

# Alaska Tribal Health Compacting

Alberta Unok, President and CEO, Alaska Native Health Board

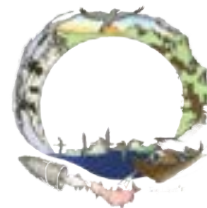
Monique Martin, Vice President of Intergovernmental Affairs, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Jacoline Bergstrom, Executive Director Health Services, Tanana Chiefs Conference

**April 2025**



ALASKA NATIVE  
TRIBAL HEALTH  
CONSORTIUM



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

# Overview

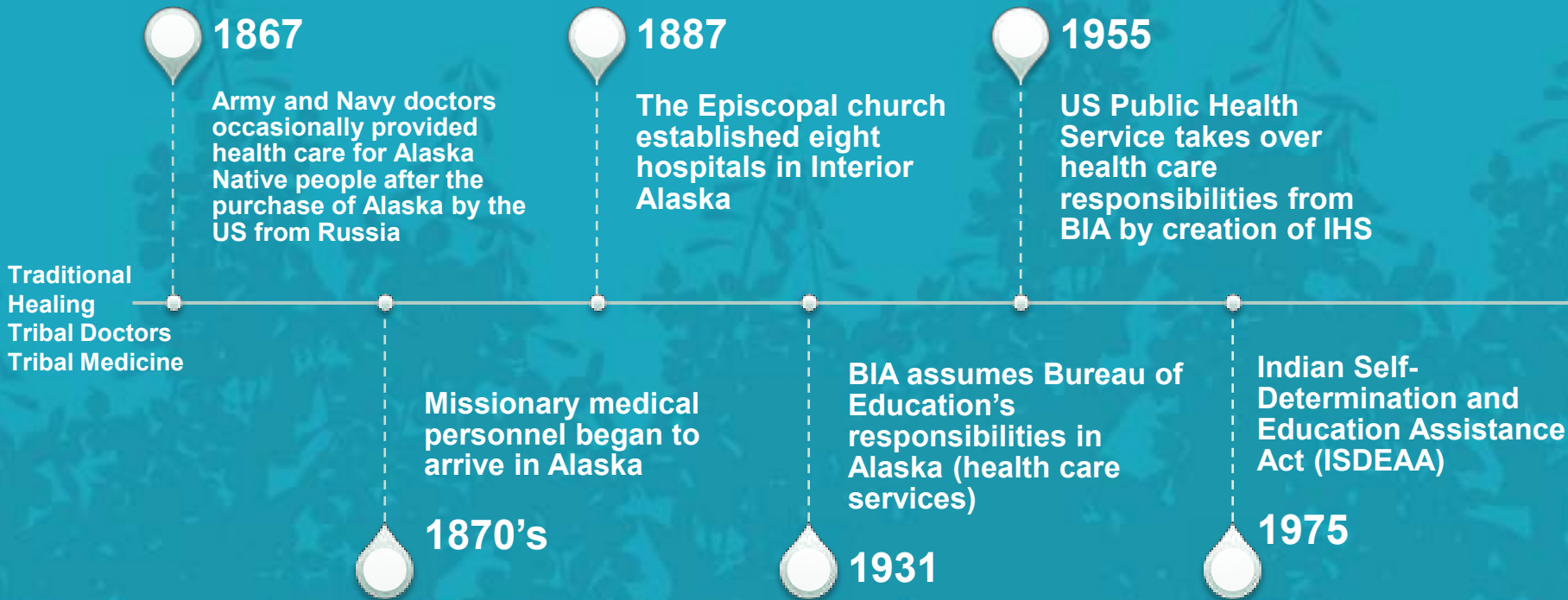
- Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB)
- Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS)
- Alaska Tribal Health Compact (ATHC)
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)
- Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC)
- Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC)

# Alaska Native Health Board



- **Established in 1968:** Over 55 years of advocacy
- **Advocacy:** Recognized as the Voice for Tribal Health
- **Mission:** To promote the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being and pride of Alaska Native people
- **Honors:** Tribal Self-Governance & Self-Determination
- **Coordinates the Alaska Tribal Health Compact** Negotiations bi-annually

# History of Alaska Native Health



# Alaska Native Health History 1953-1997

- Alaska Native Services (ANS) Hospital built in 1953
- Built to care for Alaska Native people suffering from tuberculosis, a huge epidemic in rural Alaska at the time
- Formerly operated by the Indian Health Service (IHS)



1953



1997



A group of Native American dancers, likely from the Northern Plains, are performing on a stage. They are wearing traditional regalia, including long, dark, fur-trimmed robes and multi-layered skirts with horizontal bands of red, white, and brown. The dancers are barefoot and have their arms raised in a synchronized gesture. In the background, a large audience of people, including children and adults, is seated on the floor, watching the performance. The setting appears to be a large indoor space, possibly a museum or a community center, with a high ceiling and bright lighting. A large screen is visible in the upper right corner of the frame.

# Tribal Self-Governance



# Contracting and Compacting

- Contracting is the first step in Tribes exercising self-determination in healthcare by taking on limited contracts to provide specific services for a specific dollar amount.
- Compacting is the ability of Indian Tribes to have autonomy and to assume the responsibility for programs and services administered to them on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior through contractual agreements.

