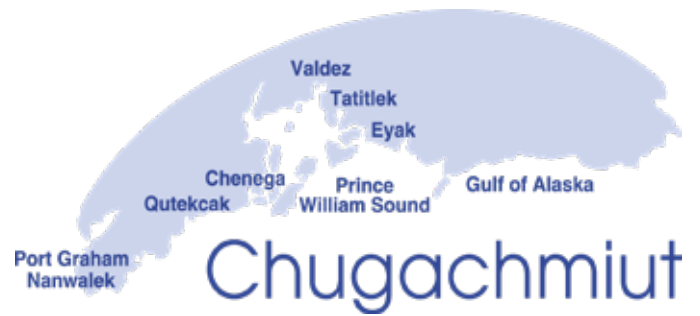


Nupuat

A quarterly publication of Chugachmiut, the tribal not-for-profit organization serving the Alaska Native peoples of the Chugach Region.



Fall 2023 Edition

Youth Summer Camps, page 3



Front row (left to right): Damian George, Rhoda Moonin, Ephimia Moonin-Wilson, Emma Tanape, and Imya Hernandez. **2nd row** (left to right): Benjamin Kvasnikoff, Kenji Simmons, Julianne Michener, and Trinity Vlasoff. **3rd row** (left to right): Mackinley Greene, Kayonte Simmons, Ashton Meganack, Trinity Vlasoff, Juanita Wood, Bella Velez, and Nancy Yeaton. **Back row** (far right): Iverson Moonin.

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Career Opportunities

Chugachmiut is a rapidly growing 501(c)(3) non-profit agency the Tribal consortium created to promote self-determination to the seven Native communities of the Chugach Region. We are seeking highly motivated, talented candidates to join us on our journey to excellence. At Chugachmiut, you not only start a job but a career that truly makes a difference in the lives of others. We offer robust benefits to full-time employees.



Scan this QR code to apply and learn more about our openings.

Key Opportunities Throughout the Region

- Addictions Counselor (Homer)
- CHA III, IV or CHP Itinerant (Any Regional Community)
- CHAP Director (Seward)
- Dental Director (Any Regional Community)
- Dental Health Aide Therapist Itinerant (Any Regional Community)
- Department of Education Director (Anchorage)
- Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant (Tatitlek)
- HRIS Coordinator (Anchorage)
- Strengthening Families Program Assistant (Any Regional Community)
- Tribal Victims Services Coordinator (Anchorage)

Benefits for Full-Time Employees

- Medical and Prescription Insurance – 100% of premiums paid for employees, 50% for eligible dependents
- Dental & Vision plans – 100% of premiums paid for employees, 50% for eligible dependents
- Life Insurance
- Short and Long-Term Disability
- 401(a) Pension Plan
- Voluntary 403(b) TDA with Roth contributions
- Employee Assistance Program
- Aflac Voluntary Supplemental Benefits
- Subsidized Gym Memberships
- Paid time off
- 13 paid Holidays
- Bereavement Leave
- Professional Development Plans

Chugachmiut has a hiring preference for qualified Alaska Native and American Indian applicants pursuant to P.L. 93-638 Indian Self Determination Act. For any questions, please reach out to the HR department at Employment@Chugachmiut.org.

APPLY NOW

www.vscyberhosting.com/Chugachmiut

Youth Summer Camps

Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation hosted summer camps with Accessing Choices in Education (ACE), a program that allows us to provide educational opportunities for students in our communities that are Alaska Native to meet their educational goals. Youth from around the Chugach region participated in language and cultural activities. Elders, parents and communities members were supportive. Quyanaa/Quanaa nangluci!

The **Chugachmiut Youth Summit** was held in July in Anchorage where 12 youth experienced and practiced Sugpiaq language, traditional culture through Elders, recognized experts, through games, crafts, media, models, art, sea life, and plants. Our week was packed with great cultural activities like braiding fireweed, dying devils club, making akutaq, practicing Native Youth Olympics, and more including visits to the Alaska Sealife Center, Alaska Native Heritage Center and Botanical Gardens!

Nanwalem Kiagmi Litnaurwia Camp was held in Nanwalek and organized by Rhoda Atakaa Moonin. About 30 youth explored the beach for sea life/subsistence and plants and practiced Sugt'stun nupuget and short Sugt'stun phrases and traditional practices. Elders, Eugenia Moonin and Nancy Yeaton (also a Local Culture Coordinator), provided cultural activities of traditional foods, plants gathering and processing, such as lipiuskaq (fried bread), akutaq (Sugpiaq ice cream), and aglauteq (biscuit).

