



the **M**essenger  
YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION  
QUARTERLY

"Working Together To Achieve Excellent Health"

Volume XXX No. 2 · July 2025

## SUMMER IS HERE!



Summer in the Yukon-Kuskokwim region is like no other! In this edition of the Messenger, explore ways to stay healthy and prepared for all the summer fun—this year and for years to come.

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### ARE YOU REAL ID READY?

Effective 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

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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](mailto: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](http://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

Elected by the Tribal Councils of each of the 58 federally recognized Tribes in the YKHC service area, the Board of Directors is the chief policy-making body of the corporation, exercising overall control, management and supervision.

### Unit 1



Mary Ayunerak  
Alakanuk



Sarah Prince  
Kotlik

### 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 9



Patrick Tall  
Chevak



John Uttereyuk  
Scammon Bay

### Unit 10



Darren Cleveland  
Quinhagak

### Unit 11



Rebecca Bostrom  
Grayling

# Message from the President & CEO

*I hope everyone has a great summer!*

As we ready for summer time activities, keep your good health at the forefront by taking advantage of YKHC's cancer prevention and detection services.

In an effort to improve access to health care that is closer to your home, beginning this summer YKHC will offer two cancer prevention and detection services at our five subregional clinics.

Recently, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved the first ever self-collected **cervical cancer screening** kit. It consists of a vaginal sample self-collection device that tests for human papillomavirus, or HPV. HPV is one of the leading causes of cervical cancer. On July 1, the kits will become available at our subregional clinics. Individuals of average risk begin testing at age 25. Learn more about this development on page 4. Similarly, YKHC also offers an HPV vaccine to youth that is safe and highly effective at preventing HPV infections that can cause some cancers later in life. Stay tuned to YKHC's website and social media to find out when the kits will be available at your village clinic.



Dan Winkelman,  
President & CEO

Second, beginning in June, our mobile mammography imaging unit will travel throughout all five subregional clinics and offer **mammogram screenings** to help detect breast cancer early, when it is easier to treat. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends persons at average risk get a mammogram beginning at age 40. Mammograms will be offered in the following communities for at least a week, around the date noted. Please check with your subregional clinic for more details.

Aniak, June 21;  
St. Mary's, July 7;

Hooper Bay, July 21;  
Emmonak, August 4; and

Toksook Bay, August 18.

Lastly, YKHC offers **colorectal cancer screening**. Since Alaska Natives are at higher risk for developing colorectal cancer, YKHC recommends screening starting at age 40—or earlier for people with a family history of colorectal cancer. Screening can be accomplished in one of three ways:

- Every year by obtaining a home stool test;
- Every three years by submitting a Cologuard stool test while in Bethel; or
- Every ten years by having a colonoscopy at the Bethel hospital.

The at-home cervical cancer screening kit and mammograms are always available at the Bethel hospital, and currently colonoscopies are only offered at the Bethel hospital. See page 5 of this edition of the Messenger for more details on each of these screening options.

Cancer prevention and detection is complicated and there are benefits and risks of screening. Different types of cancer screening are more effective and comprehensive than other methods. As always, schedule a visit with your health care provider to discuss what is appropriate for you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Dan'.



# HEALTHY LIVING

## NEW HPV SELF-COLLECTION TEST BRINGS HOPE FOR EASIER, MORE ACCESSIBLE CERVICAL CANCER SCREENING

Good news for women across the YK Region: Screening for cervical cancer is now easier and more comfortable--potentially helping more people catch signs of cancer earlier.

### **Q: Tell me more!**

**A:** In July, YKHC will offer a new, FDA-approved screening option: Patients who meet certain criteria will be able to collect their own samples for HPV testing during a visit with a healthcare provider—no speculum exam required. This method, known as self-collection, allows patients to swab privately after receiving instructions from a provider.

### **Q: Why is this important?**

**A:** This makes screening for cervical cancer more accessible and less invasive. By offering a more comfortable option, it's expected that more people will agree to be screened, leading to earlier detection of HPV—the virus that causes nearly all cervical cancers. Increased screening is expected to lead to fewer missed cases, earlier treatment and better outcomes.

