



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council

Incorporated as Dena' Nena' Henash
Vol. 51 • No. 9 September 2026



A New Era of Health Care in Tanana

The Tanana Tribal Council recently celebrated the opening of the new Tanana Health Center, marking an important investment in health care for the community and region. An open house was held July 31, 2026, welcoming community members and partners to tour the new facility.

The 6,393-square-foot health center was several years in the making. Planning began in 2021, when the Tanana Tribal Council began developing a vision for a new clinic. Through partnerships with Tanana Chiefs Conference, Indian Health Service, Ras-muson Foundation, Bettisworth North, Goldstream Group, GHEMM Company and the greater community of Ta-

nana the Tribe was able to bring that vision to life — completing the project ahead of schedule and under budget.

Designed to provide a more functional, efficient and welcoming environment, the new facility includes four exam rooms, a dental workstation, trauma area, laboratory, radiology, 2 bay morgue, pharmacy and sterilization rooms. It also includes dedicated spaces for behavioral health services, patient privacy and community health programs.

The center will support a wide range of services, from family and emergency care to prenatal care, immunizations, behavioral health, dental, substance use treatment and community

outreach.

“This is a tremendous accomplishment for our community, and we are grateful to everyone who helped make this vision a reality,” said Victor Joseph, Executive Director of the Tanana Tribal Council. “I also want to extend a special appreciation to all of the Tanana Tribal Council employees. Their hard work, dedication and commitment throughout this project helped make this accomplishment possible.”

The opening of the Tanana Health Center represents years of community vision, collaboration and hard work — creating a modern facility designed to serve Tanana families for generations to come.

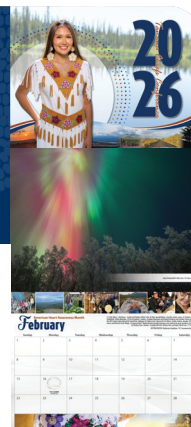
SEE MORE PHOTOS ON PAGE 4.

Submit Your Photos for the 2027 TCC CALENDAR

Deadline to Submit: October 16th, 2026

Snap, Caption, Submit, Done - Your photos could shine in our calendar!

Scan to submit your photos or visit
www.tananachiefs.org/2027calendar/



IN THIS ISSUE...

PAGE 3: Gubernatorial Candidate Mixer

PAGE 9: Victor Joseph NIH Award

PAGE 12: Fall Subregional Meetings

PAGE 14: Supporting Independence

PAGE 15: TWDS Training

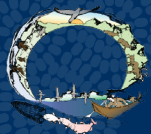


Mission

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



Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

Executive Board

Trimble Gilbert, Arctic Village
1st Traditional Chief

Andrew Jimmie, Minto
2nd Traditional Chief

Sharon Hildebrand, Nulato
Chief/Chairman

Rhonda Pitka, Beaver
Vice-President

Charlie Wright, Rampart
Secretary/Treasurer

Herbie Demit, Tanacross
Upper Tanana

Claude 'Joe' Petruska, Nikolai
Upper Kuskokwim

Nancy James, Gwichyaa Zhee
Yukon Flats

Ivan Demientieff, Grayling
Lower Yukon

Lori Baker, Minto
Yukon Tanana

Charlie Green, Galena
Yukon Koyukuk

Peter Demoski, Nulato
Elder Advisor

Mackenzie Englishoe, Gwichyaa Zhee
Youth Advisor



Letter from the Chief

Dear Tribal Leaders and Tribal Members,

Many of our communities have experienced a busy time in preparing for the long winter ahead. As you prepare, we have had the opportunity to over the past few months to visit many of your communities throughout the region. The team and I have been grateful to witness the great work of each of our Tribes in their sovereign capacities. Those communities have included, Tanana, Koyukuk, Eagle, McGrath, Birch Creek, Chalkyitsik, and Beaver through village visits and sub-regional meetings. Thank you for welcoming us into your communities, sharing food, and taking the time to sit down and share your stories. We are always grateful for the time we get to spend together.

Spending time in our villages and hearing directly from Tribal leaders and Tribal members remains one of our highest priorities. These conversations remind us of our mission, who we work for and why we do this work. Hearing what is happening in your communities — your concerns, your priorities, and your hopes for the future — helps guide our mission as we focus on the Tribes and people we serve.

Last month was the Primary Election, and I want to thank everyone who took the time to vote and make their voices heard. But our work is not over. The General Election will take place on November 3. Those elected have the power to make decisions that have a tremendous impact on Alaska Native people, our communities, and our way of life. I encourage everyone to stay engaged, learn about the candidates and issues, and make a plan to vote.

Next month will also bring two important gatherings: the National Congress of American Indians Annual Convention in Palm Springs and the Alaska Federation of Natives Annual Convention in Anchorage. Because both conventions are taking place during the same week, we encourage Tribal delegates to plan ahead. These gatherings give us an important opportunity to come together, advocate for our people, and make sure the voices of Interior Alaska Tribes are heard.

In response to our Tribes, TCC is planning to host a Summit in November that will focus on issues and priorities important to our Tribes. We have been gathering feedback from Tribal leaders which directly guides our planning.

I have encouraged our staff to think differently, try new approaches, and be more intentional about how we provide services to our Tribes. We should always be willing to learn, grow, and find better ways to serve our people. This Summit is one example of that effort, and we look forward to coming together, listening, and learning from one another.

