



Office of the
CHAIRMAN & PRESIDENT

April 8, 2016

The Honorable Paul Seaton
Alaska State Capitol Building
State Capitol Room 102
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: SB 89 Hearing in House Health & Social Services Committee Thursday 4/7/2016

Dear Representative Seaton,

I am writing in response to your request for information on sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), teen pregnancy rates and sex education in Alaska. For the first time since 2006, rates for syphilis, gonorrhea, and chlamydia all increased nationwide in 2014. Having other STDs also increases the likelihood of contracting and transmitting HIV, which is a significant concern here in Alaska where STD prevalence is high; Alaska has repeatedly ranked 1st or 2nd in Chlamydia infection rates in the nation since the early 2000s. In 2014, the Chlamydial infection rate continued to exceed the US rate by 73% - 778 cases per 100,000 compared to 450 cases per 100,000 nationally. The Alaska gonorrhea infection rate had increased to outbreak levels between 2009 and 2010 and in 2014 Alaska still struggled with a rate above the national rate of infection - 180 cases per 100,000 versus 111 cases per 100,000 nationally. These statistics most significantly impact women, young people ages 15-24 years of age and minority populations, especially those living in the rural areas of the state.

The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) recognizes the impact of STDs on the health and well-being of Alaskans and supports school- and community-based education on healthy relationships and safe sexual behaviors. Research shows that comprehensive education about sexuality is effective and has a positive impact on delaying sexual activity and increasing safe sexual behaviors among youth. The ANTHC HIV/STD Prevention Program currently addresses Alaska's high STD rates through www.iknowmine.org (IKM), a well-established statewide multi-media prevention education and outreach website with free condom distribution and at-home STD testing open to all Alaskans.

With community support and engagement, the program has also developed healthy life skills and healthy relationship curricula for Alaska Native middle school and high school aged youth geared towards helping youth make responsible decisions about sexual behaviors and sexual health. Our own evaluation efforts have demonstrated that youth who went through the Native It's Your Game middle school curriculum had more reasons not to have sex, gained knowledge about STDs and condoms and felt more confident about getting and using condoms if they choose to have sex.

Our Vision:

Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM

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Providing barrier-free access to age-appropriate education on reproductive health and sexual matters that meets national standards for sex education is crucial to addressing Alaska's high rates of STDs and sexual violence and to raising healthy, confident and successful youth.

For more information, please contact the ANTHC HIV/STD Prevention Program Manager, Connie Jessen, at cmjessen@anthc.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Andy Teuber', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andy Teuber
Chairman and President