Paluwik Kiag-mi Culture Camp was held in Port Graham and organized by Ephimia Apamia Moonin-Wilson. About 7 youth participated in activities, like learning about low tides, beading, learning dance songs, learning about goose tongues and wild chives, berry picking, fishing, basket weaving and making traditional headbands. They also learned Sugt'stun nupuget and short Sugt'stun phrases and traditional knowledge during the activities.

Katuwam Culture Camp was held in Cordova and organized by Shyla Krukoff. About 14 youth participated in activities, including plant gathering (Devil's Club to make a salve), salmonberry picking to make a syrup, and Fireweed picking to make jelly. Other activities included making fry bread, traditional fish pie (peroski), story and craft-blueberry book, natural paint making, Devil's club stick painting, and tiny dancers. Thank you to the Native Village of Eyak for providing a safe place for camp activities.



Youth gathered urritaq in Port Graham (above).
Youth made fry bread in Cordova (at right).



If there are any questions regarding Accessing Choices in Education (ACE) or have a student who needs school supplies or an educational opportunity to meet their educational goals, please contact ACE Program Manager, Angelina Roehl at Ace@chugachmiut.org or angelina@chugachmiut.org or (907) 334-0119.

Traditional Qayaq Dedication Ceremony



Quyanaa to everyone who joined us at the Traditional Qayaq Dedication Ceremony on July 29 in Seward at the Kenai Fjords National Park Visitor Center! We dedicated the traditional qayaq to the late Joseph Tabios. The traditional qayaq making project was a partnership between Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation and Kenai Fjords National Park. The initial frame was completed by master qayaq builder Joe Tabios, and apprentices Jonathon Sawden and Kris Tabios. The Tabios family and Andrew Abyo assisted in the skinning of the qayaq. It is now on permanent display at the Kenai Fjords National Park Visitor Center in the Seward boat harbor. The qayaq was one of the most essential methods for travel and the survival of the Sugpiaq/Alutiiq people in the Chugach Region. Here are some photos courtesy of Dawn Randazzo.



Tabios Family



Gillian Braver of Kenai Fjords National Park presents at the ceremony



Left-right: Dawn Randazzo (Chugachmiut), Gillian Braver (NPS), Patrick Lewis (NPS), Nick Jordan (Chugachmiut), and Mark Hiratsuka (Chugachmiut).

Chugachmiut Heritage Archive Opportunity

Cama'i! Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation Archive will be hosting a virtual Student Archivist after-school program starting in October. Students will be able to attend weekly interactive Zoom classes where we will discuss what it means to be a community archivist, the importance of Indigenous voices in the historical record, and how archival work can be used to revitalize and preserve culture in our communities.

There is no cost to participate, and we have iPads available for all students who require one! Students must be in grades 7-12, reside within the Chugach region, be of Alaska Native/Native American/Pacific Islander descent, and have access to the internet from 3:30-4:30 pm every Wednesday! If you are interested, please reach out to Dawn Randazzo to apply at dawnr@chugachmiut.org or (907) 334-0128.

Apply at: www.chugachmiut.org/student-archivist-after-school-program.
Scan QR code with your mobile device to access link.



Student Archivist Virtual After School Program



Do you want to help preserve traditional Sugpiaq and Eyak culture, language, and history? Become a Student Archivist today!

Make a difference in your community!

Learn language & culture!

Interview Elders!

Preserve and revitalize your culture!

Fall Semester 2023

Chugachmiut Birth to Five Head Start Program

Nunaka Wins GEE! Learning Award

We are thrilled to share that Nunaka: My Village won the Formal Learning (Elementary) award at the James Paul GEE! Learning Game Awards. As you may recall Nunaka is an early childhood mobile game about the Alaska Native Sugpiaq culture, teaches the Sugt'stun language, and targets key school readiness goals for children ages 3 to 5 years old. You can search "Nunaka: My Village" in the Apple and Google Play app stores.



"Overall, Nunaka is a deeply charming game experience that successfully guides players through multiple different learning outcomes – from foundational school readiness standards to embedded learning about the Sugpiaq people and Sugt'stun language. The gameplay is designed thoughtfully, with numerous good learning principles woven throughout. I truly enjoyed my time wandering around the fictionalized Sugpiaq village with my Emaa and Akaa, and I can genuinely say that I learned while playing this game. So – kudos to you, Nunaka! Your winning of the Formal/Elementary Category of the 2023 GEE! Learning Game Awards is well-deserved!" – **Chris Baker, GEE! Learning Awards**



Nanwalek Early Childhood Summer Camp children help to announce winning the award. Watch it on our YouTube channel! Scan the QR code at left for the link.