### **Q: How is self-swab testing for HPV different from a Pap smear?**

**A:** An HPV test is a highly effective test that detects high-risk types of HPV that can lead to cervical cancer. HPV testing can be done by self-collection (or by a provider during an exam.) Pap smears are older style of test, still require a speculum exam performed by a provider, that check for abnormal or pre-cancerous cells in the cervix.

### **Q: Who should get tested?**

**A:** Anyone with a cervix aged 25 to 65 should be regularly screened for cervical cancer, even if they have no symptoms.

### **Q: What happens during the screening?**

**A:** A healthcare provider will explain how to collect the sample. The patient will go to a private space to use a cotton swab to collect a sample from their vagina. The swab is returned to the provider who will send it to the lab for testing. Results are typically available within a few days, and your provider will follow up if any further action is needed.

### **Q: How can I get screened?**

**A:** During the summer, providers will also be visiting villages to offer this test and other screening services. In Bethel, talk to your healthcare provider about the HPV self-collection option.

### **Q: What can I do to lower my risk of cervical cancer?**

**A:** Talk to your provider and make a plan to get up to date on your screening. Having an easy self-swab option makes that easier!

Other important steps women can take to help prevent cervical cancer are to get vaccinated against HPV, not smoke, use condoms during sex, have regular screening tests and go back to see the doctor if screening test results are not normal.

Thanks to widespread use of the HPV vaccine, which protects against the most dangerous strains of HPV, significantly lowering the risk of cervical cancer, cervical cancer rates—and precancerous findings in screening tests—are steadily falling in the United States. **With the combined power of vaccination and accessible screening, the hope is that we will see rates of cervical cancer drop dramatically for future generations.**

## CATCH IT EARLY WITH COLORECTAL SCREENINGS

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S.—and Alaska Native people are 2.5 times more likely than the average population to get this type of cancer.

Luckily, colorectal cancer is detectable, preventable, and usually treatable—if you catch it early. Colorectal cancer often has no symptoms, so it is especially important that you get checked (screened) at the right time even if you feel perfectly healthy.

If you're Alaska-Native and over age 40, or non-Native and over 45, or have a family history of colorectal cancer, let's make sure you are up-to-date with your colorectal screening.

The good news is that YKHC offers multiple options, including some that you can do in the privacy of your own home and at a time that is right for you. Take a closer look at the three options to screen for this common cancer.

### **iFOB Test (If you are 40 and over, this is an easy test to do anywhere in the YK Delta!)**

- Eligible patients can complete an immunological fecal occult blood test (iFOB, also called a FIT test), which requires a small stool (poop) sample that can be collected at home or in your clinic's bathroom. The test looks for blood in the stool, which can be an early sign of cancer.
- A negative or normal result means you are good for one year. A positive or abnormal result means you need further testing.

### **Cologuard (If you are 45 and over, this is an easy test for you to do when in Bethel)**

- Cologuard is also an at-home or at the clinic stool test – but it requires a larger sample and checks for both blood and cancer DNA in your stool.
- You get a box and instructions to collect your sample. It needs to be collected and shipped to the lab as soon as possible—ideally the same day. You'll hear back in three weeks.
- A negative or normal result means you can wait three years to test again. A positive or abnormal result means you need further testing.



Dr. Ellen Hodges, shown here catching a salmon, encourages everyone to stay current with cancer screenings. "Catching cancer early, before you have symptoms, leads to the best outcomes," Hodges said.

### **Colonoscopy**

- A colonoscopy allows the doctor to look inside your colon to check for small growths or tumors. If they find any, they can remove them, even before they turn into cancer. You'll need to schedule it with your provider and follow all the prep instructions carefully to clean out your colon. You will hear back about results in about a month.
- A negative or normal result means you are good for as long as ten years. A positive or abnormal result means your doctor will discuss options for additional treatment and/or more frequent testing.