As we move into this time of year, many of our families are spending more time out on the land. Whether you are hunting, fishing, gathering, or traveling, please be safe. Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to return, make sure you have the supplies and equipment you need, and always practice proper firearm and boating safety. I wish everyone a safe and successful season and hope you enjoy this time with your families.

I also want to remind everyone to look after one another. September is Suicide Prevention Month, and we know that changing seasons can be difficult. Fall and spring can bring grief, loneliness, and hard days for many of our people. Please take care of yourself, check in on your family and friends, and make time for those who may be having a hard time. Sometimes simply reaching out, sitting together, or letting someone know they are cared for can mean more than we realize.

As always, my thoughts and prayers are with our people and communities across the region.



Ana Masee',
Chief Sharon Hildebrand
Tanana Chiefs Conference



Gubernatorial Candidate Mixer Brings Alaska's Biggest Race to Fairbanks

Interior Native Vote hosted the Gubernatorial Candidate Mixer on August 5th in Fairbanks. More than 200 community members showed up to this nonpartisan event to ask questions of the candidates running to be Alaska's next governor before casting their ballots in the Primary Election.

Volunteers at this event helped attendees check their voter registration status, register to vote, and identify their voting precinct to ensure they were ready for this fall's elections. Participants left with all the information they needed to head to the polls.

Masee' to everyone who turned out for this event and made your voices heard! We would also like to thank the candidates who took the time to meet with our Tribal members, leaders, and the community during this event.

Interior Native Vote is a nonpartisan voter engagement initiative led by Tanana Chiefs Conference, Fairbanks Native Association, and Doyon, Limited. Through events like the Candidate Mixer, the partnership works to help voters access election information, connect with candidates, and participate in the democratic process.



A New Era of Health Care in Tanana

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1.





Circle of Protection: The Public Safety Dispatch

Safety on the Land Starts at Home

By David Atteberry, TCC Public Safety Manager

Whether you're heading out to hunt, fish, pick berries, or travel between villages, spending time on the land and rivers is a way of life throughout Interior Alaska. While most trips end safely, every year Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs) and other emergency responders are called to search for people who have not returned home as expected.

Many people assume the most important part of a search is the equipment used by responders. In reality, one of the most valuable tools is the information left behind before the trip ever begins.

Share Your Plans

Before you leave, tell a trusted family member or friend:

- Where you are going, including your planned route and destination
- Who is traveling with you

- How you are traveling, whether by boat, ATV, truck, or on foot

- When you expect to return

- When they should contact authorities if you have not returned

If your plans change while you're out, let someone know whenever possible. A simple phone call or message can prevent an unnecessary search and provide peace of mind for your loved ones.

Carry Emergency Supplies

It is also wise to carry basic emergency supplies, even on short trips. Extra warm clothing, rain gear, food, water, a first aid kit, a flashlight, fire-starting materials, and a means of communication such

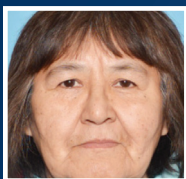
as a satellite messenger or emergency locator beacon can make a significant difference if you become stranded or delayed.

Weather and river conditions can change rapidly in Alaska. Mechanical problems, changing water levels, early snowfall, or an unexpected injury can quickly turn a routine outing into an emergency. Being prepared and making sure someone knows your plans give search and rescue personnel a much better chance of finding you quickly if assistance is needed.

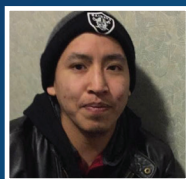
TCC VPSOs and Tribal Police Officers are committed to serving our communities and responding when emergencies occur. By taking a few minutes to share your travel plans before leaving home, you become an important partner in your own safety and help responders bring you home safely if the unexpected happens.



MISSING



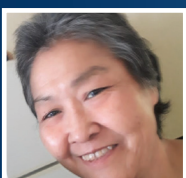
Lorraine
Ginnis



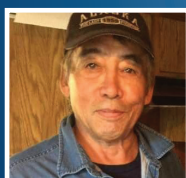
Willis
Derendoff



Doren
Sanford



Debbie
Nictune



Frank
Minano



Craig
Albert

SUBMIT TIPS ANONYMOUSLY:

Text AKTIPS followed by your tip to 84711 or visit

<https://dps.alaska.gov/ast/tips>



Call the Alaska State Troopers at 907-451-5100, Fairbanks Police Department at 907-450-6500 or TCC Public Safety at 907-452-8251 ext.3269.

Visit www.tananachiefs.org/missing for more information.

Lowering Your Risk of Alzheimer's: What You Can Do Today

The Big Picture: You Have More Power Than You Think

- Alzheimer's disease is the most common cause of dementia, affecting over 55 million people worldwide.
- While age and genetics play a role, research shows that up to 45% of dementia cases may be preventable or delayed by addressing 14 known risk factors throughout life.
- Healthy lifestyle choices can reduce your risk even if you have a family history of Alzheimer's disease. Studies show that people who follow 4 or 5 healthy habits have a 60% lower risk of developing Alzheimer's — regardless of their genetic risk.
- It is never too early or too late to start protecting your brain.