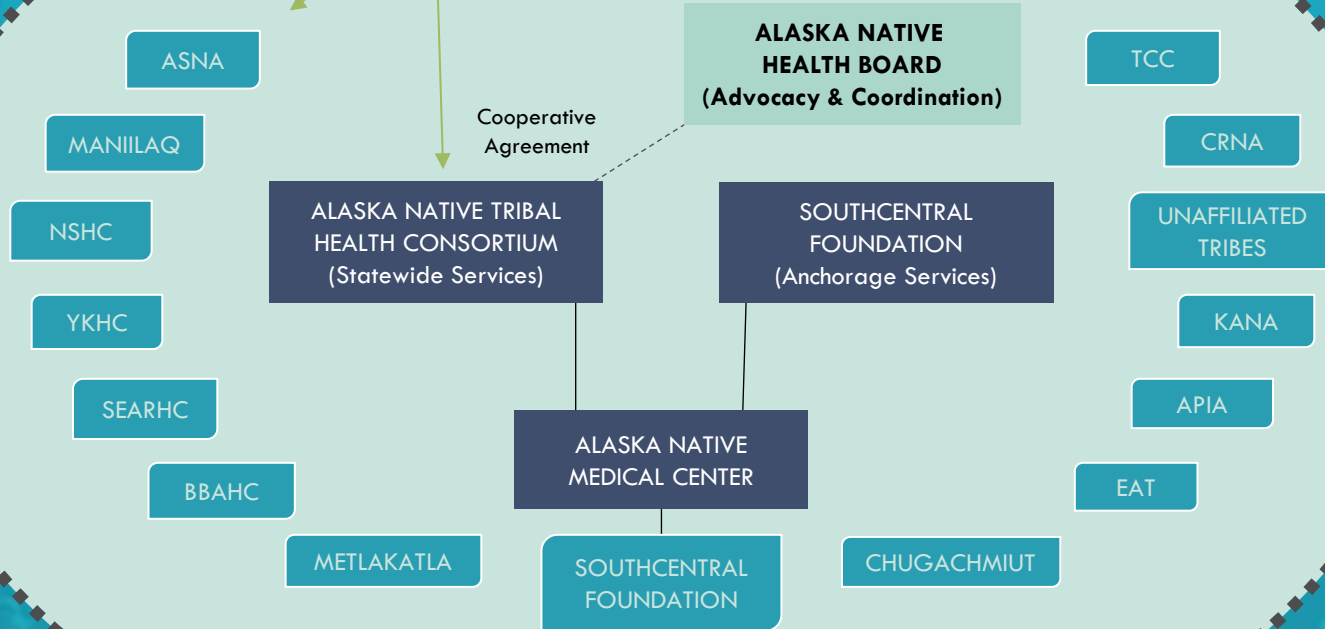
# Alaska Tribal Health Compact Co-Signers

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (1997)	Kenaitze Indian Tribe (2006)	Native Village of Tanana (2022)
Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association (1995)	Ketchikan Indian Corporation (1998)	Norton Sound Health Corporation (1995)
Arctic Slope Native Association (1998)	Knik Tribal Council (2009)	Seldovia Village Tribe (1995)
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation (1995)	Kodiak Area Native Association (1995)	Southcentral Foundation (1995)
Chickaloon Native Village (2011)	Maniilaq Association (1995)	SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (1995)
Chugachmiut (1995)	Metlakatla Indian Community (1997)	Tanana Chiefs Conference (1995)
Copper River Native Association (1995)	Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium (2000)	Yakutat Tlingit Tribe (2003)
Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments (2000)	Native Village of Eklutna (1995)	Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (1995)
Eastern Aleutian Tribes, Inc. (1997)	Native Village of Eyak (2011)	



# ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM

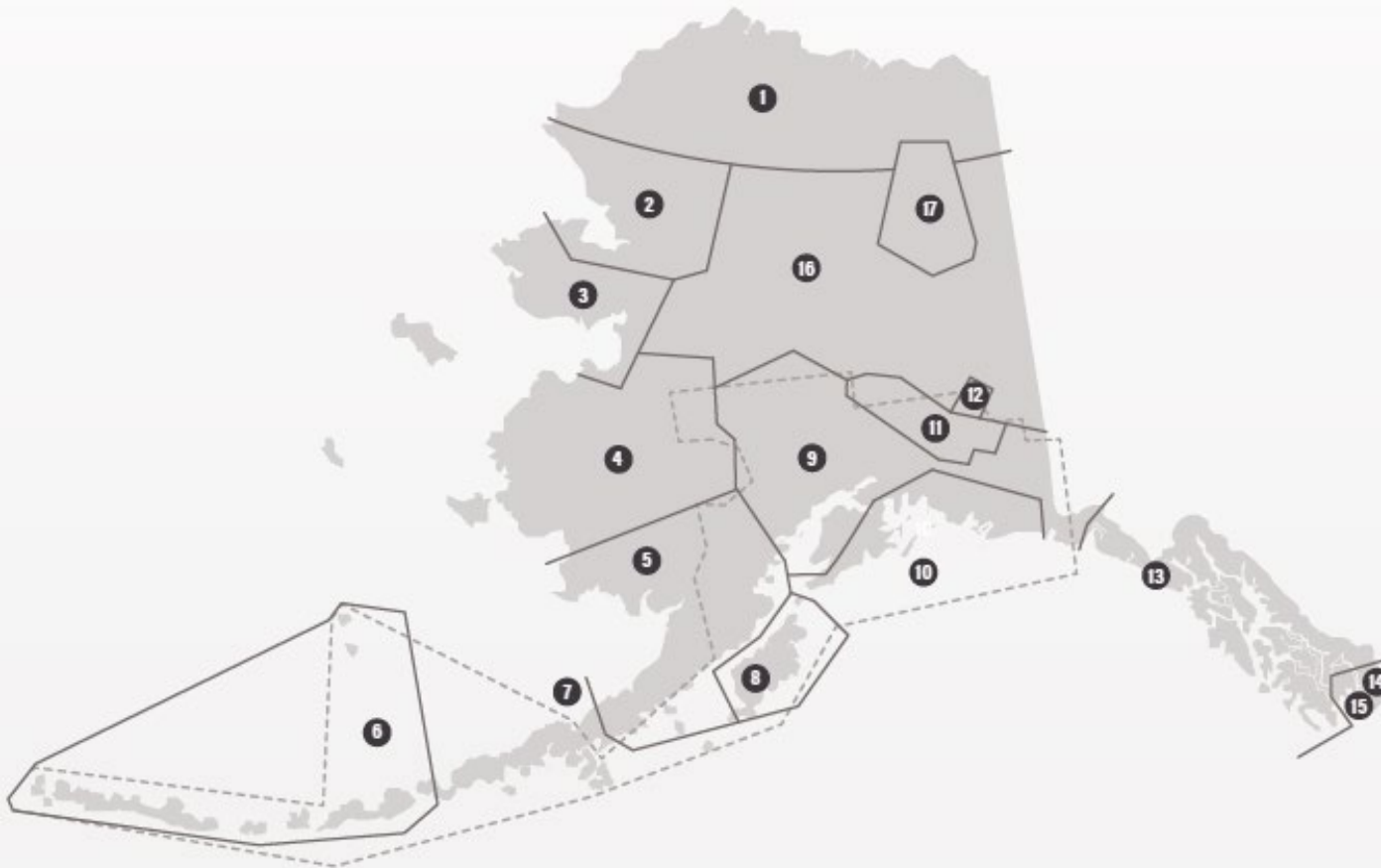
## INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE



Regional and Local Health Providers

TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

# Regional Tribal Health Locations



1. Arctic Slope Native Association
2. Maniilaq Association
3. Norton Sound Health Corporation
4. Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation
5. Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation
6. Aleutian Pribilof Island Association
7. Eastern Aleutian Tribes
8. Kodiak Area Native Association
9. Southcentral Foundation (dotted line)
10. Chugachmiut
11. Copper River Native Association
12. Mt. Sanford Tribal Consortium
13. SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium
14. Ketchikan Indian Community
15. Metlakatla Indian Community
16. Tanana Chiefs Conference
17. Council of Athabascan Tribal Government

# ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM

## Referral Pattern and Telehealth Network

Same Scale Comparison - Alaska Area to Lower 48 States



# Impact of Alaska Tribal Health System

Alaska Native Health Board  
ATHS Economic Impact Study updated 2021

## Economic

- Supports over 24,600 jobs
- Accounts for 5% of jobs in AK
- Generates over \$3.7 billion in economic activity annually

## Voice

- Voice of Alaska Native people guides what we do
- Set direction
- Success Model



# Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

- Created in 1998 with Congressional authorization
- Provides statewide health services
- Supports all Alaska Tribal health organizations and communities
- Employs 3,000+ staff members



# ANTHC: Operation Areas

- Support Services
- Community Health
- Environmental Health
- Alaska Native Medical Center



# Consortium Business Support Services

The CBSS provides support services for ANTHC and ANMC:

- Administration
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Health Information Technology (IT)
- Marketing and Communications
- Grants Planning
- Risk Management



# Community Health Services

## Health Care Provider Training:

Community Health Aides  
Behavioral Health Aides  
Dental Health Aides

## Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Colorectal Cancer Screen  
Injury Prevention

## Statewide Technical Assistance & Specialty Care

HIV Clinical Care and HIV/STI Prevention  
Hepatitis Clinic  
Assessment of Arctic Warming Impact

## Health Care Research:

Hepatitis B and C care  
Tobacco Research  
Improving Oral Health





# Community Health Services

## FY24 Highlights

### Health Aide Programs

- First Integrated Health Aide Forum held
  - Continuing Education
- Behavioral Health Aide Training Center
  - 5th Anniversary
- 11 Expanded Function Dental Health Aides I

### Alaska Tribal Cancer Advisory Network (AkTCAN)

### 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Alaska Indigenous Research Program





# Dept of Environmental Health & Engineering

## **Sanitation Facilities:**

Sanitation facilities design and construction  
Energy efficiency upgrades

## **Utility Management Support:**

Utility billing  
Emergency response  
Construction skills training

## **Environmental Health Support:**

Community environmental health  
Institutional environment health consultation and  
ANTHC Safety program

## **Health Facilities Support:**

Clinic design and construction  
Maintenance and improvement projects for regional  
hospitals

# Dept of Environmental Health & Engineering

## FY24 Program Highlights

100 local employees were hired for construction labor  
Contributing \$1.9 million to local economies.

