



Events

- Angoon:** Dental clinic July 18-22; Eye clinic Aug. 8-11, Aug. 15-19 and Sept. 19-23; Dental hygiene clinic Aug. 29-Sept. 2.
- Hoonah:** Eye clinic July 11-14 and Aug. 15-18; Dental clinic July 11-15; Dental hygiene Aug. 8-12; Dental clinic Sept. 12-26.
- Juneau:** Dental clinic July 26-27; Pediatric dental clinic Aug. 1-5.
- Kake:** 17th annual Kake culture camp July 10-16; Dental clinic July 11-15; Dental hygiene clinic July 25-29; Eye clinic Aug. 1-4; Dental clinic Aug. 8-12 and Sept. 12-16;
- Klawock:** Eye Clinic Aug. 1-5 and Sept. 26-30. Pediatric dental clinic Aug. 22-26. Totem pole raising celebration Aug. 18-20.
- Sitka:** Denture clinic July 25-29; Pediatric dental clinic Aug. 8-12.
- Yakutat:** Dental clinic Aug. 1-5; Eye clinic Aug. 10-12.

Please contact your local SEARHC clinic for more information.

Find it at www.searhc.org

E-mailing a Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital patient

Want to send an email message to a friend or relative who is a patient at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital? Just visit the SEARHC web site and follow the instructions at: <http://www.searhc.org/news/news-meh-email.html>

When you click on the link at the bottom of the page, you will get a blank message form to fill out, which is pre-addressed to the hospital (patient@searhc.org).

Fill in the patient's name on the SUBJECT line. Do not include any attachments. Your message will be received at the hospital's administration office, printed out by our staff and hand delivered to the patient.

Please note:

- Messages can only be delivered Monday through Friday during business hours
- Patients cannot send return messages
- If the patient has already been discharged, your message will be shredded

HealthBeat is produced every two months by the SEARHC Corporate Communications department for SEARHC patients. To be added or removed from our mailing list, or to offer comments or questions, please contact the Corporate Communications office at 907-463-4067.



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SEARHC brings first mobile surgery unit to Alaska



While the transitional care services and surgical services at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital areas undergo renovation, the hospital will continue its surgical operations with the help of a mobile surgery unit, which has been installed near the hospital's emergency room entrance.

The first of its kind to be used in Alaska, the mobile surgery is a fully functional, self-contained operating suite, complete with pre-operative and nurse stations, two patient-care recovery areas and an operating room.

Made by the same company that supplies mobile medical units to the military for use in the field, the unit at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital is certified by Medicare and two leading national healthcare accrediting organizations, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations and the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care.

Randy North, vice president of design and service for the company that builds the units, was in Sitka in early June to oversee the installation. "The mobile surgical unit not only meets, but exceeds requirements for a surgical unit. In the event of a disaster, it could also be used as a triage unit and care for seven patients," he said.

SEARHC expects to use the mobile surgical unit for about five months, until hospital renovations are completed. ❖

Now's the time to schedule back-to-school check-ups



If you have a child starting Headstart, kindergarten or a new school, or a child who wants to participate in school sports in the 2005-2006 school year, now's the time to call your local SEARHC clinic for your child's sports physical or well-child exam.

To make sure that your child is ready for the coming school year, please schedule their appointment today to avoid the last-minute rush! For more information, please call your local SEARHC clinic. ❖

An important message from the President



Recently, delays in Alaska Airlines flights and the announcement of the Alaska Marine Highway's proposed changes to its winter ferry schedule were reported in the news. As many debate the wisdom of the proposed fast ferry experiment, and as Alaska Airlines grapples with its "growing pains," it is unclear how much SEARHC patients can depend on these primary transportation providers to get to and from SEARHC facilities this winter.

As I've commented before, SEARHC's ability to provide accessible health care depends on many factors that are beyond our control, such as reliance on others to provide transportation. While we all wait to see what kind of transportation options will be available to us this winter, each of us can be part of the solution. Whenever the opportunity presents itself, please discuss your family's and community's transportation needs with our transportation representatives and lawmakers. Please express loud and clear how dependant you are on their services and how they can impact your access to health care. Together, we can be a strong voice that helps ensure reliable transportation to SEARHC services.

Ken Brewer

SEARHC helps test new rural healthcare model

Prince of Wales Island residents now have a unique healthcare option that is blazing new trails for rural health care.