**If you're wondering which option is the best for you (or just need a little encouragement), talk to your healthcare provider or email [Colonhealth@ykhc.org](mailto:Colonhealth@ykhc.org). Screening for colorectal cancer gives peace of mind – and could save your life. Keep our communities healthy. Let's get screened.**

# WORKING TOGETHER TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF STIs

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are a growing concern in our region, and it's important that we talk about them in a clear and supportive way.

Working together, we can keep our communities healthy. To do this, we need to make sure people know the facts, take steps to protect themselves—and visit YKHC to get testing, treatment and support.

- Right now, our community is experiencing some of the highest rates of **chlamydia** in the country—four to five times the national average.
- **Gonorrhea** rates were once similar to national levels but have recently increased dramatically, with a 254% rise between 2021 and 2022.
- **Syphilis** rates are similar to national levels. Like the rest of the country, we are in the midst of a national epidemic.
- Thankfully, **HIV** rates remain low, but they are not zero—and our region has the highest rate of new HIV diagnoses in rural Alaska.

The good news is that chlamydia, gonorrhea, and syphilis can all be treated with antibiotics. If left untreated, chlamydia and gonorrhea can lead to infertility, which can affect people’s ability to have children. Syphilis, if not treated early, can cause serious health problems in adults and even death or lifelong injury in babies.

Our healthcare team is committed to reversing these trends. We are very concerned that if we don’t act now, we could soon face even more serious outbreaks of HIV and syphilis.

Prevention is possible. If we all play our part, we believe rates could significantly drop.

YKHC offers testing and treatment. We currently have a nurse practitioner dedicated to following up on positive STI results and contacting patients to make sure they and their partners get timely treatment.

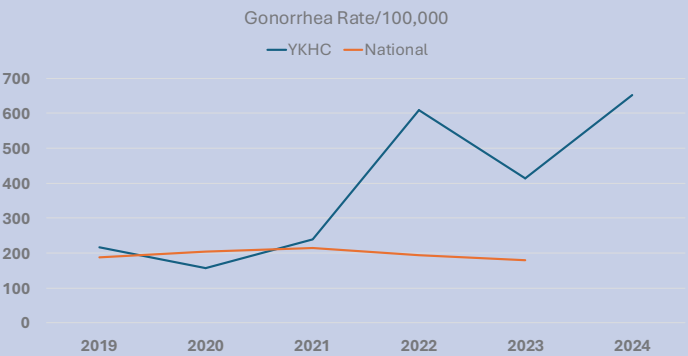
Thanks to a new grant from the CDC, we are building systems to make STI screening and treatment easier to access. YKHC’s Population Health Team is also working closely with clinic health aides to make sure no one falls through the cracks.

But our medical professionals cannot do this alone. Each of us can take steps to protect ourselves and reduce the spread of STIs.

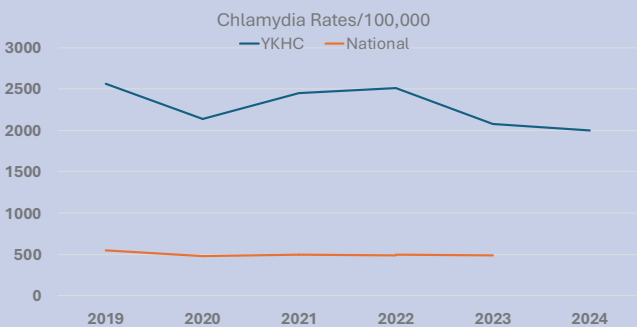
- Always use condoms during sex, as they provide protection against many infections.
- Get tested regularly, even if you don’t have symptoms. Some STIs don’t show symptoms.
- Limit your sexual partners. Talking openly with your partner about sexual health can help both of you stay safe.

Let’s continue supporting each other by talking openly, getting tested, and taking action. Together, we can protect our families and our future.

Gonorrhea rates, YK region vs. national, 2019-2024



Chlamydia rates, YK region vs. national, 2019-2024



## VASECTOMY IS A SAFE, LASTING OPTION

If you are done having children or know you don't want any in the future, a vasectomy may be a good option. It's a safe, effective form of birth control for men.

