



Elders Home Receives Quality Award!



The Yukon-Kuskokwim Elders Home was recognized for providing quality care to our elders. President and CEO Dan Winkelman, Skilled Nursing Facility Administrator Samolu Jallah, and Chief Nurse Executive Markel Stowell accepted a Nursing Home Quality award on behalf of the staff and residents in September. Learn more on page 5.

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GET REAL ID READY!

Beginning May 7, 2025, travelers must present a REAL ID-compliant license or acceptable alternative to get through security and board a commercial airline flight, including flights to and from Anchorage on Alaska Airlines.

YKHC encourages you to check today to ensure you have a REAL ID driver's license or other form of ID that is REAL ID compliant. Learn more at <https://www.dhs.gov/real-id>.

RESOURCES

YKHC main switchboard 907-543-6000
Toll Free 1-800-478-3321

APPOINTMENTS

Outpatient Clinics 907-543-6442
Dental 907-543-6229
Optometry 907-543-6336
Audiology 907-543-6466

SUBREGIONAL CLINICS

Aniak 907-675-4556
Emmonak 907-949-3500
St. Mary's 907-438-3500
Toksook Bay 907-427-3500
Hooper Bay 907-758-3500

SERVICES

Inpatient (North Wing) 907-543-6330
Pharmacy Refill Line 907-543-6988
Toll Free 877-543-6988
Physical Therapy 907-543-6342
Women's Health 907-543-6296
Irrivik Birthing Center 907-543-6346
Behavioral Health Services 907-543-6100
BH CRISIS RESPONSE LINE 907-543-6499
Developmental Disabilities 907-543-2762
Emergency Room 907-543-6395
Office of Environmental Health & Engineering,
Injury Control & EMS 907-543-6420
Community Health Aide Program .. 907-543-6253
Medicaid Travel and Enrollment 833-543-6625

ADMINISTRATION & SUPPORT

Administration 907-543-6020
Human Resources 907-543-6060
Public Relations 907-543-6038

The Messenger is a quarterly publication produced by the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation's Public Relations Department as a report to Tribal Members.

For questions, comments, submission of articles, or subscription information, write to Messenger Editor, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation, P.O. Box 528, Bethel, Alaska 99559; or call 907-543-6036. E-mail: publicrelations@ykhc.org

Deadline is the 15th of September, December, March and June.

The Messenger is also available for download on our website at www.ykhc.org/messenger. Please ask permission to reprint articles or pictures.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

ATTENTION: If you speak Yup'ik, free translation services are available to you. Call 907-543-6603.

YKHC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Alakanuk



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Message

from the President
& CEO

Happy Holidays!

Congratulations to YKHC's Elder Home for being awarded its second consecutive annual Quality Improvement Award by Mountain Pacific, Alaska's healthcare quality improvement organization. Like any journey towards quality, it has been a long and arduous one, and definitely very rewarding.

Operating a skilled nursing facility in remote Alaska is challenging. Providing high quality care and being recognized by the State of Alaska and our peers for two years in a row is exceptional and without equal. I want to personally thank the Elder Home's current and former leadership and every team member for what they do each and every day! Their embrace of Lean management theory and its application has borne fruit. Each teammate is the reason this journey has been successful and with their continued leadership and stewardship, it will continue.

With that, I would like to announce our future plans to pursue a new joint venture with the US Indian Health Service to expand the Elder Home. The joint venture program is a nationwide, competitive program that we will apply for in the spring of 2025. If successful, it would double the size of the facility and increase its residents from 18 to 36. The Elder Home has a waitlist and doubling our capacity is the next right step towards achieving our vision for the Yukon-Kuskokwim region and our customers.

Workforce and housing issues will always be a challenge but the opening of our new 132-unit staff apartment complex in 2026 will greatly alleviate our daily recruiting challenges at the Elder Home and across all YKHC departments. As we all know, the lack of housing in Bethel has been a significant challenge to recruiting and retaining new staff.

Lastly, we are also working on plans to expand the new, 109 room, Qavartarik Customer Lodge. Lately, we have averaged full occupancy twice a week. We planned for this when designing the facility and reserved space next to it for this expansion. Keep reading future editions of the *Messenger* for new updates.

As for current construction, we are continuing to build new clinics in Anvik, Metarvik, Oscarville and Stony River. Kwigillingok and Lime Village will receive new clinic expansions. We will also renovate and double the size of our supply warehouse and build a daycare facility for employees. Excluding the expansions to the Elder Home and Lodge, we currently have over \$150 million of new infrastructure in design or under construction.

