

# 2024 Report to the People



**Yukon-Kuskokwim**  
HEALTH CORPORATION





On the Cover: Summer fun on the boardwalk in Bethel, August 2024. Photo by Katie Basile.

**Mission**  
*Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health*

**Vision**  
*Through Native Self-Determination and  
Culturally Relevant Health Systems,  
We Strive to be the Healthiest People*

**Values**  
*Optimism • Compassion  
Pursuit of Excellence  
Trust • Personal Growth  
Elder Knowledge  
Importance of Family*



# 2024 Report to the People

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# Board of Directors

## Unit 1



Mary Ayunerak  
Alakanuk



Currently Vacant  
Unit 1

## Unit 2



Geraldine Beans  
St. Mary's



Gloria George  
Mtn. Village

## Unit 3



Bonnie Persson  
Upper Kalskag



Mary Willis  
Stony River

## Unit 4



Moses Owen  
Akiak



Mike Williams Sr.  
Akiak

## Unit 5



Stanley Hoffman Jr.  
Bethel



Alton Alexie  
Bethel



Walter Jim  
Bethel



Chris Larson  
Napaskiak

## Unit 6



Sam Tinker Sr.  
Kasigluk



Adolph Lewis  
Kwigillingok

## Unit 7



Simeon John  
Toksook Bay



James Sipary  
Toksook Bay

## Unit 8



Darren Cleveland  
Quinhagak



Rebecca Bostrom  
Grayling

## Unit 9



Patrick Tall  
Chevak



John Uttereyuk  
Scammon Bay

## Honorary Board

### Member



James Charlie Sr.  
Toksook Bay

# Board Committees

## Executive Board

Moses Owen, Interim Chair  
Patrick Tall, 2nd Vice Chair  
Geraldine Beans, Secretary  
Darren Cleveland, Treasurer  
Bonnie Persson, Sergeant-at-Arms  
Chris Larson, 1st Additional Member  
Alton Alexie, 2nd Additional Member  
Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Governing Body

Stanley Hoffman, Jr., Chair  
Adolph Lewis, Vice-Chair  
Sam N. Tinker, Sr., Secretary  
Vacant, Treasurer  
Rebecca Bostrom, Sergeant-at-Arms  
Mike Williams Sr.  
John Uttereyuk (MSAPC)  
James Sipary  
Mary Willis (MSAPC)  
Simeon John  
Gloria George  
Mary Ayunerak  
Walter Jim  
Geraldine Beans, Executive Board Representative

## By-Law Committee

Geraldine Beans, Chair  
Mike Williams  
James Sipary  
Chris Larson  
Sam Tinker  
Simeon John  
Darren Cleveland  
Moses Owen, Ex-Officio  
Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Policy Committee

Adolph Lewis, Chair  
Mike Williams  
Stanley L. Hoffman, Jr.  
Vacant  
Patrick Tall  
John Uttereyuk  
Sam Tinker  
Moses Owen, Ex-Officio  
Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Human Studies

Bonnie Persson  
Rebecca Bostrom  
Mary Ayunerak, Traveler  
Chris Larson  
John Uttereyuk  
Gloria George  
Adolph Lewis  
Vacant  
Simeon John

## Finance Committee

Darren Cleveland, Chair  
Stanley L. Hoffman, Jr.  
Alton Alexie  
Vacant  
Bonnie Persson  
Patrick Tall  
Moses Owen, Ex-Officio  
Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Behavioral Health Advisory

Michael Williams, Chair  
Bonnie Persson  
Alton Alexie  
Simeon John  
Rebecca Bostrom  
Mary Ayunerak  
Gloria George  
Moses Owen, Ex-Officio  
Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Board Appointments

**ANHB:** John Uttereyuk  
Rebecca Bostrom - Alternate  
**ANTHC:** Moses Owen  
Alternate: Alton Alexie  
**LifeMed:** Patrick Tall  
Stanley Hoffman, Jr.  
Dan Winkelman

## Corporate Compliance/ Quality Assurance

Mary Willis, Chair  
Stanley L. Hoffman, Jr.  
Adolph Lewis  
Vacant  
Mary Ayunerak  
Moses Owen, Ex-Officio  
Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Compensation Committee

Adolph Lewis  
Sam Tinker  
Gloria George  
Simeon John  
Geraldine Beans  
Moses Owen, Ex-Officio (interim)  
Dan Winkelman, Ex-Officio

## Board Branding

### Cultural Crafts & Photo Acquisition

Geraldine Beans  
Gloria George  
James Sipary  
Peter Atchak

### Traditional Quotes & Signage

Mary Ayunerak  
Sam N. Tinker, Sr.  
Bonnie Persson  
Simeon John  
Lotti Jones  
Veronica Winkelman  
Moses Owen, Ex-Officio

*We love to hear from  
our customers.*

*We accept feedback via email or  
customer\_feedback@ykhc.org and have  
comment cards at our clinics and at the  
hospital. We work with an outside company  
that calls and texts customers  
who have been to our hospital to ask  
for their feedback.*

*Your responses help us know how we can  
improve—and when we have done well!  
Throughout these pages, we share  
some positive feedback..provided  
by our customers.*

# Leadership Message

*Ade' and Waqaa!*

This past year, YKHC worked hard to increase access to health care, improve quality and safety, and invest in our people and infrastructure throughout our entire region for the future.