The Frontier Extended Stay Clinic, known as FESC, is located within the Alicia Roberts Medical Center. It is designed to address the needs of seriously ill or injured patients who are at least 75 miles from a short-term acute care or critical access hospital and cannot be immediately transported due to weather, darkness or other transportation difficulties. It can also provide patient monitoring and observation services for limited time periods.

Now, ARMC can provide a higher level of care for all of its patients. "We can more easily and safely provide for patients while they await transfer and, in some cases, avoid transferring patients off the island altogether," says ARMC medical director Dr. Matt Dinon.



"Rural advocates across the country are watching this project with great interest..."

Alaska is the first state in the country to test the FESC model. In addition to Klawock, FESC demonstration sites have been established in Unalaska and Glennallen.

"Rural advocates across the country are watching this project with great interest. We hope to demonstrate that FESC services make financial sense and that the end result is better patient care," said SEARHC FESC coordinator Patricia Atkinson. ❖

Providing such services requires more staff, equipment and space. Caring for patients while waiting for medevac is nothing new to ARMC staff. But since extended-stay services have never been reimbursed by Medicare, Medicaid or other third-party payers, the clinic has had to make do with the staff, equipment and facility they already have.

Thanks to a federal grant, ARMC now has additional staff to handle extended stays in the clinic, a dedicated FESC room near the emergency room for patients to stay and newly purchased diagnostic and treatment equipment.

At the pharmacy window: If you don't recognize it, question it

"That's not my medicine!" the woman exclaimed at the pharmacy window. The pharmacist rechecked the label on the bottle against the information in the computer and the tablets in the vial.

"Oh, yes ma'am," the pharmacist said. "This one looks different from your old medication because it is made by a different manufacturer. But I am glad you questioned it. It's always good to be sure."

The next time you pick up a refill at your SEARHC pharmacy and the medication looks different to you, be sure to ask your pharmacist about it.

"We want people to bring any questions about their medications to us," said Bob Young, professional services director at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital. "We use medications from different manufacturers for various reasons, often depending on the contract we have with the wholesaler



or availability," Young said. "It's cost-effective to use generic brands whenever possible, and the money we save helps us add new drugs to our formulary."

A couple of years ago, SEARHC implemented a uniform formulary for all SEARHC facilities. As a result, all

SEARHC pharmacies now carry the same medications. In the past, each site had its own list of medications. If someone visited one clinic and tried to refill a prescription written at another clinic, it might not have been available. Now, thanks to the uniform formulary, the same medications are available at all SEARHC facilities.

This added convenience means, for example, that if someone from Hoonah gets a prescription from a physician at the Juneau Medical Clinic, he or she can have the prescription filled at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital.

But no matter whether you visit your regular SEARHC pharmacy or a different one, if you have a question about your medication, it's always good to ask. And remember: Never take a medicine if you are not sure what it is for or if you don't recognize it. ❖

Patient Tip: To be or not to be listed in the hospital directory - HIPAA gives you a choice

When patients are admitted to Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital they are asked if they want their name listed in the hospital directory. SEARHC is required to ask this and other questions to comply with federal privacy regulations known as HIPAA, the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. Thanks to HIPAA, each patient can decide how their information is used or shared for certain purposes, such as being listed in the hospital directory.

The benefits of being listed in the directory at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital are:

- Family or friends who call or come to the hospital and ask for you will be transferred or directed to your room.
- Family or friends who call the hospital and ask about you may be told your general condition.
- Family or friends who call the hospital and ask if you are there will be told that you are in the hospital.

If you choose not to be listed in the directory:

- Family or friends who call or come to the hospital and ask for you will be told that you are not listed as a patient.
- Flowers and/or cards sent to you will not be delivered.

The next time you call or visit someone you know is staying in Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital and you are told that the person is not listed, remember the choice HIPAA gives patients. That person may have decided not to be listed in the directory.

For more information about your privacy rights, please call the SEARHC Compliance/Privacy Officer at 907-364-4466.

Program trains teens to help with medical emergencies



A pilot program partnered by the SEARHC Emergency Medical Service team and 4-H of Alaska offers teens a unique opportunity to learn valuable skills while helping their community.

Just organized this year, the Sitka Youth First Responders program consists of 11 members who were recruited from Mt. Edgecumbe and Sitka high schools. The youth are trained as emergency trauma technicians and emergency medical technicians.

According to Bill Winslow, a SEARHC employee who is the coordinator for the Sitka Youth First Responders, "Our mission is to instill core values and serve the Sitka community by assisting various medical-related agencies provide quality emergency medical services." He said the youth will also learn first responder skills and explore medical careers.

