronavirus/economic/funeral-assistance>

To Apply

Call 844-684-6333 from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. ET, Monday through Friday. The application is by phone (no online option), and will take 20 minutes to apply. After you have applied by phone, FEMA will send you a letter with the documents needed for submission, and how to submit them.

Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses may include, but are not limited to: funeral ser-

vices, cremation, interment, casket or urn, burial plot or cremation niche, marker or headstone, arrangement of the funeral ceremony, use of funeral home, and more. Reimbursement of expenses already paid is not eligible. View the FAQs for more information.

Amount

Individuals may receive a maximum of \$9000 per deceased individual.

If you have questions, you may call FEMA at the COVID-19 Funeral Assistance Helpline: 844-684-6333.



RIVER AND LAKE ICE PHOTOS NEEDED!

Ways to contribute photos:

WEB

Submit photos by
uploading online at
fresheyesonice.org

APP

Download the
[GLOBE Observer App](#)
to your phone and
take photos using the
"Landcover" tool

FACEBOOK

Post photo with
location & date at
[www.facebook.com/
groups/FreshEyesOnIce/](https://www.facebook.com/groups/FreshEyesOnIce/)

THE TIMING AND PROCESS OF RIVER AND LAKE FREEZE-UP AND BREAK-UP IS CHANGING IN ALASKA. THE CHANGES ARE POORLY UNDERSTOOD, MAKING IT HARD TO PLAN FOR OUR WINTER ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY. YOUR PHOTOS OF RIVER AND LAKE ICE! PLEASE CONTRIBUTE PHOTOS OF A RIVER OR LAKE NEAR YOU. REPEATED PHOTOS OF THE SAME LOCATION ARE ESPECIALLY NEEDED.



UAF phone: Chris Arp, 907-474-2783 / TCC phone: Bob Sattler 452-8251 x3343
Monica Gosselin: monica.gosselin@tananachiefs.org

Birch Creek Village Gets Visit from TCC Leadership

Last month, TCC leadership had the opportunity to listen to Birch Creek's Tribal Council on priorities to improve the village which included: education for their youth, upgrading the village's electricity/power plant, improving phone systems/communication, building and maintaining a washeteria, expanding their healthcare, infrastructure projects, building a garage/storage, and several other key topics. First Chief Jacqueline Baalam, Second Chief Oscar James, and council member Lawrence James, and other tribal members all were in attendance and participated in the discussion.

"This was my first time visiting Birch Creek and I am so impressed with the community. Despite the challenges that they face, they all work together to keep the village running smoothly," said Chief/Chairman Brian Ridley, "I look forward to working more with Chief Balaam and the tribes to address their needs and concerns."



TCC Hosts Intertribal Timber Council Symposium

By Will Putman, Forestry Director for Tanana Chiefs Conference

On May 15th through May 19th, Tanana Chiefs Conference played host to tribal foresters and land managers from around the country at the 45th National Indian Timber Symposium. The symposium is a conference hosted by the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC), held annually at a tribal location somewhere in the U.S. TCC had been selected as symposium host for 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic caused the symposium to be cancelled that year and only held virtually in 2021. This year, however, the symposium returned to an in-person event, with TCC as the host tribal organization.

The symposium was held at the Wedgewood Resort in Fairbanks from May 17th to 19th, with optional pre-symposium workshops held on the 15th and 16th. Although normally attended by 300 or more tribal and agency foresters, wildland fire managers, and natural resource managers, attendance at this year's symposium was capped at 200 registered attendees because of the pandemic and the size of the Wedgewood facility. A highlight of the sessions on Tuesday included a key-note presentation by Alfred Ketzler Sr., founder and former president of TCC, on a retrospective look at the early days of TCC and the

negotiations that led to the passage of ANCSA in 1971. Through workshops, panel discussions, agency updates and other presentations, symposium attendees were also treated to a variety of topics concerning tribal forestry and wildland fire management, including climate change, emerging technologies, biomass energy, and new funding opportunities. Field tours were available, both as a pre-symposium tour of forestry activities in the Upper Tanana subregion and a field tour in the Fairbanks area on May 18th. Field stops on the Wednesday tour around Fairbanks included the research permafrost tunnel near Fox, the Aurora Energy firewood kiln-drying facility in Fairbanks, a recent wildland fire burn scar near the University, and look at fuelbreaks involved in the Shovel Creek fire in the Murphy Dome area outside Fairbanks.

One of the features of the National Indian Timber Symposium is a number of popular social activities. TCC hosted an icebreaker at the Fountainhead Auto Museum on Monday night, and a tribal host welcome dinner at the Tanana Valley Fairgrounds on Tuesday evening. Entertainment

at the welcome dinner was provided by a local traditional drum group organized by Travis Cole, Sunny Luke and Norman Carlo, and a local fiddle band put together by Jerry Frank. The welcome dinner also included a sampling of traditional foods made possible by generous donations from Jolene Bante, Clinton Northway, Barbara Christian, and Eileen Grant. The symposium ended with an awards banquet on Thursday night. Awards were awarded, but perhaps the most anticipated feature of the banquet was the announcement of the results of a raffle of donated craft items, the proceeds of which go towards support of scholarships awarded by ITC to Native students pursuing education in forestry, fire, and natural resource management.

