

Events

- Angoon:** Dental clinic **May 9 - 13.**
- Haines:** Mobile mammography **May 19 - June 1;** Optometry clinic **May 23 - 27.**
- Hoonah:** Pediatric dental clinic **May 2 - 6;** Dental clinic **May 16 - 20;** Optometry clinic **May 16 - 20.**
- Juneau:** Dental clinic with Dr. Seely **May 13 - 14.**
Juneau Dental Clinic clinic's new home should be ready for occupancy in **June.**
- Kake:** Mobile mammography **May 4 - 9;** Dental clinic **May 2 - 6;** Pediatric dental clinic **May 9 - 13.**
- Klawock:** Neurology clinic **May 18.**
- Pelican:** Dental clinic **May 9 - 13.**
- Sitka:** Dental clinic with Dr. Reed **May 9.**
- Skagway:** Mobile mammography **June 6 - 9.**
- Yakutat:** Mobile mammography **June 23 - 28,** pending ferry schedule.

Please contact your local SEARHC clinic for more information.

Find it at
www.searhc.org

When browsing through SEARHC's web site, stop by and "see" the doc sometime. Some of your health questions are answered in the section titled "Ask your doc."

Under the Main Menu section, click on "Health Tips," then "Ask your doc" from the drop-down menu. Then click on "Ask your doc: SEARHC doctors answer frequently-asked questions." The current topic is a series of Q&A on men's health issues.

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

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SEARHC healthbeat

Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium
a bi-monthly newsletter from your partner in health

SEARHC celebrates its 30th anniversary



"Thirty years ago, a handful of visionaries dared to embark on a mission to develop a healthcare system that was planned and delivered by Native people for Native people."

These words by SEARHC President Kenneth Brewer expressed the significance of SEARHC's 30th anniversary, which was celebrated throughout the consortium last month. "We have come a long way over the last 30 years. Now is a good time to recognize our achievements, consider how far we have come, thank those who helped us get here and look ahead to what more still needs to be done," Brewer said.

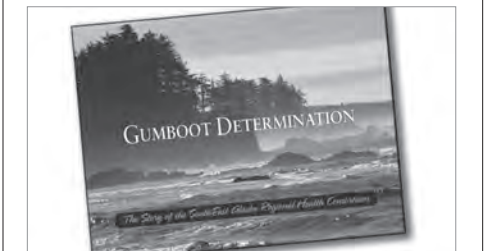
At each SEARHC clinic, cake and snacks were served to mark the event. In Sitka, home of SEARHC's Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital and the consortium's largest concentration of employees, several activities marked the 30-year milestone.

The events began reflectively with a traditional memorial service held by the SEARHC Elders Council to honor Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital patients who had died in the past year. Tribal leaders from throughout Southeast Alaska gathered for a tribal leaders' health summit, which SEARHC hosted at Centennial

Hall. Guest speakers at the summit included Dr. Charles Grim, director of the U.S. Indian Health Service, and Joel Gilbertson, commissioner of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services.

An evening celebration featured anniversary cake, special guests, entertainment by local Native dance groups and the long-awaited book *Gumboot Determination*, a chronological history of SEARHC, was also unveiled. ❖

The long-awaited book on SEARHC is now available



Gumboot Determination, The Story of the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium, is now available for purchase.

With 240 full-color pages, this book includes more than 130 interviews. You may purchase softcover books for \$20 and hardcover books for \$40. Proceeds from the book will go to The SEARHC Foundation.

For more information or to order a book online, please choose the link at www.searhc.org or feel free to contact the SEARHC Foundation at 907-463-4673. ❖

An important message from the President



As most of you probably know, April 1 became an historic date for SEARHC when all our campuses became tobacco-free.

The road to this point has been long. It has taken us five years to get here, but we are now tobacco-free on all campuses. This important move demonstrates our commitment to walk our talk in promoting preventive lifestyles among our partners.

Tobacco use is not healthy, and we advise everyone to quit for his or her own good health. We have asked our staff, patients and visitors to refrain from tobacco use while on any SEARHC campus, and we encourage them to take advantage of the opportunities that we offer to help them quit.

We understand some people may feel that it is encroachment on personal rights, and I assure you that we are sensitive to their concerns. We are taking care to give our patients notice of our tobacco-free policy as we arrange travel, and we're offering support for patients while they are staying in a SEARHC facility. We recognize that it's a challenge, but we will work through it successfully.

SEARHC is a driving force in promoting preventive lifestyles by reducing tobacco use in Southeast Alaska. Following our lead are organizations like the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, which is making plans to become tobacco-free soon. We can be certain that others will follow, as we begin to work together for healthier communities.

As always, we will continue to do our best to provide the highest level of services possible to our partners throughout Southeast Alaska.

Ken Brewer

Pardon our dust!