These significant investments in new infrastructure are an unparalleled growth happening nowhere else in rural Alaska. They will greatly improve access and quality across the YKHC health system, and thus, ultimately the health of our People. YKHC is only able to undertake this historic journey towards improved quality due to our unrelenting commitment towards excellence and our superior financial strength.

I thank our leadership, providers and all 1,600 employees for your dedication and devotion towards achieving our mission and vision for the benefit of the 30,000 residents of the great Yukon-Kuskokwim region.

I wish each of you a joyous holiday season.

Sincerely,



Dan Winkelman,
President & CEO

CHAP NEWS

CHAP FORUM 2024: Honoring Health Aide Excellence Across Alaska

In November, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium hosted the Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) Forum 2024, bringing together dental, behavioral and community health aides from across the state, representing most tribal health organizations.

This second annual integrated forum provided an opportunity for health aides from all disciplines to earn continuing medical education hours, network with providers and peers and build relationship to enhance healthcare delivery across Alaska.

A highlight of the CHAP forum was the presentation of awards honoring health aides who demonstrate dedication, leadership, and excellence in their roles. This year, we are proud to celebrate three individuals from YKHC's CHAP and DHAT for their outstanding contributions.

Dental Health Aide North Star Award: Conan Murat, Bethel

The North Star Award is given to a Dental Health Aide who has demonstrated leadership or outstanding supervision in their position.

Being one of the original Alaska DHATs, Conan Murat faced and overcame many challenges and paved the road to success for DHATs in Alaska. His contributions have guided the success of YKHC's DHAT program for over 20 years! He has traveled extensively throughout the region to provide dental care to communities in need, allowing for consistent dental care, without patients having to travel long distances. In addition to excelling in his clinical care, he also serves as a mentor to new dentists and DHATs at YKHC, sharing his vast knowledge and experience working in our region.



Conan Murat, DHAT.

North Star Award: Daniel Joekay, Bethel

Daniel Joekay was awarded the prestigious North Star Award, recognizing his exceptional leadership and commitment to guiding and mentoring health aides within the CHAP program. Daniel's dedication to supporting new health aides and delivering high-quality care has made a profound impact, making him a guiding light for his colleagues and a trusted leader within our region.



Daniel Joekay.

Shining Star Award: Darren Smith, Scammon Bay

Darren Smith received the Shining Star Award in recognition of his dedication and service. Known for his compassionate and culturally relevant approach to patient care, Darren has consistently demonstrated the values that CHAP upholds. His commitment to overcoming the unique challenges of healthcare in rural Alaska ensures that each patient receives respectful and effective care.



Darren Smith.

Photos courtesy of Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Congratulations to Conan, Daniel and Darren for their well-deserved awards!

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM ELDERS HOME RECOGNIZED FOR QUALITY

The Yukon-Kuskokwim (YK) Elders Home was awarded a Nursing Home Quality Award by the Mountain Pacific Quality Improvement Organization at the Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association's Annual Conference in Girdwood in September. This was the second consecutive year YKHC's Elders Home received this recognition.

The YK Elders Home, YKHC's long-term care facility, was one of only six nursing homes to receive this award. This year's award criteria were based on a quality measure point system that included preventing infection, decreasing readmissions, improving resident vaccination rates for influenza, pneumococcal and COVID vaccines and a bonus category to recognize the facility's STAR rating.

On hand to accept the award on behalf of YKHC were President and CEO Dan Winkelman, Skilled Nursing Facility Administrator Samolu Jallah, and Chief Nurse Executive Markel Stowell.



Staff at the YK Elders Home engage residents with physical care and social activities.

"We are excited to receive this recognition of the quality of care we provide at the YK Elders Home," said Stowell. "We are grateful for the hardworking staff at the home and everyone throughout YKHC who support the care of our elders."

THIRD COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE WELLNESS RETREAT EMPOWERS AND SUPPORTS HEALTH AIDES

Ten community health aides from across YKHC's service area gathered for a week in October. Some health aides had just a few years of experience. Others have served for decades. They all came together to learn and support each other during the third Community Health Aide Wellness Retreat.

The retreat focused on enhancing the health aides' wellness and resilience, particularly within the context of the Alaska Native culture. Attendees learned culturally-relevant strategies for coping with stress and trauma.

Discussions and activities helped participants realize their capacity to overcome negative self-talk, re-establish self-care and self-worth, and celebrate their accomplishments.



Health aides, facilitators and YKHC leaders gathered during the Community Health Aid Wellness retreat.

Attendees also learned about emotional intelligence and its application to personal and professional relationships.