Nunaka Early Childhood Summer Camp

Chugachmiut Birth to Five Head Start, through funding provided by the Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation Department's ACE funding, provided the Nunaka Early Childhood Summer Camp in Nanwalek for the month of July. The camp supported school readiness, Sugt'stun language and Sugpiaq culture. The camp was staffed by three Head Start staff and a total of 11 children ages three-five were enrolled.

Children were introduced to the Nunaka: My Village, practiced Sugt'stun words, and engaged with culturally relevant program materials and activities, including books, games, beads, puppets, and more. Just like in the game, children explored and learned more about their community, beaded, explored tidepools, practiced school readiness skills and kept journals.

"My child enjoyed summer camp, retained some Sugt'stun words. Quyanaa for hosting a fun summer learning event." – **Parent**



Alice Wood



Azalya Ukatish-Evans



Avery Ukatish

Chugachmiut Birth to Five Head Start Program

Chugachmiut Awarded Tribal Home Visiting Grant

We are excited to share that Chugachmiut received a five-year Tribal Maternal, Infant, Early Childhood Home Visiting (Tribal MIECHV) Development and Implementation grant. The goals of this program are to make sure kids aged 0 to 5 are ready for school and healthy, to keep the unique language and culture of the Sugpiaq and Eyak people alive, and to help connect different early childhood programs in the Chugach region.

In year one, our team will collaborate with the communities of Chenega, Eyak, Qutekcak, Tatitlek and Valdez to explore if there is a desire for a tribal home visiting program to support the school readiness, health and wellness of young children in each community. If the tribal community expresses interest in the home visitation program, an implementation plan will be created to build the program in a culturally competent and effective manner.

Chugachmiut is committed to delivering evidence-based, quality tribal home visiting services that respects, honors, and enriches the children, families and communities served. To learn more, please contact us by calling 1-800-478-0300 or emailing Kristin Ramstad at kristinr@chugachmiut.org or Lisa Danielson at lisa@chugachmiut.org.

Chugachmiut Scholarship Opportunity

Chugachmiut Higher Education Scholarship applications are due December 31st, 2023 for spring 2024 semester. Access the "Applications for Services" application at www.chugachmiut.org/forms-downloads. Please fill out the "Higher Education Scholarship" section, then email it to 477applications@chugachmiut.org.

Contact Donna Malchoff, Social Services Coordinator, at (907) 562-4155 or donnam@chugachmiut.org with any questions or for assistance.



Scan the QR code to access the "Applications for Service" form.



Chugachmiut Housing Improvement Program

Applications are open for the Chugachmiut Housing Improvement Program (HIP)! Funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the HIP is a need-based program that can help repair or renovate your current house or assist in purchasing a new home. The HIP is an extremely low-income grant program administered by BIA that offers housing assistance to disadvantaged Native American and Alaskan Native families who live in substandard housing, are homeless, or have no other resources for housing assistance. Priority is extended to the elderly, disabled, low-income families with dependent children, veterans, or individuals living in overcrowded and unsafe conditions.



To qualify, you will need an application, a copy of your tribal identification, proof of household income, proof of land ownership or lease, proof of disability if claiming it on the application, and live in the Chugach region.

How do you qualify?

- Be a member of a Federally Recognized Tribe
- Reside within the Tribal Service area
- Meet whole household income requirements
- Be able to show the need for housing
- Have no other resources available for housing
- Has not already gotten HIP funds for housing
- Did not acquire housing from Federal Programs in the past 20 years



Categories of Service (what services you can get):

- Minor Repairs (up to \$7,500)
- Major Repairs or Renovation (up to \$60,00)
- Replacement Home or New Housing (for a modest home)
- Down Payment Assistance (up to \$75,000)

Application and Information

www.chugachmiut.org/capacity-building/land-use-planning

Please contact Georgina Sumstad, Executive Assistant, at georgina@Chugachmiut.org for more information. The deadline for this year's application is November 13, 2023; submit your application as soon as you can.



Scan the QR code for the link to the application and more information.

Poetry Submission

No Name Mountains By Gail Evanoff

There are mountains that surround me
That speak of so many things
Like how they got there, what resides amongst the trees and boulders that flank its surface
How beautiful they shed their winter coats
And provide for so much life!
Occasionally, if you are lucky, you can enjoy how slowly they undress themselves
When a sheath of fog rolls off its surface
And the sun lights up its face!
There is something majestic how they leave you
In awe as you gape at their beauty!
Bears, deer, porcupine and birds of the smallest
To the magnificent eagle will find refuge in its coat of many trees!
Mountains seem to nestle you in
And shelter you from the windiest, coldest and hottest elements of the seasons.
They provide you a cloak from that arrow that turns off your light
They extend their arms for nests for new birth
And they give you seasons of health!
So, because mountains are so significant
Identify with them
Make them come alive for you
Call them Mt. Superior, Mt. Guardian, Mt. Funnyface! Anything...
Just make them known to you.



