

# SB 16

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## ESTABLISHING ALASKA COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE APPRECIATION DAY

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# The Community Health Aide (CHA) Profession is Unique to Alaska

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- CHAs work under the supervision of a physician.
- Because CHAs live and work in remote areas, they communicate regularly with physicians by video call, telephone, e-mail or radio.
- CHAs also coordinate the appointments of other visiting health care professionals, including public health nurses, dentists, and doctors.

# Evolution of the CHA Program

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- **1950's:** During the tuberculosis epidemic in Alaska, trained local villagers helped ensure that their neighbors received their medications regularly.
- **1956:** Dr. Walter Johnson, staff physician at Bethel ANS Hospital proposed training of village medical aides.
- **1968:** Alaska Area Native Health Service initiated formal Community Health Aide training efforts. CHA/Ps received formal federal recognition and congressional funding in 1968.
- **1973:** On September 10, the first Planning and Advisory Committee meeting for Health Aide Programs in Alaska was held.
- **1976:** Twenty additional CHA position were approved by the U.S. Congress in the ANHS Budget, increasing these from the original 185 positions in 157 villages to 205 positions in 185 villages.
- **1998:** Community Health Aide Program Certification Board (CHAPCB) created by the federal government and charged with formalizing the process for maintaining community health aides/practitioners, dental health aides, and behavioral health aides/practitioners training and practice standards and policies.
- **2001:** \$3 million in federal funding received to increase dental health and behavioral health aide numbers.
- **2003:** Dental Health Aides Certified.
- **2009:** Behavioral Health Aides Certified.

**Today, CHA's function as part of a regional team to assess and provide emergent, acute, and chronic medical care in remote Alaska communities.**





A map of Alaska showing the locations of CHAP Training Centers and Village Clinics. The map includes major cities like Anchorage, Fairbanks, Bethel, and Nome, as well as numerous smaller communities. A legend in the top left corner indicates that blue diamonds represent CHAP Training Centers and red dots represent Village Clinics. A scale bar at the bottom right shows 500 miles.

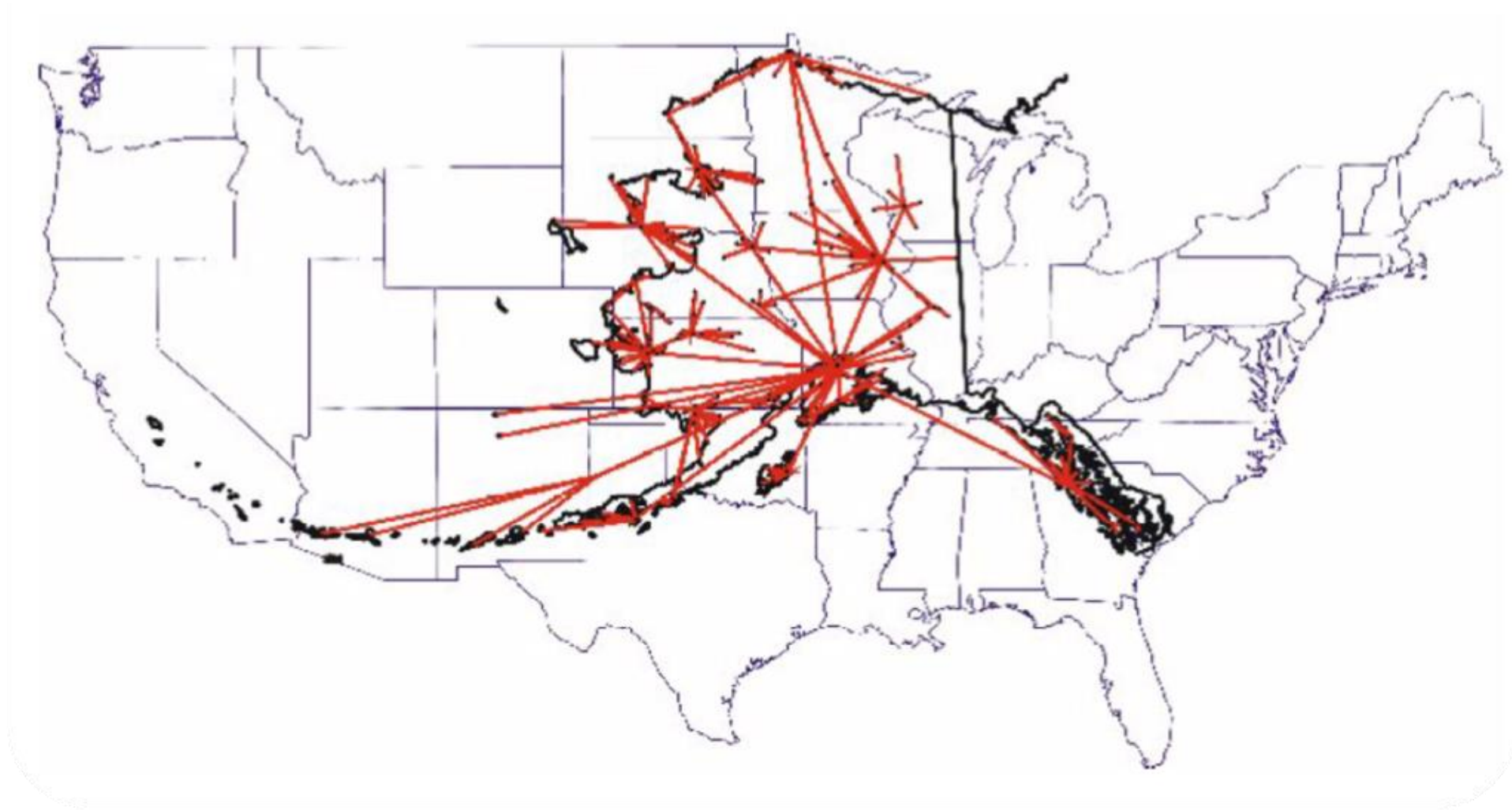
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**CHAs see a variety of patients including elders, pregnant women, infants and children, accident victims, and mental health and chronic disease patients.**





# A “Hub & Spoke” Referral Pattern



# Community Health Aides have been on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19 in rural Alaska.





It is more important than ever that we acknowledge our Community Health Aides for their broad scope of practice and selfless contributions to their communities, regions, and the state.

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**We hope you'll join  
us in showing your  
support by  
establishing  
September 10 as  
Alaska Community  
Health Aide  
Appreciation Day!**