Scattered Sites program: Septic systems, wells, water  
filtration systems, and sanitation facility designs in 21  
communities, bringing 31 homes online.

250 water and sanitation projects  
including 35 planning projects, 63 design projects, and  
implementing projects in 146 communities.

Tribal Water Center provided 8 free trainings  
Serving 75 communities & 144 students





# Alaska Native Medical Center





# Alaska Native Medical Center



- Located in Anchorage
- Tertiary referral, 182-bed hospital
- Alaska's first Level II Trauma Center
- Level II Pediatric Trauma Center
- ANTHC & SCF operate programs at ANMC under the terms of Public Law 105-83

## Alaska Native Medical Center



### FY24 Numbers



Births:  
1,426



Inpatient  
Discharges: 8,186



Surgical  
Cases: 19,797



Emergency Department  
Visits: 58,428



Total Inpatient  
Days: 52,561



Specialty Clinic  
Procedures: 24,475

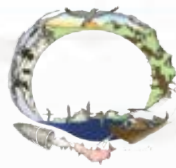


Specialty Clinic  
Visits: 126,877

# Serving Traditional Foods







Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

# **TCC Health Services Overview**

Tribal Affairs Committee

Jacoline Bergstrom, Executive Director Health Services

Vice –Chair Association of Tribal Health Directors

April 15, 2025





# About Us

We are organized as *Dena' Nena' Henash* or “Our Land Speaks”;

Alaska Native, non-profit tribal consortium with 42 members, charged with advancing Tribal self-determination and enhancing regional Native unity.

We provide services while balancing traditional Athabascan and Alaska Native values with modern demands.

We work toward meeting the health and social service needs of Tribal members and beneficiaries throughout our region. We are one of 26 co-signers to the Alaska Tribal Health Compact, serving ~ 12% of the total Alaska Native / American Indian population in Alaska.

Service Population around 19,500 in Interior Alaska

- ~16,500 Alaska Native /American Indian people

- ~3,000 non-IHS beneficiaries in rural communities and Veterans in the region

# **TCC's VISION STATEMENT: HEALTHY STRONG UNIFIED TRIBES**

## **Health Services'**

### **Vision**

*Healthy People Across Generations*

### **Mission**

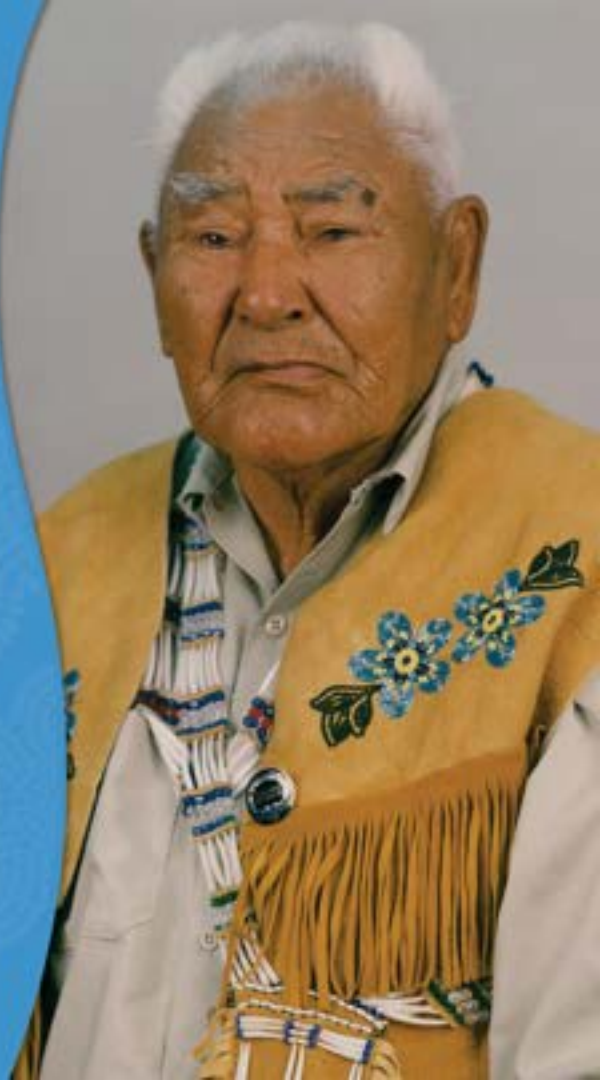
*TCC Health Services, In Partnership with Those We Serve,  
Promotes and Enhances Spiritual, Physical, Mental and  
Emotional Wellness Through Education, Prevention and the  
Delivery of Quality Services*

# **TCC's GUIDING PRINCIPLE: CH'EGHWTSEN' TRUE LOVE**

*"Accessible and trusted world-class  
services provided with unconditional  
love, compassion, dignity and  
respect"*

*"Hear me"*

Chief Peter John, Minto



# Corporate Values: True Love

**T**rust

**R**esiliency

**U**nified

**E**mpathy

**L**isten

**O**wnership

**V**oice

**E**xcellence



**Andy Jimmie, 2<sup>nd</sup> traditional Chief TCC**  
**Former Chairman TCC Regional Health Board, Alaska Native Health Board**  
**& National Indian Health Board**