"Right now, our goal is to build a foundation for the team so that they can be

self-supporting and to have a program that can be easily adopted by other communities in Southeast Alaska."

During this past year the youth helped Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital and the Sitka Fire Department with two mass casualty drills, acting as patients. They also helped medical personnel during the Alaska State EMS Symposium and served on stand-by as first responders for a mini-triathlon in Sitka. The team plans to be first responders during the Alpine Run in July, assisting the Sitka Fire Department.

"We have three adult leaders for the group, and there are always at least two at each function. We also get help from the Sitka Fire Department," Winslow said.

The SFD volunteers voted the team in as special members of the department this year. Two team members participated in SEARHC's Village Health

Occupations Program job shadowing program. One team member is doing a summer internship at a hospital in her village. The team also helped a member raise money for a trip to India to help at an orphanage.

In the fall, the team will stand by at the high school athletic games and will also help with other events in town, such as blood drives and the fire department's public education program in the elementary schools. There will also be opportunities for the team to participate in EMS events and help organize other teams in Southeast Alaska.

For more information, please call Bill Winslow at 907-966-8844. ❖

New staff, new services at Juneau Medical Center

The Juneau Medical Center has added several new positions, which means expanded services are now available to SEARHC patients.

Among the new staff are:

Social worker Ed Williams, ultrasound tech Magdalena Perry, family practice physician Blake Lawrence, M.D., pediatrics case manager Sara White, R.N. and psychiatrist Bruce Weeks, M.D.



Hospital nutritionist furthers education to better serve patients



As chief dietitian at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital in Sitka, Elizabeth "Libby" Watanabe enjoys the opportunity to encourage the use of traditional Native foods.

"I love being able to work within the nutrition field in Southeast Alaska because this is home for me. It's wonderful to promote the consumption of Native foods because they're so healthy for you," she said.

Watanabe's career at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital began in 1989 as a night aide for the Alcohol Therapy Services department. Later, she moved to the Dietary department as a food service worker. She credits her mother with her career choice. "My mother, Gerry Williams, instilled a love for good nutrition and traditional food gathering and preservation," she said.

This past May, Watanabe was awarded a master's degree in public administration from UAS-Sitka. As the first non-faculty member to receive a graduate degree, she was asked to give the student response for graduation, a responsibility she said she was honored to assume.

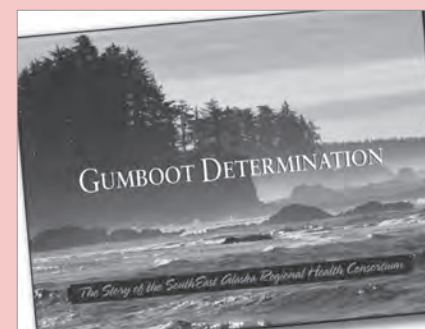
Watanabe, who is Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian, is L'uknax.adi, Raven moiety, Coho clan. She is serving her third term as the president of the Alaska

Native Sisterhood, Camp 4. She and her husband, Clint Watanabe, have one son, Justin. Her adopted clan son is Frank Sutton, S'axt' Hit S'aati, meaning "Boss of the House of Medicine." She is the daughter of Gerry Williams and Jim Young and the granddaughter of the late Lena and Judson Brown.

While continuing as chief dietitian at the hospital, Watanabe said her next educational goal is to become a certified healthcare executive. "My professional home is at SEARHC, and I really want to devote my career to SEARHC in return for all the support I've received while I've pursued academic endeavors."



Gumboot Determination:



The story of the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium is now available for purchase. With 240 full-color pages and more than 130 interviews, this book is a must for anyone interested in the history of tribal health in Southeast Alaska.

All proceeds received from the sale of *Gumboot Determination* will be donated to The SEARHC Foundation.

"We created The SEARHC Foundation to bridge the financial gap between SEARHC's resources and the unmet medical needs of Alaska Natives," said Ken Brewer, president of SEARHC.

Soft-cover books are available for a minimum \$20 donation and hard-cover books for a minimum \$40 donation, plus \$7 shipping and handling for each book mailed.

Please make your donation payable to:
The SEARHC Foundation, 3245 Hospital Dr., Juneau, AK 99801.

For more information or for credit card orders, please call 907-463-4673, or to obtain an order form, visit www.searhc.org and click on the link under "Hot Topics". Thank you.