



Alaska Native Health Board

THE VOICE OF ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SINCE 1968

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ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

ALEUTIAN PRIBILOF
ISLANDS ASSOCIATION

ARCTIC SLOPE
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

BRISTOL BAY AREA
HEALTH CORPORATION

CHICKALOON VILLAGE
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

CHUGACHMIUT

COPPER RIVER
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN
TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

EASTERN ALEUTIAN TRIBES

KARLUK IRA
TRIBAL COUNCIL

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE

KETCHIKAN
INDIAN COMMUNITY

KODIAK AREA
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

MANIILAQ ASSOCIATION

METLAKATLA INDIAN
COMMUNITY

MT. SANFORD
TRIBAL CONSORTIUM

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF EKLUKNA

NATIVE VILLAGE OF EYAK

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF TYONEK

NINILCHIK
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

NORTON SOUND
HEALTH CORPORATION

SELDOVIA VILLAGE TRIBE

SOUTHCENTRAL
FOUNDATION

SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

YAKUTAT TLINGIT TRIBE

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM
HEALTH CORPORATION

VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE

March 2, 2023

The Honorable Scott Kawasaki
Alaska Senate
Alaska State Capitol Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Senate Bill 16, Alaska Community Health Aide Appreciation Day

Dear Senator Kawasaki,

The Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB)¹ writes in support of Senate Bill 16 to proclaim September 10th as Alaska Community Health Aide Appreciation Day. The Alaska Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) serves as the backbone of the Alaska Tribal Health System.

The CHAP was developed in the 1960's in response to a number of health concerns, including: the tuberculosis epidemic, high infant mortality and high rates of injury in rural Alaska. In 1968, CHAP received formal recognition and congressional funding. The long history of cooperation and coordination between federal and state governments as well as Native tribal health organizations has facilitated improved health status in rural Alaska.

The program consists of a network of approximately 550 Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps) in over 170 rural Alaska villages. CHA/Ps work within the guidelines of the *Alaska Community Health Aide Manual* (CHAM) in assessing and providing emergent, acute, and chronic care to residents of their respective communities. Alaska CHA/Ps are the front line of healthcare in their communities. CHA/Ps are strongly connected to, respected, and essential members of their communities.

The Alaska CHAP Program has created an international model of a successful tribally-run health program. In Alaska, the program's success has expanded into community level therapists, including behavioral health and dental health. Nationally, it is authorized in federal statute². The Indian Health Service has adopted the model to help deliver care in rural areas of the Lower 48, where providers are hard to recruit and retain.

¹ ANHB was established in 1968 with the purpose of promoting the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being and pride of Alaska Native people. ANHB is the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues and is the advocacy organization for the Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS), which is comprised of tribal health programs that serve all of the 229 Tribes and 180,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people throughout the state. As the statewide tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB helps Alaska's Tribes and Tribal programs achieve effective consultation and communication with state and federal agencies on matters of concern.

² 25 U.S.C. § 1616I.

Our CHA/Ps have contributed to Alaska becoming a global model in the delivery of health care to rural communities around the world. Their commitment to serving their communities during the unprecedented pandemic, is a demonstration of the acknowledgement they deserve.

ANHB offers our full support for SB 16. If you have any comments or questions regarding our letter, please contact ANHB by email at anhb@anhb.org or by telephone at (907) 729-7510.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W F Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Chief William F. Smith, Chairman
Alaska Native Health Board
Tribally-Elected Leader of the Valdez Native Tribe

CC: Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee



March 6, 2023

Senator Scott Kawasaki
State Capitol Room 119
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Support for Senate Bill 16

Senator Kawasaki,

On behalf of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), I write in support of Senate Bill 16, *an Act establishing September 10 as Alaska Community Health Aide Appreciation Day*. ANTHC is a statewide tribal health organization serving 229 tribes and all Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) individuals in Alaska. ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation co-manage the Alaska Native Medical Center, the tertiary care hospital for all AN/AI people in Alaska. ANTHC also provides a wide range of statewide public health, community health, environmental health and other programs and services for Alaska Native people and their communities.

The Community Health Aide Program is a network of approximately 550 Community Health Aides/Practitioners (CHA/Ps) in more than 170 rural Alaska villages. CHA/Ps are part of an established referral relationship that includes mid-level providers, physicians, regional hospitals, and the Alaska Native Medical Center. Each Community Health Aide is selected for training and then hired by their local or regional Tribal Health Organization.

In Anchorage, ANTHC provides CHA/P training on the Alaska Native Medical Campus, with basic training centers in Bethel, Fairbanks, and Nome providing additional regional support. The training focuses on acute, chronic, preventive, and emergency care, delivered over four separate sessions totaling 15 weeks.

The Community Health Aide Program was developed in the 1960's to address the lack of access to health care services in rural Alaska communities. In many of these communities, the Community Health Aide remains the only source of local care, playing an essential and foundational role in the Alaska Tribal Health System.

On behalf of ANTHC, thank you for sponsoring Senate Bill 16 and your support of Alaska's Community Health Aides.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Valerie".

Valerie Nurr'araluk Davidson

ANTHC President/CEO

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
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