## Increased Access to Healthcare

We increased access to several age-related, prevention screens like colonoscopies and mammograms. We began a new service line using our CT scan and offered lung cancer screenings to those who met the national guideline. We also increased access to dental care by traveling to villages more frequently and increasing the number of dentists, dental health aide therapists and support staff. This resulted in dental encounters going from 26,000 in 2023 to over 35,000 in 2024. In 2024, our behavioral health preventative services team completed 140 community outreach activities compared with 46 similar activities the prior year. Our behavioral health aides completed an additional 73 outreach activities this past year.

## Improved Quality

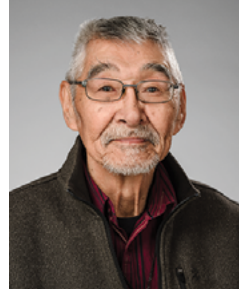
For the second year in a row, the Elders Home (YKHC's skilled-nursing facility) received a quality award from Alaska's healthcare quality improvement organization, Mountain Pacific. Being recognized by Mountain Pacific and our peers two years in a row for providing high quality care is exceptional. Doing so in remote Alaska is without equal. Congratulations to all employees that contribute to making the Elders Home safe and high quality for its residents and their families!

## Improved Safety

This year, we increased immunizations for children aged 19-35 months by 16%. Keeping your child up to date with safe and effective vaccines is one of the easiest and most effective ways to keep your child healthy and protected from serious, preventable diseases.

In 2024, we also designed and implemented our own nurse triage line for village after-hours calls. We averaged calls being answered by a registered nurse within 20 seconds or less. We currently receive approximately 1,300 calls per month.

Our remote maintenance worker program (RMW) worked with city and tribal governments, who own and operate local water and sewer systems, to prevent and fix numerous problems all over the region. More intensive responses that required additional resources were in Chefnak, Crooked Creek, Eek, Hooper Bay, Kwethluk, Nunapitchuk, Quinhagak, Russian Mission, Shageluk and Toksook Bay. The RMWs worked tirelessly with local operators to avert numerous potential catastrophic failures and kept village water and wastewater utilities safe and operational.



Moses Owen,  
Interim Board Chair



Dan Winkelman,  
President & CEO

## Invested in people and infrastructure for the future

We awarded more than \$93,000 in YKHC scholarships to 41 students pursuing a healthcare related degree or occupation and provided two dental health aide therapist candidates with more than \$68,000 in scholarships.

We recently announced plans to pursue a new joint venture with the US Indian Health Service to expand the Elders Home. The joint venture program is a nationwide, competitive program that we are applying to in April of this year. If successful, this project would double the size of the Home and increase its residents from 18 to 36 or more. The Elders Home has a wait list and doubling our capacity is the next, right step towards achieving our vision for our region's 30,000 residents.

We are developing plans to expand the 109-room Qavartarik Customer Lodge, which averaged full occupancy twice a week this year. We planned for this when we designed the facility and reserved space behind it for this expansion.

We made great progress with our 132-unit staff apartment complex. Although completion is still a year away, when finished it will greatly help with employee recruitment and retention efforts. We continue construction on new clinics in Anvik, Metarvik, Oscarville, and Stony River. Kwigillingok and Lime Village will receive 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 Elders Home and Lodge, we currently have over \$150 million of new infrastructure in design or under construction.

I want to thank our leadership, all 1,600 employees and our 58 tribal partners who accomplished everything discussed above. YKHC is only able to undertake this historic journey towards improved quality and safety due to our unrelenting commitment towards excellence and our superior financial strength. Dogidinh and quyana to all 1,600 employees for what you do, each and every day!

Sincerely,

Dan Winkelman  
President & CEO

Moses Owen  
Interim Chair of the Board of Directors



# Impact in 2024

Here are just a few ways YKHC has increased our impact across the region in the last year.

Customers enrolled in **medication assisted therapy program (MAT)** to assist with opioid misuse

**180**

Up from 118 in 2023



Visits to our website, **ykhc.org**

**140,609**

Up from 111,949 in 2023



Percentage of children 19-35 months **up to date with immunizations**

**79%**

Up from 63% in 2023



Patient encounters by **Dental team**

**35,254**

Up from 26,491 in 2023



Villages visited by  
YKHC's **Behavioral  
Health Prevention team**

**31**

Up from  
26 in 2023



Percent of female patients  
ages 52-74 **screened  
for breast cancer** in  
past two years