10 Things You Can Do to Reduce Your Risk

1. Stay Physically Active

- Regular physical activity is one of the most powerful tools for brain health.
- Aim for at least 150 minutes per week of moderate activity (brisk walking, swimming, cycling) or 75 minutes of vigorous activity.
- Exercise improves blood flow to the brain, promotes the growth of new brain cells, and reduces inflammation.
- People who are regularly active have approximately a 25% lower risk of developing dementia.



2. Eat a Brain-Healthy Diet

- The Mediterranean and Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay (MIND) diets are the most studied dietary patterns for brain health.
- Focus on:
 - Green leafy vegetables (spinach, kale) — at least 6 servings per week
 - Berries (blueberries, strawberries) — at least 2 servings per week
 - Fish — at least 1 serving per week
 - Nuts, beans, whole grains, and olive oil
- Limit red meat, fried foods, pastries, sweets, and butter/margarine.
- Higher adherence to the MIND diet has been linked to less Alzheimer's-related brain pathology, equivalent to being about 4 years younger in brain age.



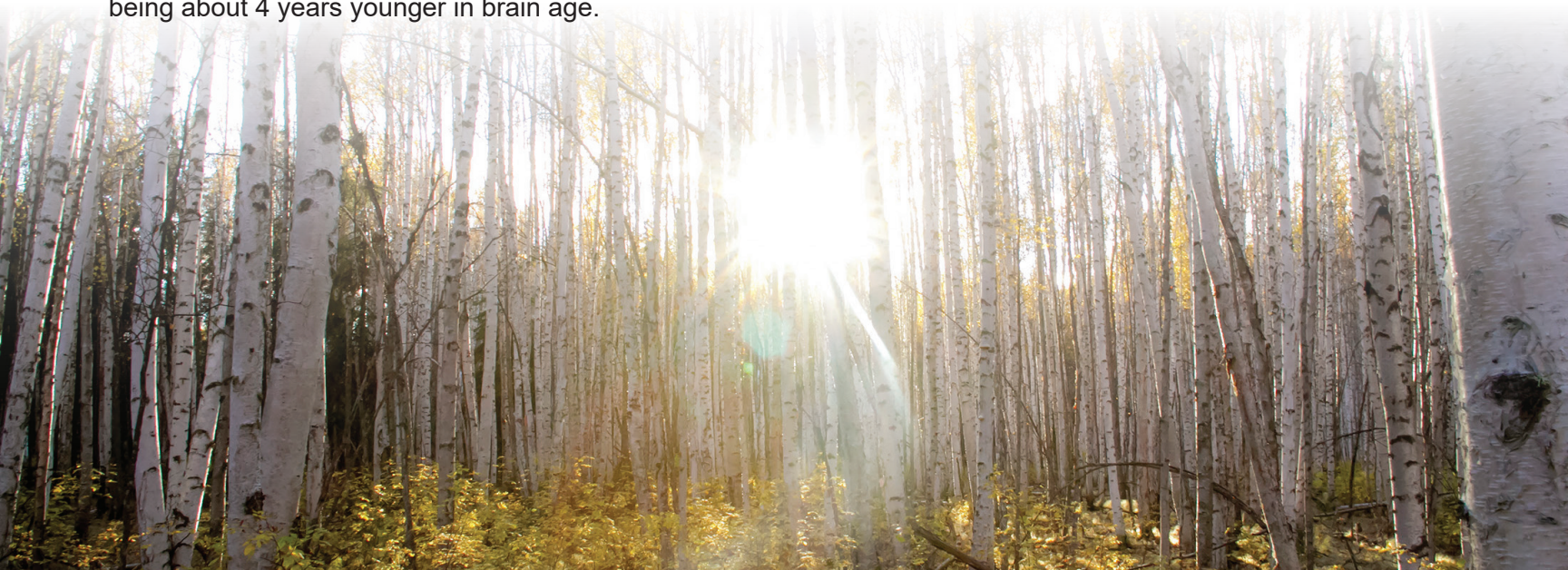
3. Protect Your Heart to Protect Your Brain

- What is good for your heart is good for your brain. Many of the same risk factors for heart disease also increase dementia risk.
- Manage your blood pressure — midlife hypertension is one of the strongest modifiable risk factors for dementia.
- Control blood sugar — diabetes increases dementia risk. Work with your doctor to keep blood sugar in a healthy range.
- Manage cholesterol — high LDL cholesterol is now recognized as a risk factor for dementia.
- Maintain a healthy weight — midlife obesity is linked to higher dementia risk.



4. Get Quality Sleep

- Aim for 7–8 hours of sleep per night. Both too little and too much sleep are associated with increased dementia risk.
- Sleep allows the brain to clear toxic proteins, including amyloid-beta, which builds up in Alzheimer's disease.
- If you snore loudly, stop breathing during sleep, or feel excessively tired during the day, talk to your doctor about sleep apnea — it is also linked to higher dementia risk.



5. Stay Socially Connected

- Social isolation and loneliness are significant risk factors for dementia. Loneliness alone is associated with a 42% increased risk.
- Stay engaged through regular contact with friends and family, community groups, volunteering, or group activities.
- Strong social engagement is associated with approximately a 19% lower risk of dementia.



6. Keep Your Mind Active

- Engage in mentally stimulating activities: reading, puzzles, learning a new language or instrument, taking classes, or playing strategy games.
- Cognitive activity builds “cognitive reserve” — the brain’s ability to resist damage and continue functioning well.
- Combining mental and physical activity (such as dance classes or group sports) may provide the greatest benefit.