# Our Region

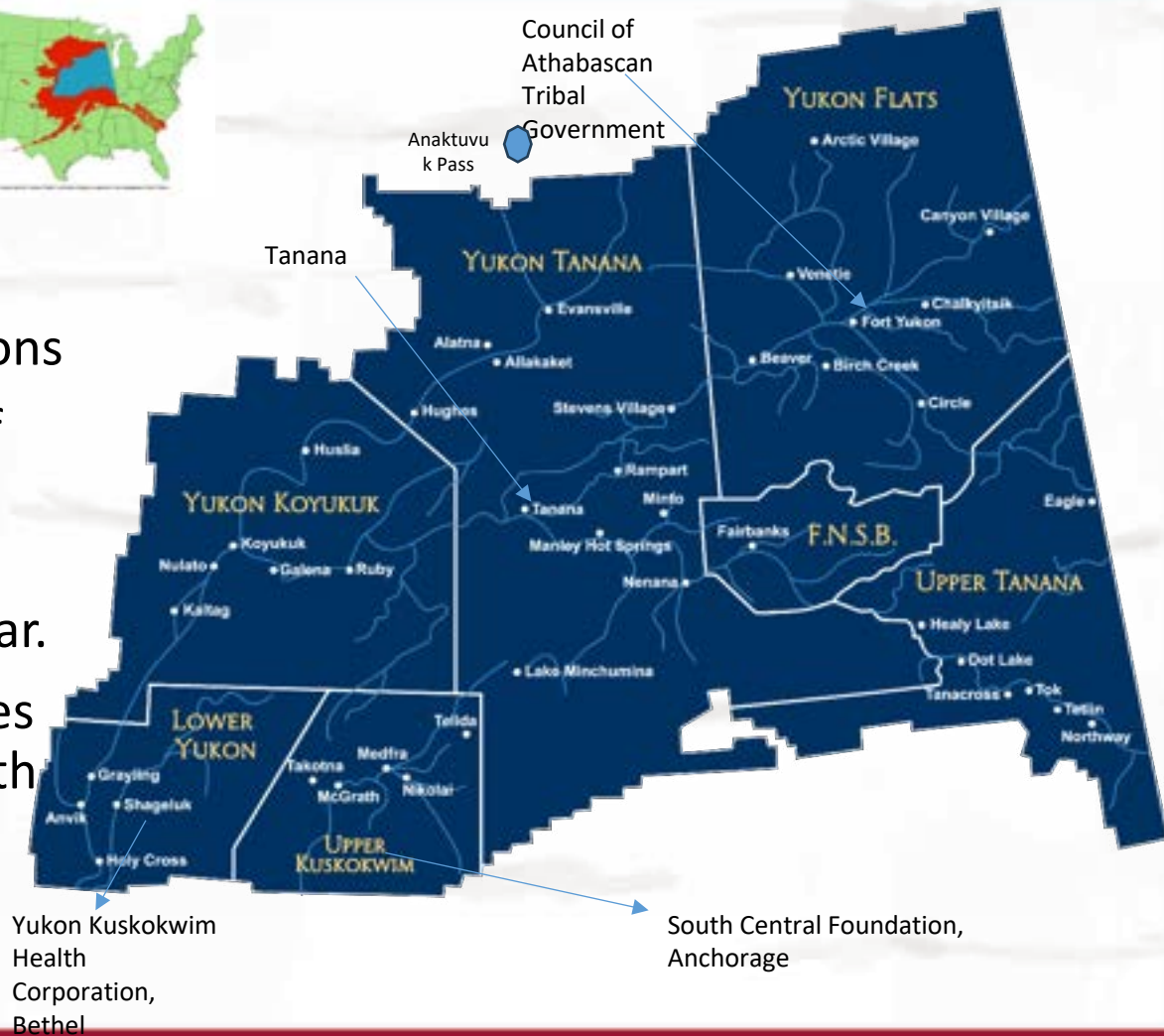


39 villages, 37 federally recognized Tribes; 6 sub-regions

235,000 square miles, 37% of the State of Alaska.

Only 11 villages have road access, at least part of the year.

Health services responsibilities shared with other Tribal health organizations





# TCC Board Structure & Funding

- Full Board of Directors (N=42), 1 seat for each Tribe/Tribal organization
  - Annual Full Board of Directors meeting
  - Tribal resolutions provide direction
- Executive Board = 9 seats (elected /staggered three year terms)
  - 6 Sub-regional Board Members & 3 officers
  - Advisory members: Health Board Chair, Elder Advisor, Youth Advisor
- Board Committees
  - Regional Health Board
  - Advocacy Committee & Budget & Planning Committee
- Funding
  - Federal (IHS, BIA)
  - State and Federal Grants
  - 3rd party collections
    - Medicaid, Medicare, Private Insurance, VA