**43%**

Up from  
30% in 2023



Emergency medical  
services (EMS) **training  
classes** offered  
by YKHC

**64**

Up from  
57 in 2023



Average days per  
**provider in villages**

**110**

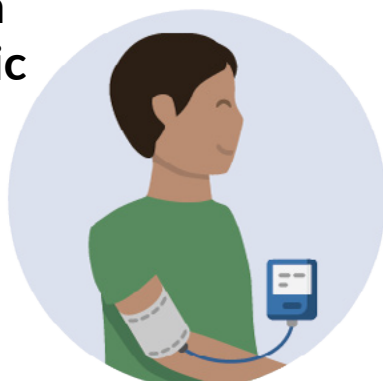
Up from  
89 in 2023



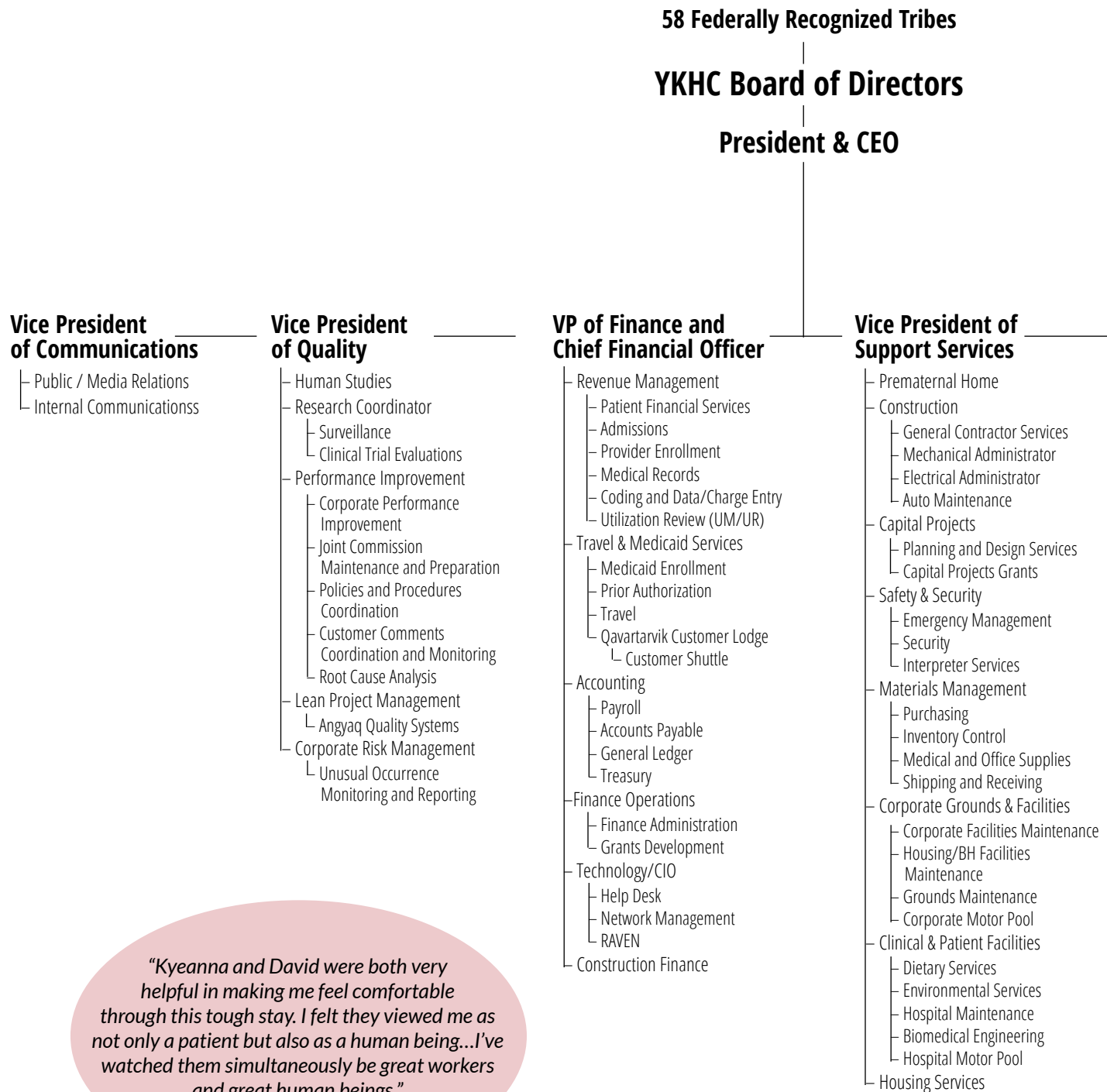
Patients seen in  
**outpatient clinic**

**26,369**

Up from  
24,785 in 2023



# Organization



*"Kyeanna and David were both very helpful in making me feel comfortable through this tough stay. I felt they viewed me as not only a patient but also as a human being...I've watched them simultaneously be great workers and great human beings."*

**– Inpatient customer**



## Vice President of Legal Affairs and Workforce

- Legal Affairs
  - General Counsel
  - Contracts
- Compliance
  - Privacy
  - Audits
- Workforce & Culture
  - Benefits
  - HRIS
  - Recruiting
  - Employee Relations
  - YK Area Health Education Center
  - Training & Organizational Development

## Vice President of Outpatient Care & Village Health

- Community Health Aide Program/Education
  - Training Center
  - Field Supervision
  - CHAP Compliance
  - CHAP Registration
- YKDRH Primary Care
  - Care Management
  - Itinerant NP/PA Program
  - Access to Collaborative Treatment
  - ANMC Field Clinic
  - Women's Health
- YKDRH Specialty Care
  - Audiology
  - Therapy Services/Traditional Healing
  - Dental
  - Optometry
  - Diabetes
  - Women Infants and Children
  - Tobacco Cessation
- Public Health
  - Population Health
  - Centralized Scheduling
  - Immunization/Well Child
  - Office of Environmental Health
  - Injury Control and Emergency Medical Services
  - Remote Maintenance Workers
  - Village Clinic Support
- Sub-Regional Clinics
  - Hooper Bay
  - Emmonak
  - St. Mary's
  - Toksook Bay
  - Aniak
  - SRC Housing & Facilities
  - SRC Performance Improvement

## Vice President of Hospital Services

### Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital

- Chief of Staff
  - Credentialing
  - Medical Staff Services
  - SART
  - Trauma Services
  - Pediatrics
- Pharmacy Services
- Diagnostic Services
  - Imaging
  - Laboratory
  - Respiratory Services
- Chief Nurse Executive
  - Nutrition Therapy
  - Hospitality
  - Infusion Clinic
  - Inpatient Adult/Peds
  - Obstetrics
  - Surgery
  - Sterile Processing Department
  - Emergency Department
  - Social Services
  - Infection Prevention
    - Employee Health
  - Nurse Education
  - YK Elders Home