7. Protect Your Hearing and Vision

- Hearing loss is the single largest modifiable risk factor for dementia, accounting for up to 7% of cases.
- If you have hearing loss, use hearing aids — studies show hearing aid use is associated with a 19–33% lower risk of cognitive decline and dementia.
- Protect your ears from excessive noise exposure.
- Untreated vision loss is also a newly recognized risk factor. Get regular eye exams and use corrective lenses as needed.



8. Stay Up to Date on Vaccinations

- Emerging research suggests that routine adult vaccinations may help protect against Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. While the evidence is still observational, the findings are consistent and striking:
 - Shingles (herpes zoster) vaccine: associated with a 24% lower risk of any dementia and a 47% lower risk of Alzheimer’s disease
 - Flu (influenza) vaccine: associated with a 13–31% lower risk of dementia, with greater protection seen with repeated annual vaccinations
 - Pneumonia (pneumococcal) vaccine: associated with a 36% lower risk of Alzheimer’s disease



- Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis) vaccine: associated with a 30–33% lower risk of dementia

- Vaccinations may protect the brain by preventing infections that trigger inflammation, a process linked to Alzheimer’s disease development.
- Staying current on recommended vaccinations is a simple, low-cost step that benefits overall health and may also protect brain health.

9. Avoid Smoking and Limit Alcohol

- Smoking damages blood vessels in the brain and increases inflammation. Quitting at any age reduces your risk.
- Excessive alcohol consumption is a recognized risk factor for dementia. If you drink, do so in moderation.



10. Address Depression and Protect Your Head

- Depression is both a risk factor for and an early symptom of dementia. If you feel persistently sad, anxious, or withdrawn, seek help — treatment matters.
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) increases dementia risk. Wear seatbelts, use helmets during sports and cycling, and take steps to prevent falls, especially as you age.



A Note About Air Pollution

- Exposure to air pollution (particularly fine particulate matter, PM2.5) is linked to higher dementia risk.
- When possible, limit exposure to heavy traffic and industrial pollution. Use air filters indoors if you live in a high-pollution area.

The Bottom Line

- You do not need to do everything perfectly. Every healthy change you make — at any age — can help protect your brain.
- The most impactful steps are: staying physically active, eating a brain-healthy diet, managing heart health, staying socially connected, getting quality sleep, treating hearing loss, and keeping up with vaccinations.
- Talk to your doctor about your personal risk factors and what steps are right for you.

Where to Learn More

- Alzheimer’s Association: www.alz.org
- World Health Organization — Dementia: www.who.int/health-topics/dementia
- National Institute on Aging: www.nia.nih.gov/health/alzheimers

Suicide Prevention Month: Connection Creates Hope

September is Suicide Prevention Month—a time to remind each other that help and hope are always available. Reaching out, checking in, listening well, and staying connected can make a huge difference and even save a life. It's practicing our core value at TCC—Ch'egh-wtsen'—unconditionally loving others!

At Tanana Chiefs Conference, suicide prevention is about the strength of our people, cultures, and communities. TCC's Suicide Prevention Program works with Tribes, families, youth, and Elders throughout the Interior to promote wellness, build resilience, and connect people with resources and support. The program provides suicide prevention trainings, education, outreach, and support for community prevention activities. We also help people recognize warning signs and learn how to respond when someone may be struggling.

We believe we all have a role in the



prevention of suicide. Checking in with friends and family, listening with care, and helping create safe spaces where people feel comfortable asking for help are all ways we can support others who are struggling. Staying connected to our families, our rich culture, our vibrant communities, and the land can help strengthen our circles of care.

If you or someone you know is struggling, you are not alone. Call or text 988 anytime to reach the Suicide & Crisis Lifeline for free, confidential support.

This Suicide Prevention Month, let's continue to look out for one another, start meaningful conversations, and remind those around us that every life is valued. Together, we can build healthier, stronger, and more connected communities.

Stay connected. Practice Ch'egh-wtsen'. Share hope.



TCC Grow-Our-Own Apprenticeship Program Celebrated Six Graduates

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) celebrated six graduates of the 2026 TCC Apprenticeship Program who demonstrated a strong commitment to professional growth, excellence, and service to our communities. The six graduates represented TCC's continued investment in developing its workforce and creating career opportunities within Tribal healthcare.

The Medical Assistant Apprenticeship Program graduates were Asasha Martin, Chelsea Curwin, Naya Derendoff, and Sienna Demoski. The Referral Coordinator Apprenticeship Program graduates were Lyco Icalina and Takoda Shoemaker.

Over the past year, these apprentices balanced virtual coursework with hands-on clinical training. Their hard work and persistence prepared them to support the health and well-being of our people. This year's cohort was especially meaningful because, for the first time, every participant who began the program successfully completed it.

TCC celebrated the graduates with a ceremony on July 30 at the Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center. The gathering provided an opportunity for colleagues, family, and supporters to recognize the graduates' accomplishments and celebrate their dedication to their careers and communities.

Please join us in congratulating Asasha, Chelsea, Naya, Sienna, Lyco, and Takoda on this significant accomplishment and wishing them continued success in their careers!

NEED TO TALK?

Help is just three digits away.