A no-scalpel vasectomy is a simple medical procedure where a small part of the vas deferens—the tubes that carry sperm—is removed. This prevents sperm from entering the semen, which means pregnancy can no longer occur. Once the procedure is confirmed successful, no other form of contraception is needed to prevent pregnancy. (While vasectomies prevent pregnancy, they do not protect against sexually transmitted infections. Condoms are still needed if you or your partner are at risk of infection.)

If you decide a vasectomy is the right choice, here's what you can expect: Most patients have the procedure done at the hospital in Bethel, and no overnight stay is required. The vasectomy is performed with local numbing medicine (and anesthesia is available, if preferred) to support you through this quick, pain-free, and safe procedure. By the third day, you can likely return to your usual activities. About three months after the vasectomy, you will be asked to provide a

semen sample at YKHC to make sure the procedure was successful.

If you are interested in learning more about this option or scheduling the procedure, speak with your healthcare provider. In a village, a health aide can refer you to speak with a provider in Bethel.

A vasectomy is a simple and lasting form of birth control. While condoms are still needed to protect against sexually transmitted infections, a vasectomy may be the right decision for families who are not interested in having additional children.



Speak with a healthcare provider to learn more about vasectomies, which offer a simple and permanent method of avoiding pregnancy. The procedure can be done in Bethel and doesn't require an overnight stay.

## GET YOUR MAMMOGRAM THIS SUMMER

When it comes to breast cancer, early detection can make all the difference. Regular screening is one of the most effective ways to catch breast cancer early—when treatment works best. For most women, screening starts at age 45 and continues every two years. However, based on your personal or family history, your provider may recommend starting earlier or getting screened more frequently.

This summer, our mobile mammography unit—affectionately called “Sophie”—is bringing screening services directly to communities, making it easier than ever to stay on top of your health. Sophie, along with a mammographer and support staff, will visit each of our sub-regional clinics (SRCs) on the following schedule:

- Aniak—week of June 21
- St. Mary's—week of July 7
- Hooper Bay—week of July 21
- Emmonak—week of August 4,
- Toksook Bay—week of August 18

Contact your local SRC for more information or to schedule your screening appointment.

In Bethel, our in-house mammography unit offers advanced breast imaging, including 3D mammograms (digital breast tomosynthesis), which provide clearer images, especially for women with dense breast tissue or higher risk factors.

YKHC's mammography services are fully accredited by the American College of Radiology, which means they meet the highest standards in image quality, staff qualifications, and patient care.

If you're over 45, not experiencing breast symptoms, and it's been at least a year since your last mammogram, you have options. Call the Women's Health Case Manager at 907-543-6557 to schedule, or contact the imaging team at 907-543-6998 for same-day availability. If you have new breast symptoms or concerns, don't wait—schedule a visit with a YKHC provider. Early screening saves lives. Get screened—and encourage someone you love to do the same.



The mobile mammogram machine will be traveling to subregional clinics this summer to make it easier for many of our customers to receive a mammograph closer to home.



# Summer in the YK Delta

## SUMMER IS THE PERFECT TIME FOR SCHOOL HEALTH CHECKUPS

What do fishing, berry picking and school physicals have in common? They're all summer activities that help families prepare for the fall season ahead.

**School sports physicals:** A school sports physical is good for 18 months so no reason to wait until the last minute—and risk missing those early-season practices! Scheduling physicals for your kiddos now means you will miss the end of summer rush.

During a school sports physical, the provider will do a brief exam, check your child's physical and mental health, and ensure they're ready and safe to participate in sports.

**Immunizations:** Many schools require children to be up-to-date on vaccinations before heading back to the classroom. Our providers can make sure your student is caught up on immunizations – and can perform a full Well Child visit.

Vaccinations help our kids avoid diseases, including meningitis, measles, tetanus, polio, whooping cough and other preventable childhood diseases. This protects your child, other students and your community. Childhood vaccinations have been a part of keeping our region healthy for decades. If one of your students has fallen behind, your YKHC provider can answer questions and help make a plan to get your child caught up.