### Behavioral Health Services

- Administration
  - Residential Services
    - BH Nurse
    - Morgan House
    - Bautista House
    - YK Ayagnirvik Healing Center
      - Inpatient Rehabilitation
      - Outpatient
    - McCann Treatment Center
    - Sobering Center
  - Outpatient Services
    - Outpatient Clinic
    - Village Services
      - Behavioral Health Aides
  - Preventative Services
    - Systems of Care
    - Native Connections
    - Prevention Early Intervention
    - Zero Suicide
    - Uqisqjun
  - Developmental Disability Services
    - Family Infant and Toddler & Infant Learning Program
    - DD Waiver Program
    - Star Program
    - Malone Home
    - DD Support Services
  - Emergency Services
    - BH Emergency Services Clinicians
    - BH DES Unit
    - Crisis Respite Center

# The Year in Pictures



## January

The much-anticipated 109-room Qavartarvik Customer Lodge opened on January 16. The facility provides safe and comfortable housing for customers traveling to Bethel for their healthcare needs.



## February

YKHC Behavioral Health Preventative Services team hosted a Calricaraq training in Bethel. Our prevention team utilizes a culturally relevant approach to promote healthy living and healing.



## March

Mountain Village Health Aide Deborah Johnson is recognized as Health Aide of the Year during the annual Tribal Gathering, an event hosted by YKHC where tribal leaders gather from the YKHC service area to hear reports and provide feedback to organizational leadership.



## April

The YKHC dental team traveled to St. Mary's, Emmonak and Bethel hosting "Give Kids a Smile!" events providing dental services to children in each community.



## May

The YKHC Summer Hire program provides students (at least 16 years old) with work experience in various departments, covering a wide-range of professions throughout the organization. The program is open entry, so participants can start working when they're ready and leave when they're ready.



## June

Akiachak Native Community Clinic opened June 3 with a ribbon cutting event followed by a community celebration at the local school gym with food and cake.



## July

YKHC broke ground for the construction of clinics in Anvik and Stony River. Over the next several years, YKHC will invest more than \$100 million in vital health care infrastructure. New clinics are scheduled to be built in Lime Village and Mertarvik, and the Kwigillingok clinic will receive a much-needed expansion. After these projects, YKHC will have built or replaced clinics in all service-area villages.



## August

YKHC leadership visited Oscarville to celebrate the groundbreaking of the new community health clinic in a small ceremony attended by tribal leaders and community members.



## September

YKHC Behavioral Health team members networked and distributed outreach materials during the Lower Kuskokwim School District teacher in-service event



## October

Flu and COVID vaccination events kicked off with a drive-up event and weekly walk-in immunizations events at the hospital in Bethel.



## November

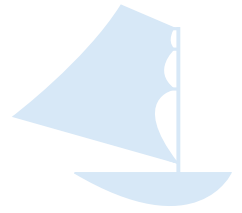
The YK Elders Home received the Alaska Nursing Home Quality Achievement Award from the Mountain Pacific Quality Improvement Organization.



## December

YKHC leadership hosted a Years of Service event where employees were recognized for reaching their 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and even 40-year milestones as YKHC employees. YKHC knows that one of the most important factors in providing quality healthcare for our customers is the retention of employees. *Quyana, dogidinh*, thank you to all of our employees who are recognized for all of your years of service this year.

# Progress on our priorities



As described by our late honorary board member Dr. Paul John, “napartet” is the mast of a boat that led he and his father out to traditional fishing waters. At YKHC, we have used Dr. John’s story to inspire our strategic plan to move our region’s health priorities forward.

Health priorities for the upcoming year are identified by tribal delegates at YKHC’s annual Tribal Gathering. Once approved by the board of directors, the priorities are formalized into our Napartet Strategy, which guides the corporation’s work for the upcoming year.

Using our Angyaq Quality System, our teams strategically work towards measurable improvements in each area of focus. In this report, we provide highlights of some of the progress made on the corporation’s 2024 Napartet priorities.

## Napartet Strategy

As described by our late honorary board member Dr. Paul John, “napartet” are the masts of the boats that led him and his father out to traditional fishing waters.

**MISSION:** Working together to achieve excellent health

**VISION:** Through Native self-determination and culturally relevant health systems, we strive to be the healthiest people

### 2024 Priorities

- Increase Access to Care
- Improve Emergency Response in Villages
- Improve Travel Communication
- Increase Village Access to Care Closer to Home
- Increase Suicide Prevention and Access to Behavioral Health

Learn more at <https://intranet.ykhc.org/angyaq-system/>

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION

**Sails:**

- Advocate for a Healthy Community
- Partner with and support Healthy People
- Improve Care Delivery, quality, and safety
- Build Corporate Capability and Culture to deliver excellence

## Increase access to care

Our customers told us they didn't want to wait as long to schedule appointments for medical care. To make care more accessible, we took on several projects to increase the number of available appointments.

### Some of our successes included:

- Increasing the number of appointments available in Primary Care by adding slots to account for the number of patients that are not able to keep their appointments, resulting in a 6% increase in visits in 2024 over 2023.
- Increasing the number of patients we serve through our Medication Assisted Therapy program by 57% by reducing barriers to care such as requiring a full assessment to Behavioral Health and being able to schedule patients immediately when they call to request an appointment. Medication Assisted Therapy combines medication treatment with therapy. For more information or for a referral, please contact 907-543-6100.
- Increasing the number of dental visits by 46% over 2023 due to an increase in dentist staffing and increased village travel.