“Mountains for Chenega” - a painting by Sandra Kleven

Thank you to **Gail Evanoff**, Behavioral Health Aide & Prince William Sound Tribal Advocate, of Chenega for submitting a poem for the issue and to **Sandra Kleven**, Behavioral Health Clinical Supervisor, for sharing the accompanying artwork! See back page for info on submitting content for the Nupuat newsletter.

Health Services Division News

Health Fairs Around the Region Recap

Quyanaa for joining us at the annual community health fair in Port Graham, Nanwalek, Chenega, and Tatitlek! We had a successful round of our annual health events in the region. The health events are partially funded through our diabetes grant, with preventative care as one of the main topics. We cannot express our gratitude enough to the local clinical staff and other volunteers who generously contributed their time to assist with setup and cleanup. This year, we also had staff from ANTHC's environmental health programs presenting a booth, in addition to our health services and behavioral health staff addressing various topics. We reintroduced floor bingo this year, and it brought joy to everyone as they rushed to claim a number after the buzzer sounded! Check out some photos, courtesy of Joseph Nyholm and Donna Malchoff!

One of the topics this year included point-of-care lab screenings for blood sugars and cholesterol values. This provided a valuable opportunity for people to assess their health status and receive a mid-year checkup for these essential labs. If you missed this opportunity, please visit our clinics, where these tests are readily available. An advantage of point-of-care tests is that our clinics no longer need to wait for favorable weather conditions to send out blood samples, and you can receive your results in less than five minutes. Other topics covered during the event included cancer screening information, the effects of energy drinks, low-sodium spice kits, Elder services, and meet-and-greets with our new behavioral health staff.



Some team members who traveled to the health fairs included Mae Silook, Christy McDonald, Teresa Kirchner, John Yakanak, Donna Malchoff, Joe Nyholm and Alex Bailey.



Tatitlek



Health Services Division News

Health Fairs Around the Region Recap

Chenega



Port Graham



Nanwalek



We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who welcomed us! We eagerly anticipate next year's event as we have some exciting new ideas in store. Please contact Joseph Nyholm, MS, RDN at JosephN@Chugachmiut.org or (907)-224-4904 with any questions.

Health Services Division News

Medicaid Redeterminations

Be sure you stay covered.

Update your contact information and watch your mail.



This process is already having a major impact on people. We are prepared to assist anyone in providing information to the Division of Public Assistance to ensure ongoing coverage.

On Medicaid?

Please add this to your To Do list this week:

- Update your contact information by calling our Medicaid Information Update Hotline at 833-441-1870 during normal business hours, M-F, 8am-5pm.
- Or go to medicaidrenewals.alaska.gov (scan QR code on flyer), and click on the link for the Medicaid Renewals Update Form.



Don't risk a gap in your Medicaid or Denali KidCare insurance coverage. GET READY TO RENEW.

Follow these steps to make sure you complete your renewal on time:



Update Your Contact Information.

Call the **Medicaid Information Update Hotline** at **833-441-1870** to update your address so that important information about your coverage gets to you.



Monitor and Respond to Mail.

Look out for your annual renewal letter in the mail sometime in the next 12 months.

Accommodation and language interpretation available at no cost upon request at 800-478-7778. TDD: Relay Alaska, 7-1-1



Have Questions?

For more information and to sign up for email updates with news about renewals, visit our website: medicaidrenewals.alaska.gov



Medical Billing Statements

Our billing department has been sending monthly billing statements for medical, behavioral health, and dental services since June 2023. If Alaska Natives or American Indians (AN/AI) have received a billing statement in the mail, it is because we do not have a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) on file for you. If you have received a statement and are AN/AI, please contact your local clinic and provide a copy of your CDIB. Otherwise, you will be responsible for payment for the services.

Health Services Division News

COVID-19

We have updated our isolation and quarantine recommendations to align with the CDC's guidance. Given the evolving nature of the disease, advances in clinical understanding, and the availability of vaccines and medications, we believe it is time to make this transition. We hope that this change will streamline procedures and make it easier for both our healthcare providers and patients.

Learn more about CDC's Isolation and Precautions for People with COVID-19 at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html (scan QR code for link).



We are continuing to see a significant decrease in positive COVID-19 testing from January to September 11, 2023.