This summer, patients and visitors at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital will notice some construction activity as the transitional care services department on 3 North undergoes much-needed renovation.

Although some inconveniences can be expected, these renovations will ultimately allow SEARHC to serve patients in a more comfortable, inviting environment.

There will be fewer available beds at the hospital, which means we will be limited in our ability to care for elective or prolonged admissions, some behavioral health patients and patients waiting for nursing home placement. In addition, this may affect patients seeking rehabilitative services or who must stay in the hospital for other than acute medical or surgical services.

Visitors to the Sitka campus will see construction activity as early as mid-June as renovations begin on 3 North and some areas of surgical services on 2 North. ❖

Patient Tip: Using your private insurance at SEARHC

Have you ever wondered why you are asked about your private insurance coverage when you visit your SEARHC clinic or Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital? After all, you might reason, doesn't the Indian Health Service cover the medical services you receive at SEARHC?

While the IHS does give money to SEARHC to provide healthcare for Native people who live in Southeast Alaska, the fact is those funds pay for only about half of the patient services that SEARHC provides. To keep pace with the health care needs of today's Native families, SEARHC has added important services such as physical therapy, optometry, air emergency medical services and state-of-the-art imaging. But these services are not funded by IHS. To help pay for these vital services SEARHC bills insurance companies, Medicare and Medicaid when a Native patient has that coverage.

In the long run, when you provide SEARHC with information about your insurance or other coverage, you help SEARHC make quality healthcare to even more Native patients.

Substance abuse prevention program empowers youth, strengthens communities

"Seven Circles," a SEARHC Behavioral Health Prevention program, is a regional, youth-focused drug and alcohol prevention coalition to help Southeast Alaska communities create effective, ongoing strategies to prevent the use of alcohol and other detrimental drugs.

An Alaska Native elder gave the Seven Circles its name and meaning from the following story.

Arctic musk oxen defend themselves against predators and from the harsh winter cold by forming a tight circle around their young, with the adults facing outward. Musk oxen have been known to form up to seven concentric circles around the young and more vulnerable of the herd.

Just as the adult musk oxen in this story young, the Seven Circles projects form

form protective circles around their metaphoric "circles of protection" around the youth in Southeast Alaska communities. Seven Circles strives to empower youth to make a difference through community partnerships in which young people share decision-making and other program responsibilities with adults. These partnerships are a key ingredient of the Seven Circles approach to prevention of substance abuse.

Four community partnerships (Kake, Craig, Haines and Angoon) currently receive funding, training and technical assistance on program planning, effective prevention strategies, evaluation, youth/adult partnerships and sustainability with site visits, phone and email communication. In addition, Seven Circles offers an annual prevention training.

The benefits to the community are many. Young people benefit from a cooperative relationship with adults, and each generation learns from the other. Youth who get involved in community building tend to remain active as adults. Involving youth in decision-making helps gain support for the program, and gives young people more control over their destinies. Developing leadership skills in youth ensures a caring and capable future generation.

For more information on the Behavioral Health Prevention Seven Circles project, contact: Andrea Thomas, program coordinator, 907-966-8753; Hedy Pederson, youth coordinator, 907-966-8730; or Julie Graham, community project assistant, 907-966-8761, or call toll-free 888-811-8761. ❖

Adult treatment program helps heal body, mind and spirit

The Bill Brady Healing Center - Gunanastí - is a culturally based six-week intensive residential treatment program for adults who struggle with an addiction to alcohol or drugs. The program is open to anyone 18 or over who is eligible to receive Indian Health Service benefits.

Participants typically enter the program through self-referral, referral from friends or family members or local health workers or by court order.

Based on a cohort model, which means that all participants begin and end the program at the same time, BBHC is located on the SEARHC Sitka campus on Japonski Island. Participants receive 24-hour staff care in a chemical-free,

tobacco-free environment. The residence is a comfortably furnished house with two living rooms, a dining area, an art room and five shared bedrooms. In this safe, supportive setting, program participants progress at their own rates of sharing and learning new skills and behaviors to help them avoid relapse when they return home.

The program features group and individual therapy, the AA 12-step study, Native American step work, numerous cultural activities, classroom instruction, nutrition classes and behavioral treatment. Therapies include recreational therapy, which encourages constructive use of leisure time - such as regular outings, games, exercise and

initiative challenges) -- and Native art therapy.

To identify continuing support needs after graduation, participants develop a continuing care plan with their primary counselors and referral persons. BBHC staff maintain periodic contact with graduates to offer encouragement and support.

In comparison to other substance abuse recovery programs, BBHC's success rate ranks it among some of the most successful programs in the country.

For more information, please call the Bill Brady Healing Center/Gunanastí at 907-966-8360/8716 or toll-free 800-770-8455. ❖

Tobacco-free at last!



After a five-year journey, the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) has reached its long-anticipated destination to officially become tobacco-free on all campuses.