*"This visit was probably the nicest visit I have ever had with the dental department here in Bethel, despite the reason I was being seen. Kara was extremely nice, from the moment she called me from the waiting room to walking me to check-out. When Shawn introduced himself and started explaining what he was going to do. I felt calm because of his tone of voice and his body language. They have excellent customer service."*

**- Dental patient**

## Improve emergency response in villages

Our customers expressed a need for quicker responses to medical emergencies in villages.

### Some of the steps we took to improve this included:

- YKHC sent a strategy team to Aniak for two days to develop a Community First Responder guide. This guide includes templates that all cities and tribes could use to reach out to their community partners to form a community coalition to guide all aspects of a first responder program including but not limited to community education, recruitment, training and recognition.
- A YKHC-owned and operated Nurse Triage Line was created. It launched in April and all villages were served by this line by the end of June 2024. This has improved response times because the previous triage line was not answered by a Registered Nurse but by a Health Care Navigator that would contact an RN to return the patient call with recommendations. With this new line, calls to the Nurse Triage Line are answered immediately by an RN that can help with both emergent and non-emergent issues right away.



## Increase village access to care closer to home

"It's nice to be able to see providers and get care without leaving my community," is feedback we heard from many of our customers. To make that happen, we examined our systems and identified ways to get more care services to villages.

### Some of our successes included:

- Doubling our tuberculosis screening rates by working with local schools and school districts to get consent and allow us to come into the schools to offer testing.
- Increasing our immunization rates in the villages by focusing our resources to have our care teams prioritize well child exams on village travel as well as verify immunization status at every visit.
- Increasing video teleconference appointments, allowing providers to see patients remotely. This has worked well for patients with chronic conditions, medication refills, blood pressure checks, reducing the need for patients to travel to Bethel for access to care.

## Improve travel communication

Accessing medical care in our region often requires traveling to Bethel and Anchorage. Our customers have asked for improved communication around travel, flights, appointments, and referrals.

### Some of our successes included:

- Contacting more than 12,000 customers to confirm their contact information, thereby making sure we can reach them to ask questions about their travel preferences and to share travel itineraries. We also asked customers if they wanted to enroll in texting with YKHC Travel, creating an easy and convenient way to communicate with us.
- Building a team to reach out to patients with travel that might be impacted by weather. The team can reschedule their appointment—and free appointment slots for other customers who can make a same-day appointment. The team opened up more than 400 outpatient appointments last year!
- Continuing to work with patients to rebook travel when patient's travel plans need to be updated. Of the more than 86,000 travel cases in 2024, more than 19,000 of them were rebooked due to patient request and 5,300 were rebooked due to weather.



*"Thank you very much  
with your non-stopping help.  
THANK YOU!!! And God bless you  
all. Thanks again"*  
– Akiachak customer



*"I called again and spoke with  
Amazing. She was very professional,  
efficient, and kind while assisting me...Going  
to appointments, being in a new place, having  
appointments extended, among other things can be  
taxing and quite tiresome. I am very grateful and  
ecstatic for the professionalism and efficient  
help of Amazing. She is truly amazing."*  
– Travel customer

# Increase suicide prevention and access to behavioral health

We consistently heard from people across the region that they, their loved ones and community members struggled with mental health and substance use issues. We made it priority to make it easier for people to get help with mental health and suicide prevention.

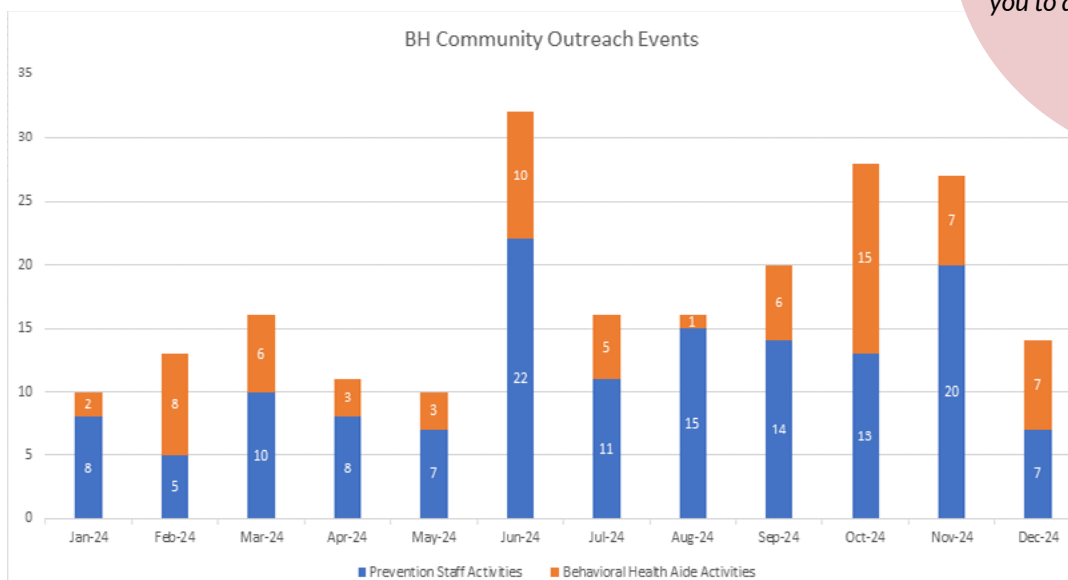
## Some of the ways we accomplished this include:

- Increasing the number and training of Behavioral Health Aides (BHAs) to help more people get the support they need in their community. This year, five BHAs became certified as Peer Recovery Support Specialists, which trains BHAs to support others by sharing their own experiences.
- Increasing community outreach trips to villages, helping people learn how to recognize potential warning signs of suicide and how to talk about the effects of bullying, substance use, and grief and much more.
- Creating a Suicide Care Pathway to help follow up with people who are at risk after they leave the hospital or Behavioral Health Unit. This pathway helps make sure they get the care they need after a crisis.
- Expanding our services to include more support for children and families. Staff in the Behavioral Health Department lead healing and support circles with women, fatherhood initiatives to support Yup'ik ways of parenting, and presentations on substance use awareness and naloxone administration.
- Running a public awareness campaign, which generated more than 300,000 impressions, to help ensure that customers knew how to contact the Behavioral Health department for services and/or crisis care.



*"I came needing help and support...the ladies were wonderful keeping me busy and help me express myself and re learning some of the feelings I have for so long. Nice work keep us safe and comfortable I don't want to leave but I have to move on and go forth...Big, big thank you to all the staff. Two thumbs up keep up the good work.*

*- Behavioral Health patient*



The Behavioral Health department completed more outreach events in 2024 compared to the prior year, as part of our work to increase access to behavioral health across the region.

# Creating better health outcomes

## Cancer screenings increase

Preventing cancer deaths is a priority for YKHC and the people of the region

Cancer is a top cause of death for people in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region. It affects people of all ages and all of us know someone who has been affected by this disease. In general, when a cancer is detected earlier, a patient will have more options for treatment and better outcomes.

Colorectal cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer are all common types of cancer that have effective screening tools. YKHC offers screenings for all three of these cancers – and they can usually be done without leaving the YK Delta.

During 2024, YKHC has seen increases in screenings for colorectal cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer.



### Percent of patients ages 45–75 screened for colorectal cancer

|                         |                         |                                 |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <b>Dec. 2023: 48.3%</b> | <b>Dec. 2024: 50.5%</b> | <b>Increase of more than 2%</b> |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|

### Female patients ages 52–74 screened for breast cancer in past two years

|                        |                        |                                  |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>Dec. 2023 30.5%</b> | <b>Dec. 2024 42.8%</b> | <b>Increase of more than 12%</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|

### Female patients ages 21–65 screened for the cervical cancer

|                        |                        |                              |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| <b>Dec. 2023 49.8%</b> | <b>Dec. 2024 52.5%</b> | <b>Increase of nearly 3%</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------|

Improving these numbers takes significant effort and commitment from all involved. Thank you to all our teams who are working hard to get screenings done. And quyana to our customers who have taken the time to complete these important tests!

Despite this progress, we remain substantially below our goal of having 80% of our eligible population current with cancer screenings. We will continue to work on this in 2025. We are particularly excited to expand the use of Cologuard, a stool test that looks for cancer DNA and can be done in your own home.

*If you are in these age groups and are not current with your cancer screening, we encourage you to discuss this with your provider at your next visit.*

## Outreach to protect babies against RSV highly successful

In 2024, YKHC teams worked tirelessly to distribute nirsevimab, an immunization which protects infants against hospitalization from respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), to babies throughout the YK region.

The YK Delta has historically experienced the highest infant hospitalization rates from RSV in the United States. Over the past decade, YKHC recorded an annual average of 56 RSV-associated hospitalizations among children under age two. Thanks to this new immunization and the dedicated staff working to immunize children across the YK Delta, only 23 RSV-associated hospitalizations occurred during 2023–2024. Only three of the hospitalizations were in children who had received nirsevimab.

By November 2023, YKHC had organized 22 trips involving nurses, health aides, and providers to surrounding villages, prioritizing locations with infants, a lack of running water, and limited staff to protect the region's most vulnerable children. Nirsevimab was shipped to remaining villages to ensure broad access. Providers developed training for local health aides, and staff collaborated with Indian Health Service and the State of Alaska to maximize the allocation of nirsevimab for the region.

By June 2024, they had immunized 760 of 1,590 eligible children from 45 communities. To encourage uptake, YKHC staff contacted families of all eligible infants and utilized local and social media to spread awareness. These efforts



were repeated in the fall of 2024 to maximize the number of infants protected. YKHC partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the State of Alaska to secure an early allotment of nirsevimab when hospitalizations began occurring as early as September 2024.

The team collaborated with the CDC, ANTHC, and the State of Alaska to evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts and publish results, hoping to encourage future uptake. We learned that not only was the immunization 90% effective at preventing hospitalizations— but it was also over 80% effective at preventing the need for an outpatient visit to YKHC for RSV. This meant that more little ones and their families had a safer, healthier and happier winter.



*"I am so happy my niece got seen here at Nunapitchuk clinic. It means so much for me and my niece being seen same day too! Qu yana Brittany for seeing my niece with such short notice."*

**– Nunapitchuk customer**

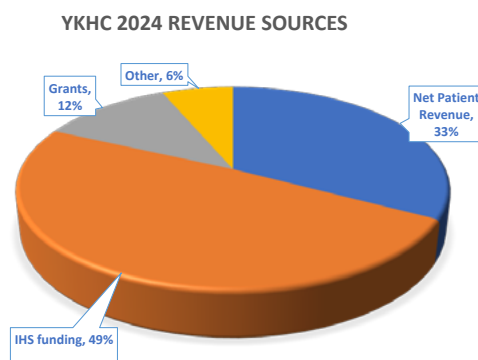
# Building a foundation for our future

## Strong financial performance allows for customer care enhancements

Again in 2024, YKHC had a year of strong financial performance as we reinvested net earnings into improving facilities and operations.