988

Connects You to Careline, Alaska's
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.

CARELINE
CRISIS SERVICES, INC.

Tanana
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Family Service and Support Hosts Inaugural Culture Camp

The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Family Service and Support Division's Education and Indigenous Learning team hosted its inaugural Family Service and Support Culture Camp at Effie Kokrine Charter School on July 22 and 23.

Children in kindergarten through sixth grade had the opportunity to attend the two-day camp, with students in grades K-3 attending in the mornings and students in grades 4-6 attending in the afternoons.

On Day One, students participated in arts and crafts, learned about Athabascan languages from Doyon Foundation's Language Revitalization Team, and explored the importance of Native Games through demonstrations led by Brittney Woods-Orrison and TCC GO student volunteer Andria Moses.

On Day Two, students participated in a language-based "Go Fish" game, where they learned the names of animals in different Athabascan language

dialects with TCC Tribal Resource Stewardship Director Diloola Erickson. Staff continued to promote cultural and language learning through hands-on activities, including beading, drum painting, and making greeting cards for Elders.

Students also had the opportunity to explore different careers, create wilderness survival kits, and learn about potlatch dancing and singing from the Dene Enslaanh dance group.

The Education and Indigenous Learning staff are grateful for the opportunity to plant seeds of cultural appreciation in our youth. We hope to make Culture Camp an annual event that strengthens relationships with our young people, celebrates Alaska Native culture, and encourages students to utilize the TCC GO program when they reach high school.

We are especially thankful for the strong partnerships with colleagues who are committed to supporting youth engagement, including team

members from Tribal Resource Stewardship, Education and Indigenous Learning, and other Family Service and Support programs.

We extend our sincere appreciation to our outside partners at Doyon Foundation, including Lucy Miller, Elizabeth "Noonoo" Green, Tatiana Andrew, and Katrina Erick, for sharing their knowledge and supporting our youth.

A special thank you goes to Brittney Woods-Orrison for sharing her knowledge of Native Games with our students. Finally, we are incredibly grateful to our TCC GO students who served as volunteer camp mentors. Your time, energy, and willingness to support the younger students helped make this camp possible.

This successful event would not have been possible without the dedication of our staff, partners, volunteers, and youth participants. Ana Ba-see!



Top row left to right: Jaxson Rada, Curtis Peterson, Lyla Kiou, and Jaeden Heffle. Bottom row from left to right: Brenna Morgan, Olivia Silas, and David Rada.



Dene Enslaanh dance group members, Oliver Evans and Eliza Winfrey.



Isaiah Justice learning about Native games from Brittney Woods-Orrison.

Victor Joseph Honored with NIHB Sovereignty in Action Award

Congratulations to Victor Joseph, TCC Chief Administrative Officer, who recently received the 2026 Sovereignty in Action Award for advocacy from the National Indian Health Board (NIHB).

Victor accepted the award during NIHB's Heroes in Health Awards Banquet, held as part of the National Tribal Health Conference. The Sovereignty in Action Awards are among NIHB's highest national honors, recognizing individuals and organizations whose leadership, innovation and dedication have made significant contributions to American Indian and Alaska Native health, Tribal health systems and public policy. The award honors work that advances Tribal sovereignty and strengthens the health and well-being of Tribal communities through advocacy, policy, innovation and culturally grounded leadership.

Victor's recognition reflects his many years of leadership and service to the Tribes and people of Interior Alaska and his continued commitment to strengthening Tribal self-determination and the systems that serve our communities.

Please join us in congratulating Victor on this well-deserved national recognition and thanking him for his continued service to our Tribes and communities.



Back to School with TCC GO!

The TCC GO program is designed to provide guidance and resources for high school students in identifying and pursuing their career field of interest while preparing them for post-secondary education or vocational training after high school.

TEACHERS

Are you a teacher in a rural TCC community?

Successfully encourage 80% of your students to enroll in TCC GO and you can earn \$100 in items for your classroom! Get 100% of your students to enroll in TCC GO and earn snacks for your classroom!

STUDENTS

Sign up for TCC GO for a chance to win an awesome prize!

5 students will win!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE
TO LEARN MORE
ABOUT TCC GO

[www.tananachiefs.org/
services/tcc-go/](http://www.tananachiefs.org/services/tcc-go/)



Introducing Sully.ai: Helping Providers Focus on What Matters Most

At Tanana Chiefs Conference, we are always looking for ways to strengthen the care we provide while honoring our commitment to Ch'eghwtsen' - providing accessible and trusted services with unconditional love, compassion, dignity, and respect.

To help providers spend more time focused on patients instead of computer screens, TCC is introducing **Sully.ai**, an artificial intelligence (AI) documentation assistant that supports providers during patient visits.

What is Sully.ai?

Sully.ai is a secure AI tool that listens during a medical appointment - with the patient's consent - and creates a draft of the visit notes. Instead of spending valuable appointment time typing into a computer, providers can focus on listening and engaging directly with their patients.

Every note created by Sully.ai is carefully reviewed, edited as needed, and approved by the provider before it becomes part of the patient's medical record.

Sully.ai does **not** diagnose conditions, recommend treatments, or make medical decisions. Your provid-

er remains responsible for every aspect of your care.

How does it benefit patients?