Experienced facilitators included Joseph Okitkun, Field Supervision Coordinator; Tamara Ayapan, Supervisor-Instructor, Asela Calhoun, PhD, Director of CHAP/Education; Ida David, BH Services Coordinator; and Josephine Augustine-Edmund, Calricaraq Program contractor. Vice President Outpatient Care and Village Health Patricia Smith, and President and CEO Dan Winkelman also visited during the retreat. Feedback from participants was overwhelmingly positive.

YKHC is committed to supporting the holistic well-being of village-based staff, ensuring they have the resources to cope with difficult situations and continue delivering much needed health care in remote western Alaska. These wellness initiatives not only support individual health aides but also contribute to the overall health of the communities they serve.



Activities supported learning and discussion about wellness and resilience.

GOOD NUTRITION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

Bottles down for babies older than 18 months

Pediatricians recommend that babies make the switch from bottles to sippy cups by age 18 months. While bottles are appropriate for infants (and are convenient!), there are several reasons why it's important to make the effort to switch your baby to a cup once the child is eating solid foods.

- Bottle use can cause bottlemouth syndrome, a form of tooth decay in very young children caused by prolonged exposure to milk or sugary drinks.
- Excess milk can cause weight gain.
- Extended bottle use may cause your baby to develop picky eating habits.
- It is easier for both you and the baby to transition to the cup/sippy cup before the baby is two years old.

While transitioning away from the bottle can seem daunting, there are ways to make it easier. First, start the sippy cup at meal times. Choose a cup that has a non-spill lid or straw. Avoid soft-nipped sippy cups, which are similar to a bottle.

When solid foods are added to the child's diet, give baby a sippy cup with 2-3 oz of water. This starts the weaning process (and provides extra liquid that can help prevent constipation that may result with the addition of solid foods.) As the child becomes proficient with the cup, use it as much as possible. If you do offer the bottle, fill it only with water.

With time, your baby will get used to drinking from the cup!



Babies thrive on healthy foods and non-sugary drinks. Learn more with YKHC's WIC program.

WIC IS MORE THAN SUPPLEMENTAL FOODS

You may know that the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program offers formula and food benefits. But did you know there's much more to WIC?

Your WIC team, which includes educators, dietitians and breastfeeding specialist, helps families and young children achieve better health throughout the pregnancy and the child's first five years. They provide information and assistance to help parents, guardians and children live healthy lives. With the help of WIC, each generation can be even healthier than the one before.



Scan this QR code to visit www.ykhc.org/wic and apply for WIC online

If you are a pregnant person or the parent or guardian of an infant or child under age 5, you can apply. Most families in our region will qualify. There are several ways to apply. You can visit the WIC office at the hospital in Bethel, make an appointment at your local clinic or apply online at www.ykhc.org/wic.

When you apply online, click on the link to the DocuSign website and follow the directions provided. You will need to complete all applicable forms.

- **Child application** – Complete one for each child between 1-5 years
- **Postpartum/Breastfeeding application** – Complete as soon as you have your baby
- **Infant application** – Complete one for each child less than one year old
- **Pregnant application** – Complete as soon as you have pregnancy diagnosis from the clinic

Make sure to provide accurate and complete contact information, including phone number, address and email, which are required to receive benefits. Then sign with an e-signature. A WIC representative will contact you to follow up.

COOK UP HEALTHY FOOD HABITS IN 2025

Food is so much more than energy for our bodies. It is tradition, sharing, community, comfort and culture.

The foods we eat also contribute to our health. What you eat today can affect how you feel in 10, 20, or more years from now. As we get older, many of us may develop one or more chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancers, that can be linked to the foods we eat.

Many of the foods in a traditional Alaska Native diet support good health. Fruits and vegetables contain nutrients and fiber which help prevent chronic diseases.

Berries and greens grow well in Alaska. Salmonberries, blueberries, blackberries, cranberries, fiddleheads, spruce tips, beach asparagus, sourdock, and many other edible plants may be available just outside your door!

Wild game (such as moose, deer, and musk ox), birds (like ptarmigan, geese, duck) are excellent sources of protein. Fish and other marine foods found in the YK Delta, including seal, whale, herring and salmon, are high in protein and contain fats that are good for your heart and brain.

Once you have chosen healthy food, consider how they are prepared. **How you make a food can be just as important as which foods you choose to eat!**



Check out some tasty and healthy recipes on the following pages or at www.ykhc.org/recipes.

For more information, reach out to Diabetes Prevention & Control at 907-543-6133.



Limit salt. Use herbs and other seasonings to add flavor to foods.



Cook meat without adding additional fat or breading. Ideas include grilling and broiling.



Add vegetables to foods such as soups and eggs to easily add extra nutrition, flavor and brightness to your meals.



Minimize added fat by using small amounts of olive or canola oil. Consider other tasty ways to add flavor to foods, such as a squeeze of lemon or lime juice.