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Make an appointment for vaccinations, Well Child visits or school sport physicals by calling your local clinic. Or in Bethel, call 907-543-6442.

To help support the need for sports physicals, YKHC has arranged for extra appointment times in Bethel on July 3, 7, 8, 9, 14 and 15.

## SUMMER HIRE PROGRAM IN MOTION!

The goal of our Summer Hire Program is simple but powerful: to give students a chance to learn about careers in healthcare while gaining real-world work experience—and earning a paycheck along the way!

It's a unique opportunity for young people to see what it's really like to be part of a professional team, explore different roles in healthcare, and build skills that will serve them for years to come.

One of the best parts? Students get to do all this right in their own backyard.

This year, we had over 100 eager applicants for 72 openings across various departments. Our Human Resources team rose to the challenge, working hard to match students with opportunities. For many, this will be their very first job—exciting and maybe a little nerve-racking. For our returning summer hires, it's a chance to lead by example and show the newbies how it's done.

The program gives students a first-hand look at what a career in healthcare really involves. With the support of mentors, coaches, and supervisors, students will plant the seeds of future career dreams and start imagining what's possible.

From the kickoff event to the final goodbyes (which happen on different schedules depending on the student), participants will walk away with new skills, new friends, and new insights. Along the way, they'll gather stories of kindness, patience, and inspiration—memories that just might shape their futures.

We know starting something new can bring nerves. But rest assured: our students are in good hands. Mentors and supervisors have not only volunteered to guide them—they've asked for this chance to support and teach the next genera-



Summer hire staff completed orientation and began their summer work experience as their schedules allowed, during May, June and July.

tion. That kind of commitment helps calm those first-day jitters and shows students that they're truly welcome.

Of course, mentoring students isn't always easy—especially when managers are already juggling full workloads and competing priorities. But they've gone out on a limb to make space for learners, and that effort is making a lasting difference.

There will be a few bumps in the road, but those moments often lead to the greatest lessons. With guidance and determination, our students will grow in resilience, gain clarity on their career interests, and come to better understand how healthcare teams work together.

## EASY RECIPES FOR BUSY SUMMER DAYS

The YKHC Diabetes Prevention and Control team shares two simple, healthy recipes that work well for the long, busy days of summer: a salmon and veggie omelet and a cool, tart rhubarb tea. They're quick to make, use ingredients that are usually available locally, and don't require too much time in the kitchen!



### SALMON AND VEGGIE OMELET

#### Ingredients:

- 4 teaspoons canola oil, 2 teaspoons for vegetables, 1 teaspoon for cooking each omelet
- 3/4 cup finely chopped broccoli
- 3/4 cup finely chopped zucchini or yellow squash
- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill, divided in half
- 4 large eggs, beaten
- 4 ounce salmon fillet, cooked, flaked
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper
- 4 tablespoons shredded cheddar cheese, divided in half

#### Preparation:

1. Heat skillet over medium heat.
2. Coat pan with 2 teaspoons canola oil. Add broccoli, zucchini, onion, 1/4 teaspoon dill and cook 3-5 minutes.
3. Remove cooked vegetables from pan and divide in half.
4. Combine eggs, salmon, 1/4 teaspoon dill, and pepper in a small bowl. Divide mixture in half for 2 omelets.
5. Reheat skillet over medium heat and coat pan with 1 teaspoon canola oil.
6. Add half of egg mixture to pan and cook 3-4 minutes; flip omelet and add half of the vegetables and cheese.
7. Cook 2 minutes and fold in half. Continue until cooked through and cheese has melted.
8. Repeat for second omelet.

*Adapted from tasteofhome.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*

## EAT, PLAY AND LEARN AT WELLNESS WEDNESDAY CLASSES

To learn more healthy habits with food and exercise, join our weekly Wellness Wednesday gatherings, which are free and open to anyone over 16 who is interested in improving their health. Classes are offered every Wednesday evening (except holidays) from 5:15 – 7 p.m. in the Wellness Center located on the second floor of the hospital. In addition to health and wellness information, classes usually include dinner at no cost to participants.