By reducing the amount of time providers spend documenting visits, Sully.ai helps create a more personal healthcare experience. Providers can devote more attention to conversations, answer questions more thoroughly, and better understand each patient's concerns.

This technology also helps improve the accuracy of medical documentation by capturing important details during the visit.

In addition, reducing after-hours documentation helps lessen provider burnout, allowing healthcare teams to remain focused, attentive, and present for every patient.

Protecting your privacy

Patient privacy remains a top priority.

With your permission, your visit may be recorded so Sully.ai can generate a medical note. Recordings are stored securely, protected under HIPAA privacy requirements, and deleted after 90 days.

In some cases, the technology

company may remove identifying information, such as names, and use de-identified portions of recordings of the encounter to improve the AI system. Strong privacy protections are in place throughout the process.

Nothing becomes part of your medical record until your provider has reviewed and approved it.

You are always in control

Using Sully.ai is your choice.

If you prefer not to have your visit recorded, simply let your provider know. You may also change your mind at any time. Choosing not to use Sully.ai will not affect the care you receive.

Supporting care through Ch'eghwtsen'

Technology should never replace the connection between a patient and provider—it should strengthen it.

By reducing administrative work, Sully.ai allows providers to spend more time listening, building relationships, and delivering care with Ch'eghwtsen'. It is one more way TCC is working to ensure every patient receives compassionate, patient-centered care.

Alaska Community Foundation Invests in TCC Leadership Program

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) extends its appreciation to the Alaska Community Foundation (ACF) for a generous \$20,000 contribution to support TCC's Leadership for Results Program, offered through TCC's Learning and Development Department. Through this support, participants completed projects that are creating meaningful, grassroots, and lasting change in people and communities.

Supporting Community Needs, Strengthening Leadership

Participants in the Leadership for Results Program identified community needs and developed projects to improve the well-being of individuals and families and strengthening their leadership skills, built confidence, and learned how to turn ideas into action. Their work reflects a commitment to community values, collaboration, and positive change.

Past Grassroots Projects have included:

- Supporting grassroots community wellness efforts that strengthen connections and encourage local leadership.
- Building a healthy foundation for children and families through programs that support early childhood development and family well-being.
- Creating strength-based men's initiatives that promote connection, mentorship, and community en-

gagement across generations.

These projects show how strong leadership can help communities grow and create positive opportunities for future generations.

Tanana Chiefs Conference is grateful to the Alaska Community Foundation for investing in leadership development and community growth. Their support helps leaders develop the skills and knowledge needed to make a difference in their communities.

The partnership between TCC and the Alaska Community Foundation reflects a shared commitment to developing leaders who can address local challenges, bring people together, and improve the well-being of Alaska Native communities.

TCC extends its sincere appreciation to the Alaska Community Foundation for helping make these leadership projects possible and for supporting leaders who are working to build healthier, stronger, and more vibrant communities throughout the Interior.

About the TCC Leadership for Results Program

The Leadership for Results Program helps leaders build the skills, knowl-



Tiffany Simmons, TCC's Executive Director of Tribal Government & Tribal Services, with Alex McKay, President & CEO of the Alaska Community Foundation.

edge, and tools needed to address community challenges, achieve measurable results, and improve the lives of the people they serve. Through the program, participants grow as leaders while creating positive change in their communities.

The next cohort of Leadership for Results will start on November 17, 2026. Contact TCC's Learning & Development program at LearningAndDevelopment@tananachiefs.org or 907-452-8251 ext. 3359 to learn more about this opportunity.

TCC Celebrates Darlene Huntington's Promotion to Deputy Pharmacy Director

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is proud to congratulate Darlene Huntington on her promotion to Deputy Pharmacy Director.

Darlene's career with TCC began nearly 15 years ago when she joined the organization as a pharmacy student extern. Since then, she has continued to grow through several pharmacy roles, serving as Lead Village Health Pharmacist for the past nine years.

Throughout her career, Darlene has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing high-quality pharmacy services to Alaska Native people. Her work has included a special focus on improving access to safe, reliable medication services for rural communities throughout the region.

Born and raised in Utqiagvik, Darlene is an enrolled Tribal member of the Native Village of Barrow. She has called Fairbanks home for nearly 22 years, where she lives with her husband, Leon Huntington, and their twin daughters, Marian and Rosi.

Darlene's nearly 15 years of service reflect her dedication to TCC and the people and communities we serve. Her experience, leadership, and commitment will be valuable as she steps into her new role.

Please join us in congratulating Darlene on this well-deserved promotion and thanking her for her many years of dedicated service to our region!



Yukon-Koyukuk Subregional Meeting

In August, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) leadership and staff traveled to Koyukuk for the Yukon-Koyukuk subregional meeting, where we heard from Tribal members and leadership from across the subregion. Being out in our rural communities listening to our Tribal members, hearing your concerns and celebrating your wins, helps us in our continued dedication to serving our Tribal communities.

We would like to thank the community of Koyukuk for welcoming us into their community. We are grateful for the opportunity that our departments had to present, hear feedback, and collaborate with the villages in the Yukon Koyukuk subregion.



Upper Kuskokwim Subregional Meeting

In August, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) leadership traveled to McGrath for the Upper Kuskokwim Subregional Meeting.

As always, it was a valuable opportunity to spend time with Tribal leaders, hear directly about the issues and priorities affecting their communities, and explore ways TCC can continue supporting our Tribal leaders and Tribal members.