Steam your veggies. If using canned vegetables, rinse canned vegetables and fruits to remove some of the added salt and sugar.



Limit ultra-process foods, such as pop, candy, and chips. These foods tend to have added fat, salt, and/or sugar, as well as other additives. These foods are linked with obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic health conditions..

Eat well today. Your future self will thank you! Even better is that your children will follow the example you set for them. Teaching your children and grandchildren healthy eating habits now will help improve the health outcomes of future generations.

Eat well this year!

HEALTHY SALMON SPREAD



Ingredients:

- 10 ounces cooked salmon, flaked and divided in half
- 1/2 cup plain non-fat Greek yogurt, divided in half
- 1 tablespoon light mayonnaise
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice, or to taste
- 1 tablespoon chives, chopped - optional
- 2 tablespoons red onion, chopped fine
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped garlic
- Salt and pepper to taste

Preparation:

1. Place half of the salmon, half of the yogurt, light mayonnaise and lemon juice in a food processor or blender.
2. Puree until smooth and creamy.
3. Transfer the mixture to a bowl and stir in the remaining salmon and yogurt.
4. Add the chives, onion, garlic and stir until combined.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste.
6. Pair with fresh veggies for a healthy snack.
7. Store refrigerated, covered, for up to 3 days.

Adapted from everydayhealthyrecipes.com

HEARTY SOUP



Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 medium carrots, diced
- 3 stalks celery, diced
- 2 medium potatoes, diced
- 2 teaspoons Italian seasoning
- 4 cups vegetable broth + 1 cup water
- 1 pound meat of choice, browned
- 2 15 ounce cans diced tomatoes
- 1 cup frozen corn
- 1 15 ounce can kidney beans
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped - optional
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice, or to taste - optional

Preparation:

1. Once hot, add onion and 1 teaspoon salt and cook for 5 minutes, stirring often.
2. Add garlic, carrots, celery, and potatoes and cook for 5 more minutes, stirring often.
3. Add Italian seasoning and cook for 1 more minute.
4. Add broth, water, meat, tomatoes, corn, beans, bay leaf, and black pepper.
5. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, until the vegetables are tender, about 35 minutes.
6. Remove from heat and stir in parsley and lemon juice.

Adapted from hummusapien.com

*YKHC is here for you and
your family*

Try these recipes

Recipes courtesy of YKHC Diabetes Prevention and Control. For more recipes, visit www.ykhc.org/recipes.

WHIPPED BERRY DESSERT



Ingredients:

- 1 cup non-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 1 cup sugar free whipped topping
- 3 pints fresh or frozen berries

Preparation:

1. In a large bowl, combine yogurt and berries.
2. Gently fold in whipped topping.
3. Refrigerate or freeze for 2 hours to firm.

Use any combination of berries: cloudberrries, tundra blueberries, cranberries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries

Adapted from ciri.com

ICED RHUBARB TEA



Ingredients:

- 8 cups rhubarb, cut into 1 inch pieces
- 8 cups water
- 1 orange, peeled and sliced in rings
- 1-2 pints of berries, mashed

Preparation:

1. In a large pot, combine rhubarb and water.
2. Bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer for 20-25 minutes, or until tender.
3. Using a colander, strain rhubarb into a large bowl, pressing with spatula to extract juice.
4. Stir in orange slices and mashed berries.
5. Cool, pour into pitcher, and serve over ice.

Adapted from Foods We Alaskans Enjoy; anthc.org

VEGGIE LOADED GAME MEATLOAF



Ingredients:

- | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| • 2 pounds ground game meat | finely chopped |
| • 1 cup oatmeal | • 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| • 2 large eggs, beaten | • 1/2 teaspoon red pepper flakes |
| • 1 cup shredded carrot | • 1/2 teaspoon black pepper |
| • 1/2 cup onion, diced | • 2 teaspoons thyme |
| • 1 bell pepper, diced | • 2 teaspoons parsley |
| • 1 stalk celery, diced | |
| • 2-3 garlic cloves, | |

Preparation:

1. Heat oven to 350° F.
2. In a bowl, combine all ingredients.
3. Form into a loaf in an ungreased loaf pan.
4. Bake, uncovered for 60-70 minutes.