Measure	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Overall
Positive Tests	26	35	6	5	4	1	5	3	5	90
% Positive of Resulted Tests	13.33%	21.15%	10%	7.58%	10.81%	2.27%	13.16%	7.69%	35.71%	13.82%
% Vaccinated of Positive Tests	57.69%	74.29%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	76.67%
Negative Tests	169	123	54	61	33	43	33	36	9	561
Resulted Tests	195	158	60	66	37	44	38	39	14	651
Ordered Tests	194	158	61	67	36	44	38	40	14	652
Unique Patient Count - Ordered Tests	154	109	50	54	30	39	36	35	13	357

ANTHC Travel Summit

In August, we participated in the ANTHC Travel Summit. The goals were to convene tribal health partners with ANTHC leadership and relevant departments to identify and initiate solutions for the various issues encountered during travel, Purchased and Referred Care (PRC), and housing arrangements when patients travel to ANTHC for appointments. These work groups will collaborate over the next few months, and we will reconvene as a full group on December 14th to continue this important work. Key Health Services staff who attended included Albi Tatum, Melody Wallace, Alison Smith, Mae Silook and Christine Seville.

Note: To assist patients traveling to Anchorage for care at the Alaska Native Medical Center, ANTHC has created a dedicated webpage at anthc.org/travel. This page serves as a resource for patient housing amenities, shuttle tracking, specialty clinic information, and more.

Purchased and Referred Care (PRC)

PRC has been collaborating with HAA's in each community, as well as patients, to obtain the Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) required for participation in the PRC program. The clinics can assist with application submissions, document copying, certified return receipt mailings, and even provide assistance with obtaining Birth Certificates. We extend our appreciation to all community members who have allowed us to assist them in this process.

Mae Silook, PRC Coordinator, continues her efforts to secure CDIBs across the region. She distributed multiple applications at health events and addressed numerous questions. Currently, we are actively processing 12 different applications. Additionally, Mae is working on becoming a Fee Agent for the State of Alaska Medicaid, enabling her to assist patients with enrollment, demographic updates, and Medicaid information renewals.

Health Services Division News

Join the Health Services Team! Growing to Serve

Anchorage

- Advanced Practice Provider Itinerant Pool
- CHA III-P Itinerant Pool
- Dental Assistant Itinerant

Chenega

- Health Administrative Assistant
- Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant
- Community Health Aide Trainee (CHAT) to Community Health Practitioner (CHP)

Port Graham

- Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant
- CHAT to CHP

Seward

- CHAP Director
- Dental Coordinator/Dental Assistant
- Dental Director

Tatitlek

- CHAT to CHP
- Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant

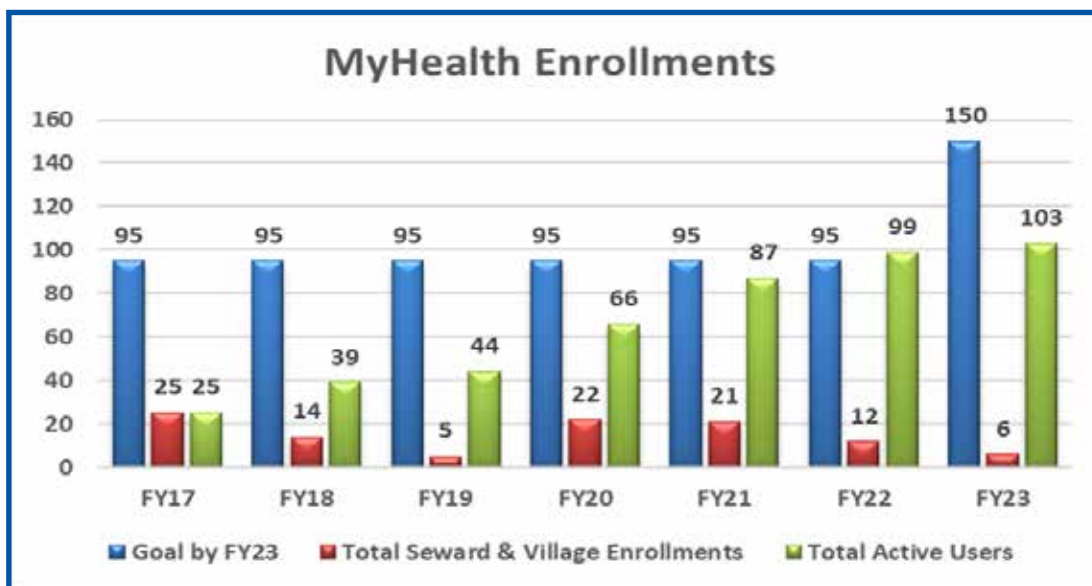
We welcomed Raisa Gust, a Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant, to the team in Nanwalek!