Traditional Chiefs of TCC region, 1915

# Full Board of Directors

## Executive Board

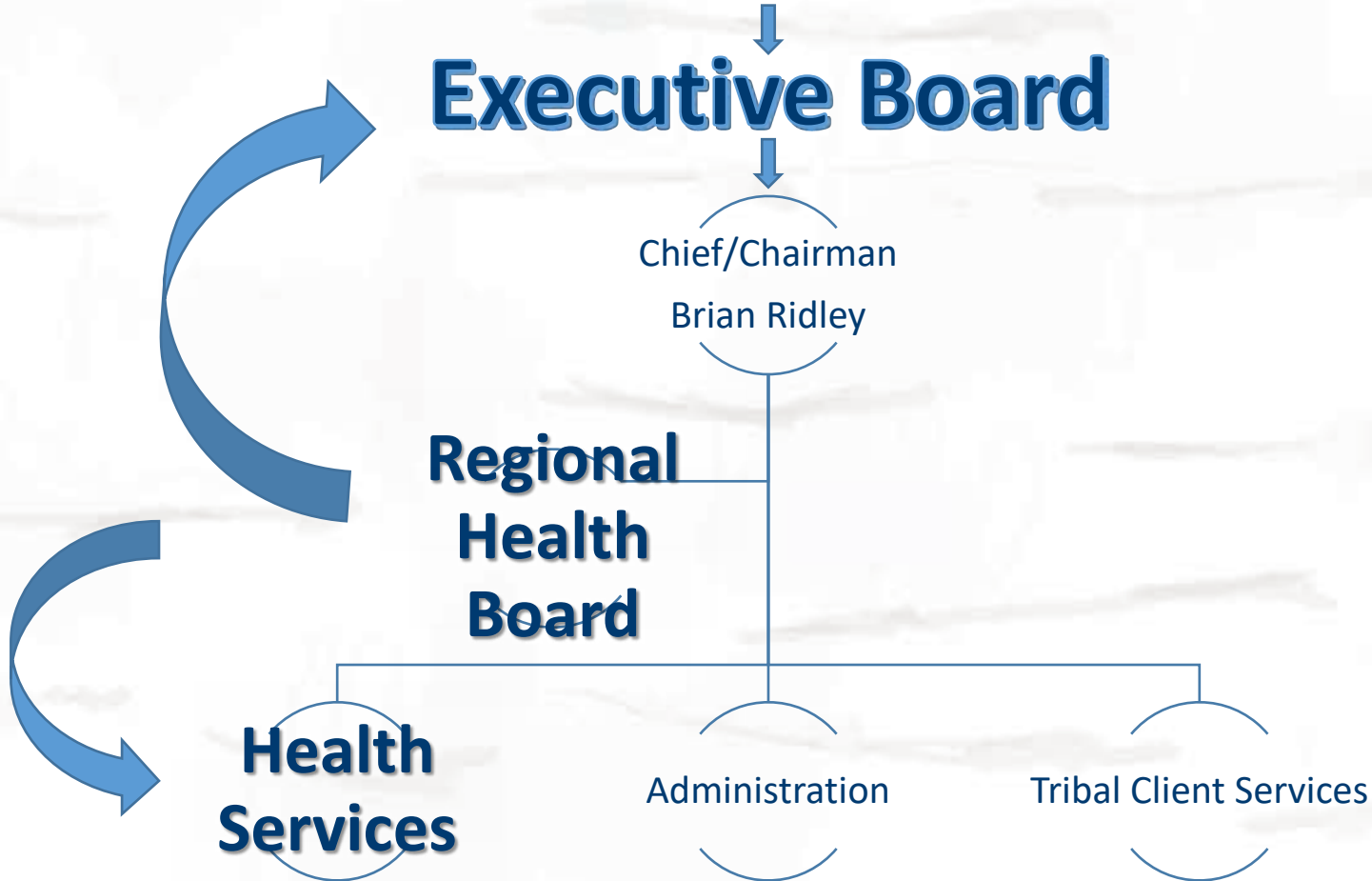
Chief/Chairman  
Brian Ridley

## Regional Health Board

Health  
Services

Administration

Tribal Client Services



# TCC Leadership

- Brian Ridley, Elected Chief/Chairman, President/CEO as of March 2023 (1<sup>st</sup> term 2023 - 2026)
- Strengthening the Organization & Supporting Tribes, using Self Governance principles
  - **Post-pandemic** adaptations workforce & services
  - Infrastructure opportunities for our Tribes
  - Food security concerns
  - Public safety concerns
  - Behavioral Health needs
  - Elder services needs



Brian Ridley, Native Village of Eagle  
TCC President/CEO & Chief/Chairman,  
Alaska Vice President National Congress of  
American Indians

# Remote Communities in the Interior

- 11 out of 39 communities have (limited) road –access
  - Most rural Patients rely on airline traffic
  - Medevacs for medical emergencies
- 13 communities with limited sanitation facilities
  - No running water in homes; challenging for infectious diseases
  - Several communities in need of new clinics
- Limited internet access
  - Broadband limitations
  - Limits telehealth reliability
  - limits rural telework options





# Challenges for TCC Region: Social Determinants of Health

- Social Determinants of Health
  - Water and Sanitation infrastructure needs
  - Food security – salmon crisis / climate impacts
  - Historical trauma, loss of language, culture, boarding schools
  - Limited access to Education / Jobs in rural communities
- Lifestyle - behavioral related indicators of health
  - Tobacco & substance use
  - Obesity & Diabetes rates
  - Cancer rates
  - Immunization rates