Significant among these was the completion of the new 109-room Qavartarvik Customer Lodge, providing a beautiful, restful place for patients to stay while in Bethel for care. This full-service hotel with an in-house cafeteria is a major upgrade from the previous 27-room hostel. We consistently receive positive feedback from our customers on this enhancement.

YKHC spent more than \$80 million in other capital improvements during FY24. Previously approved capital projects have started for new village clinics in Anvik, Stony River, and Oscarville, with foundations being completed and construction materials on site. The Metartvik and Lime Village clinics are in the process of site selection and engineering. Significant renovations were completed in the sub-regional clinics during the past year that will further enhance the customer experience. The YK Elders Home, the pre-maternal facility and the administration building, now named Kangiq, have been renovated for the first time since all were constructed.



## Commitment to quality

YKHC uses the Angyaq Quality System (AQS) as a data-driven approach to improving safety and quality, with the goal of enhancing customer care. AQS is based on Lean management principles, which are used in high reliability organizations across the world.



Leaders throughout YKHC gather to celebrate Angyaq Quality Systems successes.

Through regular checks and feedback, YKHC works to improve elements of care, like wait times, care coordination, and patient involvement—while also training staff to provide the highest quality care.

The system blends traditional values with modern healthcare practices to better meet the needs of the diverse communities in the region.

In 2024, we trained 560 employees on the principles of AQS and had 33 employees complete additional trainings that enable them to train others, ensuring we can build upon our improvement work for years to come.

# YKHC Tuntu apartments and capital projects: 2024 Project Highlights

- Jan.
  - Qavartarvik Customer Lodging (QCL) final construction inspection
  - QCL ribbon cutting and grand opening
  - Tuntu Apartments – Review of 65% complete design documents
- Feb.
  - Tuntu Apts. value engineering work session
- Mar.
  - Tuntu Apts. permit documents reviewed by YKHC and contractor
- April
  - Tuntu Apts. piling installation began
  - 95% design documents completed for Anvik, Stony River, and Oscarville
  - Permit documents submitted to State Fire Marshal
- May
  - Tuntu Apts. pile cap installation
  - Tuntu Apts. structural steel erection begins
- June
  - Tuntu Apts. 100% construction documents received from Architect
  - Tuntu Apts. steel erection and metal floor/roof decking beginning
  - Piling install and ground breaking in Stony River, Anvik, and Oscarville
- July
  - Tuntu Apts. steel erection for South Side
  - Tuntu Apts. installation of the roofing and exterior wall framing
  - Stony River, Anvik, Oscarville Clinics 100% design completed
- Aug.
  - Tuntu Apts. Roofing completed
  - Tuntu Apts. Final concrete floor slab poured
  - Anvik, Stony River, and Oscarville clinic materials arrive
- Sept.
  - Tuntu Apts. exterior wall panel and window installation begins
  - Tuntu Apts. interior wall framing
  - Medical Supply Warehouse 65% design drawings complete
- Oct.
  - Tuntu Apts. drywall and sound insulation start at 4th floor
  - Tuntu Apts. fire stopping starts at 4th floor walls and floors
- Nov.
  - Tuntu Apts. mechanical, plumbing, electrical and sprinkler rough-in
  - Tuntu Apts. insulated soffit panels complete
  - Small Ambulatory Program grant application submitted for Mertarvik
  - Lime Village design completed
- Dec.
  - Tuntu Apts. pre-drywall installation inspections
  - Anvik clinic exterior completed
  - Medical Supply Warehouse 95% design drawings complete



# Celebrating our employees

YKHC knows that one of the most important factors in providing quality healthcare for our customers is the retention of employees who contribute to our mission of Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health. We have numerous programs to recognize and celebrate our employees throughout the year.



*Quyana, dogidinh*, thank you to all of our employees for caring for our customers.



**Employee of the Quarter recognition:** Each quarter, managers recognize employees who have excelled at the job or taken on additional responsibilities during the previous quarter.



**Health Aide of the Year:** It's always a pleasure to celebrate a Health Aide of the Year for their outstanding commitment to providing excellent care. At Tribal Gathering in March 2024, we recognized Deborah Johnson, from Mountain Village. (Second from left in photo)



**Health Aide retreat:** For several days, experienced facilitators gather with health aides for activities and conversations designed to enhance wellness and resilience, particularly within the context of their responsibilities and Alaska Native culture.



**Years of Service celebration:** At a luncheon, we celebrate our employees who hit five-year milestones during the prior 12- months. In 2024, we recognized Alan Miller for 40 years at YKHC!



**Good Catch awards:** Each quarter, a group of employees are recognized by senior leadership for their commitment to customer safety.



**Summer employee picnic:** In Bethel, employees gathered for food and friendship at a summer picnic in front of the hospital. Many village clinics and sub-regional clinics celebrate with events at their clinics as well!