See the full list of career opportunities and apply at: <https://www.vscyberhosting.com/Chugachmiut/>. See inside front cover for other opportunities. A challenge for recruitment in opportunities in villages continues for non-local people is the extremely limited and lack of available housing options.

MyHealth Enrollment

One of our goals is to increase the number of MyHealth enrollments. We initially set a target of 95 enrollments, but we have since raised it to 150.

How can enrolling in MyHealth benefit you? Creating an account provides you with direct access to your medical records. There's no need to wait for lab results; you can access them immediately. You can also view your immunization records and send messages directly to your healthcare team. To sign up, please contact your local clinic to gain access to your account.



Health Services Division News

Prevention - FY2023 Clinical Care Quality Measures Progress Report

The measures in this report are based on standard clinical quality measures endorsed by organizations such as the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), the National Committee for Quality Assurance, and the Health Services Resources Administration.

Preventive care is crucial. Obtaining recommended screenings is one of the most significant actions you can take for your health. Preventive care screenings play a vital role in detecting and addressing health issues early when treatment is most likely to be effective.

	Clinical Quality Measures	FY23 as of 9.5.23 Results	Chugachmiut FY2023 GOAL	Goal Met		# patients needed to meet goal	FY2022 Results	% Change FY22 to FY23	Team Progress Indicators	Goal Met		# patients needed to meet goal
				Yes	No					Yes	No	
Preventive Care	Depression Screening and Follow Up	84.87%	66%	x		0	82.43%	2%	Improvement	x		0
	BMI Screening and Follow-Up	27.16%	64%		x	205	46.17%	-19%	Decline		x	101
	Tobacco Screening and Intervention	72.91%	88%		x	69	70.24%	3%	Improvement		x	82
	Weight Assessment of Children	16.32%	66%		x	95	9.14%	7%	Improvement		x	106
	Adult Immunizations	18.00%	55%		x	849	6.00%	12%	Improvement		x	214
	Child Immunizations	20.00%	65%		x	7			New Measure			
	Statin Therapy	52.03%	75%		x	31			New Measure			
Cancer	Cervical Cancer Screening	56.02%	50.00%	x		0	61.70%	-6%	Decline	x		0
	Cervical Cancer Screening:3yr Pap Test	45.83%	50.00%		x	10	47.23%	-1%	Decline		x	7
	Cervical Cancer Screening: 5yr HPV Test	52.66%	50.00%	x		0	55.72%	-3%	Decline	x		0
	Breast Cancer Screening	38.53%	50.00%		x	13	42.86%	-4%	Decline		x	9
	Colorectal Cancer Screening	55.90%	50%	x		0	56.16%	0%	Improvement	x		0
	Colorectal Cancer Screening AK	48.74%	50%		x	5	52.00%	-3%	Decline	x		0
Chronic Conditions	Diabetes: Hemoglobin A1c	23.33%	16.00%		x	7	14.29%	9%	Decline	x		0
	N/D and Antiplatelets	85.29%	80%	x		0	82.76%	3%	Improvement	x		0
	Controlling High Blood Pressure	55.67%	63%		x	15	58.94%	-3%	Decline		x	9
	CAD: Lipid Therapy	92.11%	81%	x		0	78.79%	13%	Improvement		x	1
Opioids	Any Opioid	11.95%	10%		x	16	12.70%	-1%	Improvement		x	23
	Chronic Opioids	19.59%	18%		x	2	23.08%	-3%	Improvement		x	6
	High Dose 50 MME/day Opioids	15.79%	17%	x		0	25.00%	-9%	Improvement		x	2
	High Dose 90MME/day Opioids	5.26%	3%		x	1	4.17%	1%	Decline		x	1
	Chronic Opioids and Sedatives	10.53%	8%		x	1	8.33%	2%	Decline		x	1
Total Met or Not Met				7	15		Total Met or Not Met			7	13	

Health Services Division News

Community Health Aide Update

During the community health fairs, each Community Health Aide developed and staffed an educational booth focused on a topic they considered vital to their individual community's needs. Some of the booth topics included Cancer Screenings and Prevention, Healthy Salt Alternatives, Dangers of Energy Drinks, and Maintaining a Healthy Heart.

Agnes Miller, CHP, and **Genny Miller**, CHP, were due for their biennial skills review and traveled to Seward to meet this new requirement by the CHAPCB, effective as of January 2023. These comprehensive skills validations are now mandatory every two years before a health aide can recertify.

Tania Romanoff, CHAT in Nanwalek, has completed Session I training through her blended course and is currently working on her post-session learning needs and patient encounters. She should soon be eligible for certification and is progressing through her Session II course, with an expected completion date in early November. After that, she will need to complete her Session II post-session learning needs before being certified as a CHA-II. Once certified, she will be able to take on-call duties in her community and provide expanded services within her scope.