The April 1 unveiling of signs announcing SEARHC's tobacco-free status on the Juneau and Sitka campuses signaled the journey's beginning. The Community Health Services division, including all village clinics and much of the Sitka campus, had adopted a tobacco-free policy last October.

The SEARHC vision includes promoting community and personal health, and we are committed to providing a safe, healthy environment for our patients, visitors and staff at all SEARHC facilities. Reducing patient disease caused by tobacco use is one of the SEARHC Board of Directors'

strategic objectives. By prohibiting tobacco use on SEARHC property, we are actively working toward this goal.

We ask that all patients, visitors and staff help us reach this objective by complying with our no-tobacco policy. (Tobacco products include cigarettes, cigars, pipes and chewing tobacco.)

If you would like to reduce or eliminate your reliance on tobacco, our SEARHC tobacco cessation counselors in Sitka and Juneau can develop an individualized program for you. Please call 966-8721 in Sitka or 364-4440 in Juneau for help in quitting.

("SEARHC campus" refers to SEARHC-managed Indian Health Service property and any facility owned or leased by SEARHC.) ❖

Well-child exams: More than just immunizations

Beat the rush! It's not too early to schedule your child for a well-child exam before the 2005/2006 school year. Even if your child isn't going into kindergarten or participating in sports, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children and adolescents have a well-child/adolescent exam at least once a year.

Your provider will monitor how your child is growing and developing and screen to detect problems early. A well-child/adolescent exam is your chance for you and your child to discuss health concerns and learn about growth and development. Well-child exams aren't just for immunizations!

To schedule an appointment, please call:

- Juneau Medical Center at **463-4040**
- Alicia Roberts Medical Center at **755-4800**
- Haines Medical Clinic at **766-6300**
- Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital Outpatient Department (Sitka) at **966-8318**. Well-child exams can be scheduled Monday-Friday with a pediatrician or a family practice physician, or in the Teen Clinic (for ages 12-18) every Wednesday, 5-8 p.m. ❖

On land and sea: Upcoming programs from Prince of Wales Health Promotion

There's an old saying that a journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step. The Prince of Wales office of the SEARHC Health Promotion program is hosting 10,000 Steps to Healthy Living, an eight-week event that involves a popular form of physical activity -- walking.

Participants wear a pedometer every day and try to increase their number of steps each day. Other physical activity can be converted into steps as well. The pedometer keeps track of the steps taken each day and participants are encouraged to find creative ways to add more steps to their routine so they can eventually reach the 10,000-step goal, or another personal goal. Participants who log their steps and turn in their log every month are eligible for prizes.

A class on pickled kelp will be offered Monday, May 9, at 6:30 pm at the Craig High School home economics room. Dolly Garza, a professor in the marine advisory program at University of Alaska Fairbanks, will teach participants to prepare the kelp for pickling. Don't miss out on this fun and educational opportunity to learn a new way to prepare traditional foods. All ingredients and supplies will be provided. Everyone is invited to attend.

For more information about either of these exciting events, please call June May at 755-4959. ❖

Youth program combines treatment and adventure

Raven's Way - Yéil Jeeyáx - is a nationally accredited residential treatment program for youth that combines conventional substance abuse treatment with adventure-based therapy and Native cultural activities. The 40-day program uses a cohort model in which eight to 10 students function as a peer support group in a family-like environment.



Open to Alaska youth ages 13 to 18 who have a primary diagnosis of substance abuse and/or dependence, the program features physical challenges, group cooperation and team building. Since Raven's Way is a voluntary program, participants must be willing to engage themselves in an intensive, substance-free treatment program.

Based in Sitka, with trips to wilderness sites in the area, the program develops each participant's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual strengths, along with communication and problem-solving skills. Raven's Way graduates leave the program with the tools to choose a healthy, substance-free lifestyle.

Program curriculum includes individual and group counseling, substance abuse assessment and education, academic education, "step" work and relapse prevention, home-like residential living and peer support groups. Wilderness expedition and ropes course activities, Native culture activities and aftercare planning and follow-up are also part of the program.



Raven's Way has 21 staff, including licensed/certified psychologist and therapists, alcohol/drug counselors (including expedition specialists) and a secondary education teacher. Medical and psychiatric support is available through the SEARHC Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital. Accredited by the Commission for the Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, Raven's Way follows the ethical standards set by the National Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors.



Raven's Way participants may be referred to the program by parents, community service providers, health councils, probation officers, schools and others. Treatment costs for most students are covered by the Indian Health Service, Medicaid or insurance. Transportation costs may be covered by Medicaid, insurance or local resources.

For referral information or details about upcoming course dates and referral packets, please contact the Raven's Way intake specialist at 907-966-8716, or toll-free at 800-770-3063 or email: rwintake@searhc.org. ❖