We are grateful to the community of McGrath for their warm hospitality and to our Upper Kuskokwim Tribal leaders for sharing their concerns, ideas, and guidance with us.

These conversations strengthen our partnerships and help ensure our work continues to be guided by the voices of the Tribes we serve as we work together toward our shared vision of Healthy, Strong, Unified Tribes.





TCC Migratory Bird Regional Co-Management Council

The Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Alaska Migratory Bird Regional Co-Management Council (AMBCC) serves as a strong voice for Interior Alaska Tribes in the stewardship and management of migratory birds and their eggs. The council works to ensure the continued health and conservation of migratory bird populations while protecting the subsistence harvest rights of Alaska Native communities. Comprised of representatives from TCC's six sub-regions, the council advocates for sustainable migratory bird management and subsistence access for Tribal members.

AMBCC brings together Alaska Native regional councils, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to collaboratively manage migratory bird resources. This unique partnership supports both conservation efforts and the preservation of Indigenous cultural practices and traditional harvesting rights.

A beloved project of the TCC Migratory Bird Regional Co-Management Council is *Kk'onaat'oghee, kk'onaadedaale, tsooye* ("Birds" or literally "things that fly"), a booklet that was compiled for the council by Susan "Ketsoo" Paskvan. It celebrates the rich history, knowledge, and personal bird stories of the Koyukon people. The publication highlights the deep cultural and spiritual connection Alaska Native communities have with migratory birds and underscores the importance of preserving these relationships for future generations.



Featured Bird: Bank Swallow

Denaakk'e: dekenh yee hooldloy, violet-green swallow; kaalnoye, kaalnooye (U), kaalnoy (L), beł onh hooldloye

Common: Bank swallow

Scientific Names: *Hirundo rustica*



Important Characteristics

The Bank Swallow is usually seen in flocks, flying low over ponds and rivers with quick, fluttery wingbeats. It nests in dense colonies, in holes in dirt or sand banks.

Habitat/Description

Near water; fields, marshes, streams, lakes. Typically seen feeding in flight over (or near) water at all seasons, even in migration. Nests in colonies in vertical banks of dirt or sand, usually along rivers or ponds, seldom away from water.

Origin Story

Late Bill Williams of Hughes shared the following k'edon ts'ednee story at a language institute in Fairbanks. He said that a long time ago the birds had a big meeting in the Lower 48 before they traveled back to Alaska. Dotson' started flying first. He asked "who would be the pilot of all the birds?" The telele, eagle, said he would lead the birds back. This was in the time long ago and it shows that this prophesied the coming of airplanes. On the way, he was not an honest pilot, not too friendly to his passengers, much in the same way that there are some airlines that are not so nice. So, the chiefs had another meeting and they asked who else would be able to lead the birds back. The deldoole, crane agreed to lead them back. It turned out he was a friendly pilot. He had enough room for three birds under its wings. Some birds can't fly too far so they can rest under the crane's wings. Swallows come back with the cranes.

Elder's Stories

Benedict Jones stated that the swallows eat a lot of mosquitoes. The air force in Galena used a lot of pesticides to get rid of the mosquitoes and since then there have been fewer swallows. They nest on the hillsides or in the mud of the river banks.

Paddy Nollner told how the sand hill cranes would make big circles high up in the sky when they were coming back. The cranes would make a beautiful sound as they flew. The swallows would travel with the cranes, catch a ride right under its wings. Then they would get out anywhere.



August AMBCC Fall Meeting Participants

Members of the Alaska Migratory Bird Co-Management Council (AMBCC) and Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) Tribal Resources Stewardship (TRS) staff gathered during the August AMBCC Fall meeting. Pictured are AMBCC members Rady Mayo, Michael Peter, Alissa Perez, and Claude "Joe" Petruska, not pictured was Don Honea and Rich Freireich. Along with TRS staff Dilool Erickson, Kimberly Nicholas, Robin Haglin, and Jacqueline Muehlbauer. The meeting was made even more memorable with catering provided by the talented Indigenous chefs of Dishii Food Truck, Oden Peter-Raboff and Joana Cupul. Together, participants shared knowledge, strengthened partnerships, and supported collaborative efforts to conserve migratory birds while protecting Indigenous subsistence traditions across Alaska.



Supporting Independence Through TCC Services

For Devin Agnes, receiving support through Tanana Chiefs Conference has meant having a team of people working together to help him navigate services, address his needs, and maintain his independence.

Devin, who was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy at birth, has been receiving support from his home community, the Nulato Tribe, since his diagnosis. Currently, he works with

several department heads and program leads at TCC, including Bryana Angulo, Program Manager for Tribal Protective Services; Lisa Donat, Program Coordinator for Home Care Services; and Amanda Race, Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Coordinator.

Since Chief/Chairman Sharon Hildebrand was elected in March, Devin has also had the opportunity to participate in weekly Teams meetings with TCC leadership and the people connected to his services, which include staff members at the Fairbanks Rescue Mission and the Alaska Center for Children and Adults.

These regular meetings have provided an opportunity for Devin to share updates, ask questions, and make sure the people supporting him understand what he needs. They have also helped keep his case moving forward as his team works to connect him with the services and resources he needs.