Circle breakup/flood, 2023



Eagle, breakup, May 13, 2023, photo Ned Rozell

# Community Infrastructure



Arctic Village, new washeteria



Hughes, washeteria 1988



Stevens Village, washeteria



Galena Water plant  
Aging infrastructure



Outhouse,  
Honey bucket,  
Mini-pass system



# Challenges for TCC Region – Food Security

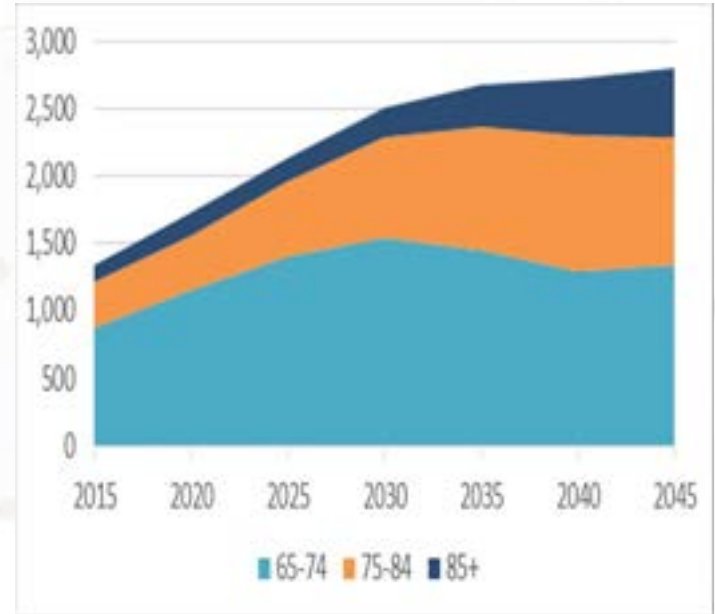


TCC Secretary Treasure, Charlie Wright –

# Strategic Planning Approach - Tribally Driven

- Executive Team Leadership Team & Executive Board
- Data driven – Baldrige Framework
- Input all stakeholders through:
  - Tribal resolutions
  - Sub-regional meetings
  - Community meetings with TCC Leadership
  - Patient/ client feedback
    - Surveys / focus groups
    - complaints /suggestions
  - Staff feedback

Population Growth projections for Alaska  
Native elder population in TCC Region (ANTHC-  
epicenter 2022)



An/AI population estimate AK Interior: 16,966  
**Birth Rate:** 15.8 / 1,000 (12.8 AK population)  
**Life expectancy:** 69.5 years (78.2 AK population)



## **Trends/Concerns from Board & Community Members**

- Meth use, opioid addictions, fentanyl overdoses
- domestic violence /violence associated with addictions
- Public safety
- Lack of jobs
- Fish Disaster; food security; climate change
- State fiscal crisis, energy assistance reductions
- Lack of reliable internet access
- School closures in small villages
- Travel challenges / wait times for appointments

# Strategic Initiatives Health 2023 - 2025

- **Increase Access to all Services**
  - Increase Staffing / Growing our own
  - work through pandemic “backlog”
  - Increase Telehealth utilization
  - Address challenges with Patient travel / Housing – partnerships
  - Address village clinic infrastructure challenges
- **Finish Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center expansion and open expanded services:**
  - Address Workforce challenges
  - Capitalize on partnerships with other Health entities
  - new service lines
- **Improve Wellness /Prevention & Behavioral health –integration & Access**
  - Improve Integration with Primary care & increase access to early intervention and specialty services
  - Expand Mental Health/Substance Use prevention & access to care
  - Increase access to continued care / step-down programs
  - Address tobacco rates, obesity and other behavioral factors
  - Implementation of indigenous healing practices
- **Address Water & Sanitation needs**
  - 13 communities without water/sewer in-home -partnerships
  - Aging infrastructure in other communities
  - Capitalize on funding opportunities /advocacy to reduce administrative barriers
- **Achieve Re-accreditation of services ( Clinical, Behavioral Health, Lab, Radiology)**
  - 2023 –reaccreditation AAAHC & ACS –Accreditation
  - 2024 –re-accreditation CARF



# Pandemic Impacts

Increased adaptability of how we deliver services

- Telehealth, outside the 4-walls
- Challenges
  - Recruitment/workforce
  - Supply chain challenges
  - Inflation impact to rural communities
    - Disproportionally impacting off-the road communities
    - Increased cost of goods & fuel
- Opportunities
  - Increased telehealth Services & expanded authorities
  - Broadband expansion \$ for rural communities
  - Infrastructure funding for water & Sewer projects



# Workforce

- Impacts from the Pandemic continue
  - Health care staff are adaptable, but increased burned -out
  - Increased # staff early retirement/ career change
  - increased request for part-time
  - Despite increase in telehealth, access to care may be reduced
- Medical Inflation
  - Significant increases in wages and incentives
  - Fewer Locums available and at higher cost
- Loan repayment options
  - SHARP 1 & 2 – professional shortage designation required
  - Sharp 3 – challenge = requires 100% paid by employer
    - consider part-time options or job-share for loan repayment





# Workforce challenges – “growing our own”

## TCC CHAP TRAINING CENTER



## GROW OUR OWN

Medical Assistant

## Apprenticeship Program

We are looking for motivated individuals to join our health care team, while attending virtual classes weekly for 1 year to become a Certified Clinical Medical Assistant.

### What Will You Learn?

How to record patient history.  
Measure patient vital signs (taking blood pressure, heart rate and pulse).  
Give patients injections and/or medications.