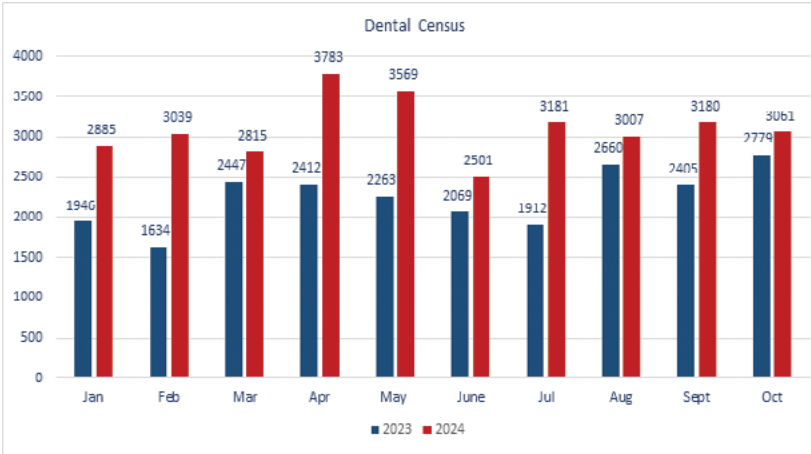
Adapted from tasteofhome.com

DENTAL TEAM TRAVEL HELPS KEEP SMILES BRIGHT AND HEALTHY

With 17 dentists and a strong team of Dental Health Aide Therapists (DHATs) on staff, the Dental department has been able to increase the number of patients they have seen during 2024 by more than 40%.

In addition to seeing more patients in Bethel, the Dental team traveled to many village and sub-regional clinics, allowing customers to receive oral care closer to their homes. Customers were grateful to be able get their dental care needs met without having to travel to Bethel.

Healthy smiles are a team effort! Take care of your teeth with regular brushing and flossing – and schedule regular visits with your DHAT or dentist who can assist with cleanings, cavities and other oral care needs. We look forward to seeing you!



The number of dental encounters in 2024 (shown in red) exceeded the number of encounters in every month of 2023 (shown in blue), resulting in more than 40% more patients being seen.



Dr. Brita Pihl and Dental Health Aide Therapist Rene Hoffman provided dental care for 88 patients during an eight day trip to Alakanuk in October.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

- E-mail us at customer_feedback@ykhc.org
- Download a feedback form at www.ykhc.org/comment
- Mail a comment form to P.O. Box 287, Bethel, AK 99559

CHECK UP ON YOUR ORAL HEALTH HABITS

Recommendations for good oral care haven't changed much in recent years; you likely already know most of the practices that help keep a person's mouth and teeth in top shape! But are you putting put all these tips into action? Review the list below and see if you need to shine up your oral care habits in 2025.	Yes I do this ☒	Start in 2025 ☒
Schedule a visit with a Dental Health Aide Therapist (DHAT) or dentist at least every six months. Call your sub-regional clinic or the YKHC Dental Dept. at 907-543-6229. Your dentist will check your mouth for cancers, oral health problems, and cavities.	☐	☐
Reduce added sugar in your food and drinks. They contribute to oral diseases and other chronic diseases.	☐	☐
Brush your teeth well twice a day and floss between your teeth to remove dental plaque.	☐	☐
Don't use tobacco products. The more you use tobacco, the higher your risk of developing cancer.	☐	☐
Drink less alcohol. The more alcohol you drink, the higher your risk of head and neck cancer. If you drink, do so in moderation to lower your risk.	☐	☐
Act on any new symptoms. Talk to your doctor or dentist if you have sudden changes in taste and smell	☐	☐



Speak with a member of YKHC's Tobacco Cessation team to get the support you need to finally quit tobacco this year.

MAKE 2025 THE YEAR YOU GO TOBACCO-FREE

If you're a tobacco user, the single most important thing you can do to improve your health in 2025 is to stop using tobacco. Quitting can also help you feel better, save money and set a good example of a tobacco-free life for your kids.

If you're thinking about quitting, we recommend these first four steps to get you started:

1. Write down a list of four things that make you want to quit.
2. Tell your family, friends and healthcare provider you want to quit and ask if they will support you.
3. Explore options for quitting, such as the YKHC Tobacco Cessation program.
4. Enroll in a tobacco cessation program. Using medications combined with counseling can more than double your chances of quitting.

Here are two local resources available to support you in quitting tobacco.

- YKHC Tobacco Cessation Program. Call 907-543-6312 for more information on how to enroll.
- Alaska's Tobacco Quit Line. Call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669), or visit Alaskaquitline.com.

Stopping tobacco use is not easy, but hundreds of people quit every year. Make 2025 your year!

LET'S LEARN MORE ABOUT LUNG CANCER SCREENINGS

If you are a smoker between ages 50 and 80, your healthcare professional might have recommended you a low-dose computed tomography (also called a low-dose CT scan, or LDCT) to screen for lung cancer.

If you have questions about what this means or how the screening works, you are in the right place! Take a few minutes to review some of the most frequently asked questions about this powerful tool to help detect lung cancers early.