Sarah Russell, a social worker with the Fairbanks Rescue Mission, has played an important role in Devin's day-to-day support, including helping

him get to appointments and other places he needs to go. Fontana Dawson with the Alaska Center for Children and Adults has also participated in the weekly meetings, bringing specialized knowledge of the State Waiver process for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Her expertise has helped the team navigate assessments, paperwork, and other steps in the process.

Each person involved has brought different knowledge and experience to the table, creating a collaborative network around Devin.

One of the services Devin is most thankful for is TCC's assistance in helping him obtain his Medicaid waiver. While the process has taken time, the continued communication and weekly meetings have helped keep things moving forward.

For Lisa Donat, seeing the team come together has reinforced the value of collaboration.

"We all had a piece that we were knowledgeable about and together we were all able to assist him," Lisa said. "Devin is smart and a go getter; he has great things in his future!"

For Devin, that determination has been evident in the opportunities he has pursued along the way. He regularly goes to the gym, pursues his education, and is becoming stronger by the day. One memorable moment

came when he threw the first pitch while representing TCC at a Gold Panners game.

"Seeing the opportunities in action for one of our Tribal members has been amazing," said Chief/Chairman Sharon Hildebrand. "Devin represents the determination and motivation we see in our Tribal membership. With a little support and encouragement, he was able to go the distance, and we are so proud of him and all that he has accomplished."

For TCC leadership and the team supporting Devin, seeing him take part in that moment was about more than throwing a first pitch. It was an opportunity to see the impact of encouragement, coordinated services, and a community of people working together to support his goals.

"Seeing him throw the first pitch while representing Tanana Chiefs Conference at the Gold Panners game meant so much to us as an organization," Sharon said. "Masee'."

TCC is committed to supporting Tribal citizens through programs and services that promote independence, strengthen families, and help people live healthy and fulfilling lives in their communities.

Devin's story is one example of what can happen when individuals, families, service providers, community organizations, and TCC work together to help a Tribal citizen pursue greater independence and the opportunities ahead.



TCC Earns Family Friendly Workplace Award

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) was honored with the 2026 Family Friendly Workplace Award in the Large Non-Profit category from the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce.

This recognition celebrates TCC's commitment to creating a workplace that supports employees and their families. From benefits and workplace policies to programs that promote employee well-being and work-life balance, TCC continues to look for ways to support our employees both at work and at home.

We know that when our employees and their families are supported, our organization is stronger and better positioned to serve our Tribes and communities.

Thank you to all of our employees who make TCC a supportive, caring and family-friendly place to work!



Welcoming Tiffany Yatlin as Employment & Training Case Manager

Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is pleased to welcome Tiffany Yatlin as the new Employment and Training Case Manager.

Originally from Vashraii' Koo' (Arctic Village), Tiffany now resides in Fairbanks with her three children. She brings 17 years of experience working for her Tribe as a Tribal Administrator, where she developed valuable experience supporting Tribal operations and serving her community.

"I'm excited to work alongside my coworkers and see what kind of improvements we can make for Family and Workforce Services here at Tanana Chiefs Conference and keep striving to help our villages," Tiffany shared.

Please join us in welcoming Tiffany to TCC and wishing her success in her new role!





The conference provided an opportunity for TWDS staff to share knowledge, build relationships, and strengthen the connections that help TCC programs work together to support families throughout the region.





Tanana
Chiefs
Conference

The Council Newsletter

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Fairbanks	Eye Clinic Optometrist
Fairbanks	Clinic Greeter
Fairbanks	Payroll Specialist
Fairbanks	Corporate Compliance Officer
Fairbanks	Registration Manager
Fairbanks	Facilities Technician I
Fairbanks	Addictions Certified Nurse Aide
Fairbanks	Credentialing Coordinator
Fairbanks	TRS Policy & Outreach Intern
Fairbanks	Residential Support Technician
Fairbanks	Addictions Counselor I
Nenana	Tribal Family Youth Specialist
Northway	Preschool Assistant Teacher
Region-Wide	Community Health Aide/Practitioner - Itinerant



Apply Online or Learn About Our Benefits!

Visit our website at www.tananachiefs.org/careers to see a full list of open positions and learn more about the benefits available through Tanana Chiefs Conference.

JOBS LISTED WERE OPEN AS OF AUGUST 27, 2026

Not Sure What Job is Right for You?

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If you're Alaska Native or American Indian, apply through our 'General Posting for Alaska Native/American Indian Applicants. Submit your resume once, and our Human Resources team will match you with jobs that fit your skills and experience.

Apply today at www.tananachiefs.org/careers.



UPCOMING EVENTS

SEP
7

TCC Offices Closed
Labor Day

OCT
3

Feeding Our Souls: An Indigenous Healing Event
11:00am - 4:00pm • Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center, Building A • Follow our social media for more information.

OCT
12

TCC Offices Closed
Indigenous Peoples Day

OCT
16

TCC Executive Board Meeting
8:30am - 5:00pm • Chief Peter John Tribal Building, 6th Floor Board Room

OCT
18-22

National Congress of American Indians
Palm Springs, CA • www.ncai.org/event/83rd-annual-convention-and-marketplace

OCT
22-24

Alaska Federation of Natives
Anchorage, AK • nativefederation.org/convention/

NOV
3-5

TCC Fall Summit
8 Star Event Center • Fairbanks, AK
More information to come.