Melonie Kashevarof, CHA-III in Chenega, is continuing to work on her Session IV patient count and will be coming to Seward for encounters to fulfill this requirement in the next few months.

Tania McMullen, CHA-IV in Port Graham, has expressed her desire to obtain her CHA-Practitioner certification, and we hope to support her in her preceptorship soon by bringing her to Seward.

Emerson Kvasnikoff, CHA-IV in Nanwalek, has also expressed interest in furthering his certification to become a Practitioner, and we hope to arrange his preceptorship very soon.

Next Step in Digital Dentistry

We extend our sincere appreciation to the Port Graham Tribal Council for purchasing a 3D dental printer! Building upon Chugachmiut's and Port Graham Tribal Council's past investments of two digital scanners (from COVID funding), for the first time ever, we were able to expand dental services and offer crowns, dentures, and night guards to those in need. In-office 3D printing enables better responsiveness to patient needs, significantly reduces manufacturing times, and opens new treatment options. With the 3D printer, we can get a denture to a patient within 3 days which consists of 2-3 appointments in their home community and a crown or mouth guard can be prepped and seated in the patient's mouth the same day.

In July, Dr. Jensen and Angela McKinney traveled to the maker of the 3D printer for training and within the next week, scheduled travel to Port Graham and Nanwalek and provided services. All communities would greatly benefit from having their own 3D printer because the equipment is quite heavy to transport and requires a chartered plane to transport.

Joslin Vision Program Update

We had to go through an additional step of having the Indian Health Service build a VPN network for us to connect to. Once this is complete, we will be able to receive the equipment and have our RD complete the imaging training. We remain optimistic about initiating retinal imaging services at the clinics before the year's end.

Health Services Division News

Diabetes

The Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) focuses on effective evidence-based intervention strategies using the SDPI Diabetes Best Practices. SDPI funding has made it possible for AN/AI communities to develop and sustain quality diabetes treatment and prevention programs - often where few resources existed before. This quarter, we submitted the SDPI continuation of funding for 2024 application.

Our Registered Dietitian, Joe Nyholm, continues to offer medical nutrition therapy for both routine diabetes follow-up and as needed for provider referrals. He visited every community this quarter.

Health Coach Services

Our Health Coach, Gala Davis, has mainly served in Seward. However, Gala attended the health events and was providing education on how Vitamin D is essential to good health and disease prevention. Gala is available to provide weight loss, fitness, Pilates, and health coaching services. We have been providing education to engage community members across the region to increase awareness of the services available.

Pharmacy Services - Vaccine Program Update

Flu season is just around the corner! Pharmacy has ordered **flu vaccines** in two formulations, to cover patients from 6 months and up, and a special high-dose formulation for ages 65 and up. These vaccines are scheduled to arrive in Seward on September 1st and will be distributed to all regional clinics within 2 business days. Health Aides in the clinics have been notified to anticipate these shipments.

During flu season, other respiratory illnesses are more common as well. A new **Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) vaccine** should become available for state-supplied ordering and is recommended as a single dose for adults aged 60+ years, and for pregnant patients (from 32-36 weeks gestation) to prevent illness in infants. The ACIP recommendation for pregnant patients is expected to be made in October. This new vaccine has demonstrated efficacy in reducing the severity and spread of RSV and will be a valuable addition to our vaccine selection.

FDA approved a new therapeutic (Nirsevimab) to prevent RSV in babies and toddlers on July 17, 2023. It is recommended for infants aged <8 months born during or entering their first RSV season and for infants and children 8-19 months who are at increased risk of severe RSV disease entering their second RSV season. This therapeutic will be state supplied by the AK Immunization Program and should become available during September. This is the first time that the state immunization program has included anything other than vaccines but feels like this therapeutic is pivotal to combating RSV in Alaska so the decision was made to include it in the vaccine program to increase its availability throughout Alaska.

COVID-19 vaccines will continue to be available as flu season ramps up. The bivalent formulation of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines has been available at each clinic for some time.



Employee Spotlight

Brent S. Harmon



Brent S. Harmon. Photo by Sarah Boss

Brent S. Harmon joined the Chugachmiut team as a Behavioral Health Clinician in July. He was born in Ely, Nevada and grew up all over rural Nevada and the Death Valley, California area. His paternal family is from northern Nevada and has been part of the railroad, mining, and ranching communities. His maternal family was from the San Francisco Bay until the 1960's when his maternal grandmother fell in love with the desert near Las Vegas and Death Valley. Brent moved to the Kenai Peninsula with his wife of 23 years and their two teenage children.