What is the benefit of screening?

Doctors recommend a screening test to find a disease early, when treatment may work better.

Who should be screened?

The US Preventive Services Task Force recommends yearly lung cancer screening with LDCT for people who:

1. Are between 50 and 80 years old and
2. Smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years, and
3. Have a 20 "pack-year" or more smoking history

What is a "pack-year"?

To calculate "pack years," multiply the number of years a person smoked by the number of packs they smoked each day. A person could have a 20-pack-year history, for example, if they smoked:

- 1 pack a day for 20 years
- 2 packs a day for 10 years
- 1 ½ packs a day for a little longer than 13 years
- 3 packs a day for a little longer than 6 ½ years

What happens during a lung cancer screening?

You lie on a table and an x-ray machine uses a low dose (amount) of radiation to make detailed images of your lungs. The scan only takes a few minutes and is not painful. Results are typically available within a few days of your screening from your doctor.

Where can I get a low-dose CT for lung cancer screening?

YKHC offers lung cancer screenings at the hospital in Bethel.

How can I get an appointment? Do I need to speak with my doctor first?

An appointment for CT lung cancer screening can be requested after a conversation with your doctor about your history, current concerns, and risks for lung cancer. Your provider may be able to arrange for screening the day of your visit, or you can call 907-543-6442 to schedule an appointment.

Winter Travel Safety



Winter travel is the most fun when you know you are prepared in case you get stuck outside for a while.

Imagine you're on your way to see your relatives in another village 40 miles upriver and your snow machine suddenly stops.

You try starting it a few times, maybe trying fixing it, but nothing is happening. Now you are miles away from home and it's -20 degrees with the windchill.

Are you panicked and unprepared? Or do you feel confident knowing you have followed best practices for traveling in winter conditions?

Let's find out! Review the list of safe winter travel tips in the right column. Put a check next to each item that you are prepared to do in a situation where your snowmachine breaks down on a winter trip across the tundra. The more items you can check off, the better prepared you likely are!

- ☐ **Be sure that someone knows your travel plans.** Before you take off, be sure to alert several people to your travel plans. Let them know where you are going, what path you are taking at what time they should call for help if you haven't arrived.
- ☐ **Make yourself visible.** Use bright colors to make yourself more visible. This helps rescuers find you. Put something colorful on your snowmachine or yourself.
- ☐ **Use your sled for shelter or find a safe spot to wait out the storm.** Remember the wisdom shared by elders: When you're towing a sled, tip it to one side with the bottom of the sled facing the wind. It's crucial to have a stick or something long and narrow, as the snow will start to drift around and over you as you're sitting inside the sled, sheltered from the direct wind. Use the stick to carve a hole out of the drifted snow once in a while to look for sunlight, which would indicate the storm has passed. If you do not have a sled, find a sheltered area, like some trees, that can protect you from the harsh weather.
- ☐ **Signal for help.** Use a whistle or make large shapes in the snow to signal for help. Three loud blasts are a universal call for help. If possible, use technology like GPS and satellite messengers to help communicate to others where you are.
- ☐ **Keep warm.** Use what you can for heat. Wear your warmest clothes and cover up with anything you have. Carry a warm blanket or sleeping bag. If you can, start a fire. Elders say you'll start to have hallucinations of warm fires or people who give you warm clothing while telling you to remove the clothing you have on first. Don't listen to those.
- ☐ **Eat snacks and drink water.** Eating and drinking can help you stay energized, hydrated and clear-headed. Bring snacks, but be careful not to use all your supplies at once.
- ☐ **Stay put and don't lose hope.** Elders recommend to stay put unless it's unsafe. Walking around in a storm can make you more lost and uses a lot of energy. Searchers will look for you by your machine. Panicking can make things worse. Take deep breaths and remember, you can handle this. Believe that rescuers are searching for you. Stay positive and trust that help will come.
- ☐ **Once you're safe, think about what you learned.** This experience can help you be better prepared for exciting winter adventures in the future!



AYAGNIRVIK HEALING CENTER: Help for individuals struggling with substance use disorders

The Ayagnirvik Healing Center offers individuals experiencing a substance use disorder an effective, culturally-relevant residential treatment program

There may be a time when an individual struggling with a substance use disorder needs to step away from their current situation and immerse themselves in treatment and healing. For those individuals, Ayagnirvik Healing Center can offer the treatment and care they need.

The Ayagnirvik Healing Center, often referred to as AHC, offers services to men and women for substance use and co-occurring disorders. The multi-week, residential program focuses on healing the whole person. Treatment is designed to assist individuals in examining reasons for substance use and to address issues that result from or contribute to substance use.