# Advocating for our customers

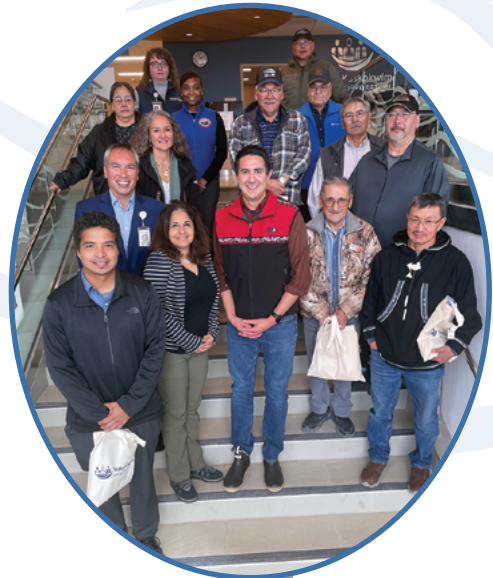
This year, YKHC hosted numerous partner organizations and agencies, with the goal of advocating for the needs of our customers. Our guests leave with a better understanding of the work we do and the needs of the region.



Four members of Senator Murkowski's team, including members of the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, flew to Bethel to speak with YKHC leadership about an upcoming bill extending Indian Health Service coverage and to discuss housing issues in the region.



In July, YKHC leaders and staff hosted leaders from the Alaska Native Medical Center and Alaska Native Tribal Health Organization with the goal of enhancing our partnership. A visit to the Aniak sub-regional clinic and Napaskiak was scheduled as part of their trip.



In August, Alaska Federation of Natives President Ben Mallot traveled President Biden's Director of Domestic Policy Neera Tanden to Bethel to meet with community partners to learn about how the compacting model is used successfully in healthcare and can be applied to other federal services.



The Alaska Mother and Child Death Review board met with physicians at YKHC to discuss ways to reduce infant, child and pregnancy-associated mortality in Alaska by better understanding the factors associated with each death.



In August, Director of the Indian Health Service Roselyn Tso and other leaders visited YKHC, where she met with YKHC leadership and staff, and visited the village of Napakiak to look at how Indian Health Services can support the region.



YKHC hosted the Alaska Native Health Board's quarterly meeting in Bethel. Nearly 30 Board members and tribal health organization leaders came to better understand the region by touring the hospital, visiting a fishcamp and taking a boat ride to Kwethluk, where they met with tribal leaders.



The Executive Director of the Alaska VA Healthcare System and his team toured the YK Delta Regional Hospital, as part of a trip to identify ways we can partner to provide healthcare to veterans.

# Thank you for being a part of YKHC!

Looking to do more? Here are some ways you can increase your impact and help us get better.

## Share your feedback

If you see something you like or have a suggestion on how we can improve, let us know! Provide your opinion if you are contacted via phone or text to complete a survey after a visit to the emergency room or a stay in the hospital. Or provide feedback any time by emailing [customer\\_feedback@ykhc.org](mailto:customer_feedback@ykhc.org)

## Cancel any appointments you can't make

Life happens. We understand that your plans may change and you may not be able to keep an appointment. When that happens, please let us know! Call your clinic or call 907-543-6442 in Bethel. When you cancel in advance, we can offer your appointment to another patient who is waiting to receive care, making our community a little healthier.

## Let your health aide know you appreciate them!

Our dedicated health aides are the heart of healthcare in the YK Delta. YKHC has several programs to show our appreciation for their commitment to providing excellent health. Words of support from the communities they serve can go a long way in helping health aides feel appreciated.

## Check your contact information every time you register for an appointment

When you get a new phone number, let us know. Every time you check in for a medical appointment, double check that our teams have your most current phone number. That way, we can reach you to confirm/change an appointment, provide test results, discuss your medication or arrange travel. Confirming your phone number takes just a second and can help us provide the care you deserve.

## Work at YKHC

Join your tribal healthcare organization! We offer a wide selection of jobs with competitive wages, generous time off and opportunities to learn and grow. Check out our open positions at [www.ykhc.org/work](http://www.ykhc.org/work). We recently increased starting wages on many entry level jobs.

## Follow us on social media

Social media is the quickest way for us to get the word out across the region. To stay up to date with news and health information, follow us at [www.facebook.com/ykhealth](http://www.facebook.com/ykhealth) or [www.instagram.com/ykhealthcorp](http://www.instagram.com/ykhealthcorp). Check in regularly, share posts you think others might want to see—and keep an eye out for pictures of people you know!



A message from YKHC President & CEO

## **URGENT: CALL YOUR LEGISLATORS, NOW!**

I write this in early February 2025 from the steps of our Capitol building in Juneau. After meeting with state law makers, it has become clear that significant cuts to Medicaid are likely coming from Congress. If that happens this spring, more Medicaid cuts from the states will follow.

Like most tribal health organizations, Medicaid makes up nearly 50% of YKHC's annual budget. We use those monies to pay salaries, purchase airfares, build infrastructure and most importantly, deliver vital healthcare services to the 30,000 customers in our region, over 22,000 of whom are currently on Medicaid.

If Medicaid is important to you and your family, I strongly urge you to call and let your opinion be known to your two US Senators, Congressman and State of Alaska delegation members.

Lisa Murkowski 907-271-3735  
Dan Sullivan 907-271-5915  
Congressman Nick Begich 907-921-6575  
Sen. Lyman Hoffman 866-465-4453

Rep. Nellie Jimmie 800-323-4942  
Sen. President Gary Stevens 800-821-4925  
Speaker of the House Bryce Edgmon 800-898-4451

[www.ykhc.org](http://www.ykhc.org)