Brent is passionate about serving remote and rural communities. He often draws inspiration from Helen Keller's quote, "One person can do so much; but together we can do so much more." He has especially enjoyed learning about the villages in the region and getting to know people.

"One of the things that I remember about growing up in the small communities of Nevada was how hard it was to get professional people to listen to what we wanted and needed. So, my plan is to talk with people, families, and leaders in each community where I am getting to work now. I want to learn what is wanted and help to craft some of the services that are needed. I hope we get to do a lot together in the villages!"

In his role, Brent will focus on Tribal Opioid Response planning and outreach. He will serve as co-director of a grant aimed at raising awareness of opioids, addiction, and treatment. In addition, he will provide general counseling and social work services in the communities. Prior to joining Chugachmiut, he served as a Qualified Addiction Professional and Directing Clinician for Set Free Alaska. His diverse professional background includes roles as a high school counselor, English and History teacher, Clinical Case Manager at a homeless shelter for pregnant and parenting women, and a stay-at-home and home-schooling parent. He also has experience in mining, ranching and construction.

Tribal Opioid Response

A part of the Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) initiative is to educate people about available resources and equip them to respond immediately to overdose situations. One of the most crucial tools in this endeavor is Naloxone, commonly referred to as the Narcan Kit. Naloxone is an FDA-approved medication delivered as a nasal spray, capable of reversing the effects of opioid overdose. It is user-friendly and can be a lifesaving intervention. Learn more about naloxone, where to get it, how to use it, signs of overdose, and what to do if you think someone has overdosed, at opioids.alaska.gov.



Employee Spotlight

Sheila Lowe

Sheila Lowe (Yupik) is a mother of seven and is married to Roger Lowe. Her family ties trace back to Kotlik and Mountain Village. Sheila joined Chugachmiut as a Medical Billing Specialist in February 2023 where her primary responsibility entails accurate and timely billing for patients' insurance coverage for medical, dental, and behavioral health services. One of the most rewarding aspects of her role is contributing to the organization's revenue and assisting patients with their accounts.

Sheila has been working in the revenue cycle field since 2010. Her journey started as a Patient Accounts Clerk, and she gradually advanced her career, eventually becoming a Billing Supervisor. She is a certified revenue cycle professional accredited by the American Association of Healthcare Administrative Management. Additionally, Sheila holds membership in the National Society of Leadership and Success.

Sheila holds an associate degree in accounting and a certificate of occupational endorsement in bookkeeping from UAA. She is a strong advocate for higher education and certifications that can benefit individuals in their careers. She is currently attending APU working toward obtaining her bachelor's degree in business administration with a minor in healthcare management, and her anticipated graduation date of spring 2024. She hopes to pursue a master's degree and become a certified coder afterward.



Sheila and Roger Lowe. Photo by Roger Lowe, Jr.

Sheila loves Native dancing and wearing her traditional regalia. She finds the rhythm of the drums and singing to be truly amazing. Growing up, she enjoyed hunting seals, beluga whales, moose and caribou.

❄️ ❄️ ❄️ 2023 Christmas Card Design Contest ❄️ ❄️ ❄️

Calling All Artists!

We are hosting our annual Christmas Card Design Contest with a chance to win one of three prizes! The grand prize winner will be featured on our 2023 Christmas card and will also receive a cash prize of \$150. Additionally, there will be two - runners-up who will receive a cash prize of \$25 and acknowledgment in Chugachmiut media outlets. The contest is open to everyone and all ages. Once submitted, Chugachmiut assumes all rights of the artwork, including the right to sell, destroy, and/or reuse.

The submission deadline is **Friday, November 17, 2023** at 5 pm (AKST). Artwork must be submitted digitally and include an artwork release form. Submit to: media@chugachmiut.org.

See full rules and submission information at www.chugachmiut.org/2023-christmas-card-design-contest.



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Chugachmiut Board & Executive Leadership

A seven-member Board of Directors governs Chugachmiut; each board member selected by their tribal government. The Board of Directors appoints the Executive Director who manages the day-to-day operations of the organization.

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Port Graham

Larry Evanoff, *Vice Chair*
Chenege

Jim Ujioka, *Treasurer*
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Pamela Smith, *Director*
Eyak

Nanci Robart, *Director*
Tatitlek

Angela Vanderpool
Executive Director

Nupuat Newsletter - Call for Submissions

Have a story, essay, or poetry to share? Have some suggested topics or feedback for our newsletter? We welcome submissions from Tribal/community members, councils and employees. To submit ideas, articles, stories, poetry, pictures for use in the Nupuat, please email to media@Chugachmiut.org.