### Apply Today!

Applications are being accepted now, with classes beginning April 2024. Participants will be working full-time at Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center as soon as they are accepted and cleared through Human Resources.

**This is a competitive program and we will only be selecting 4 participants!**

### Questions? Contact:

Whitney Padino, Health Education Program Manager  
907-851-6682 ext. 3042  
[whitney.padino@tanachiefs.org](mailto:whitney.padino@tanachiefs.org)

Learn more at:  
[www.tanachiefs.org/imagoprogram/](http://www.tanachiefs.org/imagoprogram/)



SCAN TO  
LEARN MORE!



Tanana  
Chiefs  
Conference

This apprenticeship program is in partnership with Alaska Primary Care Association.

Will be a  
paid full-time  
position.

Working hours:  
Monday-Friday  
8am - 5pm

# Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center Expansion

Designed to meet the needs of our patient population through 2030  
Bringing care closer to home



# Chief Andrew Isaac Health Center Expansion

- 1.Expanded Existing Services** : Radiology Services with CT-Scan, Expanded Lab services, expanded urgent care /specialties  
**2.New Services** : Ambulatory Surgery Center, Cancer Care & Infusion Center, Audiology, Ophthalmology





# Behavioral Health

- Increased need for services
  - Challenges:
    - State grant funding reduced / 1115 waivers did not offset cost
    - Provider enrollment delays
    - Prior authorization requirements
  - Opportunities:
    - Reduce administrative burden-reduce documentation requirements
    - Support BH-SPA proposed changes to remove / reduce Prior authorizations.



Old Minto Family Recovery Camp



# On another positive note....

**Opportunities** through continued strong collaboration with statewide and federal partners

- Tribal Health -Medicaid Taskforce
- 100% FMAP
- HB 151 –continuous eligibility for age 0-6
- Improve / expedite patient /client (re)-enrollment process & provider (re)-enrollment process
- Streamline travel-re-authorization & reimbursement process for Tribal health organizations performing Medicaid-travel

**Assurances:** Tribal Health Organizations are providing quality health care and have strong quality assurance policies and procedures in place.





## **IHS Team Award 2022: TCC Cancer Care Committee**

- Data analysis of Adenoma (polyp) Detection Rate (ADR) among TCC Patients during Colonoscopies.
- ADR was found to be significantly higher.
- Findings led to adjusted screening interval for colonoscopy from 10 to 5 years.
- Findings published\* in collaboration with ANTHC epi-center



Dr. Steve Gerrish,  
MD



Jenni Prewitt, BS

**\*Elevated Adenomatous Polyp Detection Rate Among Alaska Native and American Indian People in Interior Alaska, 2018-2022**

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# Quality Management Recognition

- **SyncTimes Patient Experience Award (2023)**
  - TCC received the Patient Experience Award for timely response by Patient Experience staff when requested through the SyncTimes tablets in each exam room
- **Accreditation Association for Ambulatory HealthCare (AAAHC) Bernard Kershner Quality Improvement Award (2024)**
  - TCC received this National award for a quality improvement study that focused on accelerated Hepatitis C Screening of our patients



Jenni Prewitt, Data Analyst &  
Vanessa Ketzler, Quality Management  
Director

# **TCC Pharmacy Recognition**

## **May 2023 Spotlight**

### **IHS National Pharmacy Council Awards Committee**

Recognition for:

- COVID-19 Response
- Clinical pharmacist specialist provider with full prescriptive authority
- Pharmacist-driven provision of
  - tobacco cessation counseling & medication,
  - family planning, prenatal care,
  - Anticoagulation,
  - independent lab ordering
- Robust tele-pharmacy services in 24 remote village clinics



TCC Pharmacy Staff

**Alaska Pharmacist Association 2023  
Awards for TCC Pharmacists:**

Dan Nelson, Bowl of Hygieia Award

Samantha Ervin, Distinguished  
Pharmacist of the year





# TCC Health representatives / subject matter experts, statewide & national representation



**Crystal Stordahl**, Community Health Aide program (CHAP) director/Community Health Center (CHC) Director

- TCC Representative to the Alaska CHAP Directors
- Alaska's delegate to CHAP -Tribal Advisory Council,
- advising the Indian Health Services on CHAP Nationalization



**Melissa Clemente**, CHC grant coordinator

- Expert on UDS –(CHC) outcome measures /statewide acknowledged
- Region-X steering committee member for UDS + health outcome measures



**Dan Nelson**, Pharmacy Director

- TCC Representative to Tribal Pharmacy Directors committee
- Pharmacy representative to Medicaid Task Force
- Subject matter expert on Pharmacy rules & Regulations
- Former chair of Alaska Pharmacist Association



**Marilyn Andon**, Deputy Health Director

- TCC representative ANTHC Board
- Alaska Medicaid Taskforce Member
- Alaska Alternate delegate to the SAMHSA Tribal Advisory Council



**Jacoline Bergstrom**, Executive Director Health Services

- Vice-chair, Alaska Tribal Health Directors
- Alaska Native Health Board, legislative Committee
- National Indian Health Services Budget Formulation Workgroup, Technical representative for Alaska
- Alaska's delegate to the national IHS-Purchased/ Referred Care Workgroup
- Alaska Medicaid Taskforce member

# **“Anaa Basee”**