The AHC staff work to assist each individual to reach their goals in improving their quality of life. The program uses an evidence-based approach, offering individual and group sessions to assist in self-exploration, healing from trauma, and gaining and strengthening skills to improve relationships, manage emotions, and to reach individual goals. Residents participate in Calricaraq, a culturally-based program utilizing Yup'ik culture, values, and traditions to address behavioral health issues from a holistic, indigenous approach.

Medication Assisted Treatment, provided by YKHC medical staff, is also offered as a treatment option.

AHC is a 16-bed facility that contains offices, group meeting areas and a large multi-purpose room with a basketball half-court. The AHC program utilizes a community approach to treatment. Residents' daily schedule includes community activities that help foster a sense of community and provide opportunities for self-care, reflection and improvement. Family visits can be scheduled, when individual circumstances allow.

Participants are admitted after evaluation by YKHC Behavioral Health. If you think Ayagnirvik Healing Center is right for you or someone you know, contact YKHC Behavioral Health at 907-543-6100.

Ayagnirvik Healing Center is one of many services YKHC offers to assist men and women experiencing substance use issues. Learn more about YKHC's behavioral health programs at ykhc.org/behavioral-health or by calling 907-543-6100, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. YKHC behavioral health is by your side.

We are here to help

YKHC Behavioral Health offers a wide variety of residential and outpatient programs to support individuals, families, loved ones and communities who need help with mental health or substance use disorders.

YKHC's prevention team partners with communities to offer a culturally-based approach, Calricaraq, to promote healthy living and healing. Our prevention team travels to villages and is excited to participate in events at the school or in the community.

To learn more about any of our programs, call 907-543-6100, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Emergency support is always available. A person in crisis or someone supporting them can access immediate, confidential mental health support 24-hours-a-day by calling the YKHC crisis line at 907-543-6499 or 844-543-6499, or by calling or texting the National Lifeline at 988.

WE ALL BENEFIT WHEN ELIGIBLE CUSTOMERS ENROLL IN MEDICAID AND MEDICARE

Did you know that having as many qualified customers as possible enrolled in Medicaid, Medicare and Child Healthcare Insurance Programs (CHIP) is vital to the wellbeing of our patients?

These programs serve as a critical source of care for American Indians and Alaska Natives—and allow patients to be seen at other facilities outside of the Indian Health Service (IHS) system, should that be necessary. These programs do *not* reduce any of your existing IHS benefits.

When tribal members enroll in these insurance coverages, YKHC, ANTHC and other tribal healthcare organizations are able to bill those insurance carriers for the services provided.

Why is that important? IHS funding only covers about half of YKHC’s operating expenses. Funds collected from other insurance programs—including Medicaid, Medicare and CHIP—allow us to offer many of the additional healthcare services our customers love and depend on that aren’t funded by IHS, such as the new YKHC-operated nurse triage line.

As part of YKHC’s commitment to enhance existing medical services, we would like to continue to encourage our tribal members to apply for medical coverage through Medicaid, Medicare and CHIP.

If you think you might be eligible, apply today! Application help and screening assistance is available by calling YKHC at 833-543-6625.

MEDICAID★Get Ready to Renew!

Be sure you stay covered

5 THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR MEDICAID RENEWAL

1		Keep your contact information up to date.	Go to medicaidrenewals.alaska.gov or scan the QR code with your smart-phone and follow the “Save time” link to update online. Or, call the Medicaid Information Update Hotline 833-441-1870.	
2		Monitor and respond to mail.	You may receive mail when it is your turn to renew. Respond quickly to avoid delays in coverage.	
3		The process is easy, with help along the way!	Most renewal packets come pre-populated with your information. You just need to be sure the information is correct, if it isn't, make corrections. We'll let you know if your renewal packet is missing anything. We'll mail a checklist of missing information to send back within 30 calendar days. Send in your packet even if it's late. If you miss the renewal date, your packet can be used to re-enroll if it's submitted within 180 days of your disenrollment.	
4		Your children may be eligible for Medicaid even if you're not.	Children under the age of 19 with insurance may be eligible if their household income is under 177% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for Alaska and children under the age of 19 without insurance may be eligible if their household income is under 203% of the FPL for Alaska.	
5		You can appeal if you don't agree.	A Notice of Action will be mailed regarding your Medicaid coverage and will include information on how to appeal.	

For more information and to sign up for email updates with news about renewals, visit medicaidrenewals.alaska.gov
If you have questions or need help with any part of the process, contact YKHC’s Medicaid Enrollment Office at 907-543-6470.

TRIBAL GATHERING XXIX IS SCHEDULED FOR FEB. 27-28, 2025

Each year, YKHC invites two delegates from each of the 58-federally recognized tribes in the YKHC service area to gather in Bethel to hear reports about progress and help establish priorities for the corporation for the upcoming year.

