

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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SEARHC renames Juneau clinic to honor Ethel Lund

JUNEAU, Feb. 7, 2008 — The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) has honored President Emeritus Ethel Lund by renaming the Juneau Medical Center for her. A special reception for Ethel was held on Jan. 25 at the conclusion of the quarterly meeting of SEARHC's Board of Directors.

"It was a surprise, both humbling and a great honor," Ethel said. "At the same time, I am filled with gratitude, not only at the honor in the naming, but also in being blessed to work with wonderful, caring folk as we shared the same vision of improved health care for Alaska Native people. It was the greatest trip (experience) of my life, seeing many of the changes we envisioned actually come to be."

"The Board of Directors is pleased to honor and recognize the accomplishments of Ethel Lund by naming our medical facility in Juneau after her," said Jan Hill, SEARHC Board of Directors Chair. "Throughout her 25 years of service, Ethel Lund provided dedication, leadership and profound commitment to evolve SEARHC into a nationally recognized tribal health care organization. She continues her work today as our president emeritus and a member of our Elders Council, and she provides guidance, support and role-modeling for many young Native people entering health careers."

Ethel was one of what she frequently calls "the little old ladies from the villages" who played such an important role in the creation of SEARHC in 1975. She became SEARHC's first Board Chair for 1975-77, managing the consortium on a volunteer basis. In 1977 she was hired as SEARHC's first president, serving until her retirement in 2000. In addition to her current roles as SEARHC President Emeritus and with the SEARHC Elders Council, Ethel also serves on the boards for several other Native and health care organizations in Juneau and around the country.

"I was moved to be a part of an important occasion to honor a woman of distinction who has expanded health care to our Native people," SEARHC President/CEO Roald Helgesen said. "Ethel is a role model for all of us. She taught by example, how to lead with our patients first on our minds. She taught us to listen, stay focused on our mission, treat our patients like our family, take the high road, and approach our work with 'Gumboot Determination.' It is fitting that our Board honors Ethel Lund by naming our premier outpatient facility after a woman of such distinction."

SEARHC is one of the oldest and largest Native-run health care organizations in the country, and was created under the provisions of the Indian Self-Determination Act. When SEARHC began in 1975 three people shared one office at Mt. Edgcumbe Hospital, which then was managed by the Indian Health Service. Under Ethel's stewardship, SEARHC helped Alaska Natives take more control over their own health care, and the Indian Health Service eventually turned over to SEARHC the management of several services, including the hospital. SEARHC now is the largest private employer in Southeast Alaska, with nearly 1,000 employees serving the health care needs of approximately 18,000 people in 18 remote Native communities in a region about the size of Florida.

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