By the end of the week, the weather had warmed up dramatically and spirits were high. The symposium was deemed to be a great success, and our TCC Forestry and Wildland Fire staff and others, after having worked so hard to pull together all the details to make everything work, were proud to have been so directly involved in hosting a great meeting.



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. Material submitted anonymously will not be printed.



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference



You Could Be Home Right Now

For your next appointment, call Central Scheduling at 907-451-6682 and request a video call and meet with your medical provider from the comfort of your own couch.

All you need is an email address, an internet connection, a smart phone or computer, the free Zoom App, and a quiet place to talk.

**It's safe. It's convenient.
It's face-to-face quality care.**



Submit Your Grad Photos!

The deadline to submit photos to be featured in our Council newsletter is **Wednesday, June 15, 2022**. Enter your Name, Tribal Affiliation, and School of Graduation on our submission form at:
<https://www.tananachiefs.org/2022-graduate-submission-form/>



Find Your Purpose
Join our Team at Tanana Chiefs Conference
www.tananachiefs.org/careers

Village Vacancies

- **Alatna:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Family Visitor, Tribal Administrator-Onsite Supervisor, Tribal Workforce Development Specialist
- **Allakaket:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Community Health Representative, Home Care Provider
- **Anaktuvuk Pass:** Behavioral Health Aide
- **Anvik:** Rural Trauma Navigator, Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook, Village Public Safety Officer
- **Arctic Village:** Home Care Provider, Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook, Tribal Administrator-Onsite Supervisor, Village Public Safety Officer
- **Birch Creek:** Rural Trauma Navigator
- **Chalkyitsik:** Behavioral Health Aide, Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Tribal Family Youth Specialist, Village Public Safety Officer
- **Circle:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Rural Trauma Navigator, Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook, Tribal Family Youth Specialist
- **Dot Lake:** Behavioral Health Aide, Community Health Aide/Practitioner
- **Eagle:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Home Care Provider, Rural Trauma Navigator, Tribal Family Youth Specialist
- **Evansville:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook
- **Fort Yukon:** Home Care Provider
- **Galena:** Behavioral Health Clinical Associate-Galena, Behavioral Health Clinician, Clinical Support Staff/Medical Assistant, Nurse Practitioner - Primary Care, Physician Assistant - Primary Care, Galena, RN
- **Grayling:** Family Visitor, Preschool Assistant Teacher, Preschool Lead Teacher, Tribal Workforce Development Specialist, Village Public Safety Officer
- **Healy Lake:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Rural Trauma Navigator, Village Public Safety Officer, Home Care Provider
- **Holy Cross:** Home Care Provider, Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook
- **Hughes:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner
- **Huslia:** Family Visitor, Preschool Assistant Teacher, Substitute Teacher/Assistant Teacher, Tribal Workforce Development Specialist
- **Kaltag:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Tribal Administrator-Onsite Supervisor, Tribal Family Youth Specialist, Tribal Workforce Development Specialist
- **Koyukuk:** Carpenter, Laborer, Project Supervisor, Tribal Office Administrative Assistant
- **McGrath:** Elder Nutrition Cook, Rural Trauma Navigator, Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook, Tribal Workforce Development Specialist, Village Public Safety Officer
- **Minto:** Behavioral Health Aide, Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Rural Trauma Navigator
- **Nenana:** Clinical Support Staff/Medical Assistant, Infant/Toddler Teacher, Preschool Assistant Teacher, Preschool Lead Teacher, Rural Safe Home Attendant, Substitute Teacher/Assistant Teacher, Tribal Administrator-Onsite Supervisor, Tribal Family Youth Specialist
- **Nikolai:** Tribal Administrator-Onsite Supervisor
- **Northway:** Behavioral Health Aide, Carpenter, Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Laborer, Project Supervisor, Rural Safe Home Attendant, Substitute Teacher/Assistant Teacher, Village Public Safety Officer
- **Nulato:** Rural Safe Home Attendant, Substitute Teacher/Assistant Teacher
- **Old Minto:** Camp Counselor I, OMFR Camp Laborer, OMFR Counselor I
- **Rampart:** Behavioral Health Aide, Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Rural Trauma Navigator, Substitute Elder Nutrition Cook, Tribal Administrator-Onsite Supervisor
- **Ruby:** Behavioral Health Aide, Community Health Aide/Practitioner
- **Stevens Village:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner
- **Takotna:** Rural Trauma Navigator
- **Tanacross:** Community Health Aide/Practitioner
- **Tetlin:** Behavioral Health Aide, Community Health Aide/Practitioner, Village Public Safety Officer
- **Tok:** Behavioral Health Clinical Associate-Tok, Certified Medical Assistant, Clinical Support Staff/Medical Assistant, Coordinator/Instructor Mid Level Practitioner, Facilities Technician, Nurse Practitioner - Upper Tanana Health Center, Physician Assistant-Upper Tanana Health Center, Security Officer, Squad Boss, Urgent Care RN Advanced, UTHC Administrative Assistant I, UTHC Environmental Services Technician I, Village Public Safety Officer-Regional Rover, Wild Land Firefighter Type II Crew Member
- **Venetie:** Village Public Safety Officer

JOB LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF MAY 24, 2022