SAVE THE DATE for Tribal Gathering 2025, which is scheduled for Feb. 27-28. The theme of this years’ gathering is “On our River Towards Excellence,” which recognizes our progress in moving the organization closer to our mission of Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health.



Capital Projects Update

Sept - Dec 2024

Program Accomplishments

Tuntu Apartments:

- Insulated metal panel siding was completed to 90% in October. Contractor will complete remaining work next summer.
- Exterior windows were set.
- Within the interstitial space, the rough-in was completed and the plumbing pipes passed air pressure testing.
- Carpenters framed interior walls through-out the 4th floor.
- Fire-proofing on the 4th floor is 75% complete.
- All trades completed rough-in within northeast wing of the 4th floor. Those spaces will get wall insulation and sheetrock starting in December.
- 12" Pile for decks and canopies were driven in November.

Village Clinics: 95% drawings are in progress. Request for Proposal to hire a Contractor for Mertarvik, Lime Village and Kwigillingok are being developed. Anvik clinic is under construction. Oscarville clinic will begin construction later this winter and Stony River clinic construction materials will be on the first river barge in Spring 2025.

Warehouse: 95% Design Drawings were approved by YKHC and Construction Drawings are underway. Request for Proposal to hire a Contractor will be released at end of December.

Daycare Center: Cost analysis is being conducted to review using an existing building vs. new construction.



Exterior metal siding 90% complete



Splice welding of piles



Stud wall layout

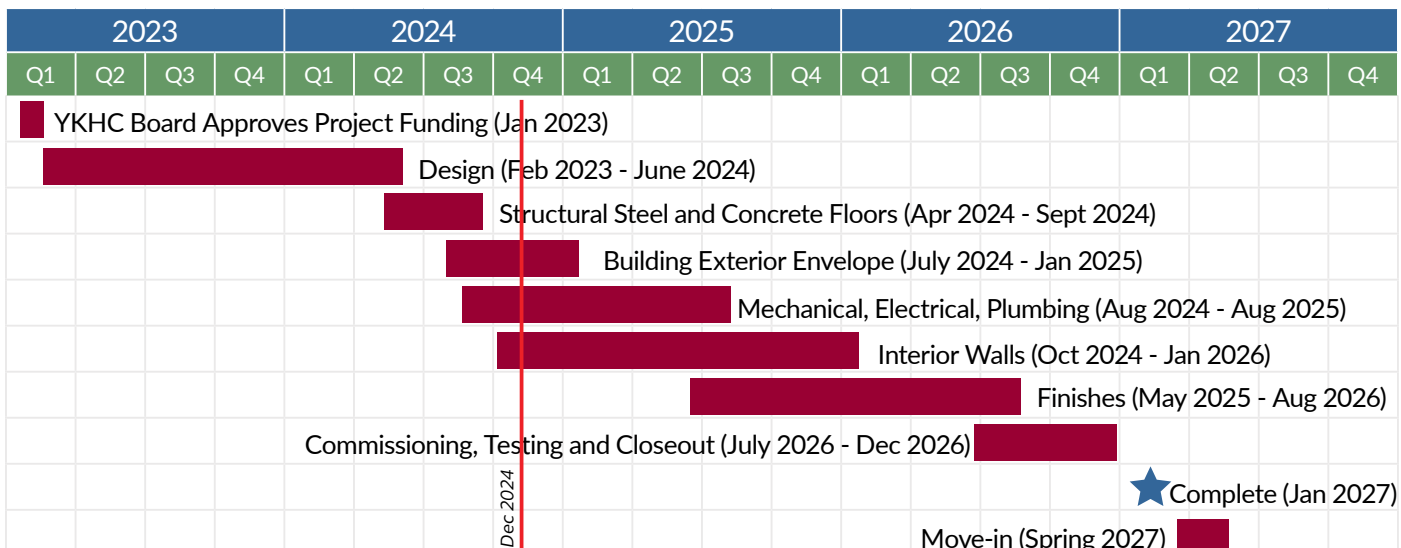


Firestopping between floors



Bathroom rough-in

Tuntu Apartments Project Schedule



Work at YKHC!

Join hundreds of employees in the YK Region who make a difference in their community by working at YKHC.

We offer a wide variety of jobs and training opportunities, so you can start working now and get additional training when you are ready.

Take another look!

Starting wages recently increased for many support jobs, such as Materials Management, Pre-Maternal Home Attendant, Medical Technician and many more.

We also offer a summer hire program for high school and college students looking for their first job. Applications open in spring.

Learn more and apply at www.ykhc.org/work.