Please call the YKHC Diabetes Prevention and Control at 907-543-6133 if you have questions or an interest in attending and achieving optimal health and wellness. Join and bring a friend or family member with you!

## INTRODUCING FOODS TO YOUR BABY

Baby foods and pureed food are good for babies—but starting about age one, but children should be encouraged to try different textures and develop chewing skills.

Adding lumpy or finely chopped/ground foods to a little ones diet is important, as too much soft food can cause chewing issues and picky eating as the child gets older.

While it can be natural to worry about introducing new foods, follow these safety tips and you will be on your way to helping your child enjoy a wide variety of foods and lifelong healthy eating habits!

- Always supervise infants and toddlers while eating
- Cut food  $\frac{1}{4}$  in or smaller and only allow a few pieces on the plate at a time
- Encourage small bites and complete chewing
- Don't allow toddlers to eat laying down or walking around
- Encourage toddlers to eat what the family is eating

YKHC's Women Infant and Children program can help ensure you baby gets the nutrition they need to grow up healthy and strong. Learn more and apply at [www.ykhc.org/WIC](http://www.ykhc.org/WIC).



Introducing babies to different foods and textures can help them develop a taste for a healthy diet.

## SAY “YES!” TO TESTING FOR TB

Tuberculosis (TB) is around and we need to **THINK** about it. Cases of TB in our region doubled in 2022 and 2023 compared to the average number of cases in 2015-2022. This increase is alarming, especially because TB has historically affected Alaska Native communities more than others. In the YK region, TB rates are nearly 100 times higher than the US average.

We need to **TEST** for TB. Identifying and treating cases as early as possible is an important step in eliminating TB. You can have TB without symptoms, so it's important that everyone in the YK Delta get tested. We need everyone's help! This fall, you may be asked to give permission for your school-age children to be tested for TB, or you may see a notice that TB testing is happening in your community. When you or your little ones have the chance to be tested, say “Yes!”

Fortunately, it is possible to **TREAT** and cure TB with medication. If you or a family member tests positive for TB, your provider will explain your treatment plan. The sooner you complete treatment, the better! We work closely with the State of Alaska, which continues to provide treatment and support, as well as coordinate and follow up testing for close contacts.

These initiatives have laid a strong foundation for combating this epidemic, but we are still early in our fight, and rates remain high. The path toward TB elimination requires support from everyone to **“Think TB. Test early. Treat now.”**

## TAKE THE TB QUIZ

Think you have a good grasp on some of the basic facts about TB? Take this short quiz and find out!

### 1. How can you help stop the spread of TB?

- A:** Think about TB, especially if you have common symptoms of TB, including a bad cough that lasts 3 weeks or longer, pain in the chest or are coughing up blood or phlegm from deep inside the lungs
- B:** Test for TB whenever it is offered in your community.
- C:** Treat your TB infection right away, if you test positive.
- D:** All of the above

### 2. Who should get tested for TB?

- A:** Only people who have a cough
- B:** Only healthcare workers
- C:** Any adult or child who is offered a test
- D:** Only babies and elders

### 3. What is the main message of the phrase “Think TB. Test early. Treat now.”?

- A:** People in the YK region should be aware that TB is on the rise in our communities and everyone should get tested. People who have TB should be treated.
- B:** TB is an abbreviation for tuberculosis.
- C:** TB testing is often done with a standardized solution made with purified protein derivative (PPD)
- D:** TB can cause coughing

**Answers :** (1) D; (2) C; (3) A

# Capital Projects Update

Tuntu Apartments  
Village Clinics  
Warehouse  
Day Care Center



January – May 2025

## Program Accomplishments

### Tuntu Apartments:

- Units on floors 3 and 4 – framing, insulation, sheetrock and finish painting completed.
- Units on 2nd floor – mechanical and electrical rough-in complete, sheetrock complete and mud / tape and paint nearly complete.
- 1st floor units – interior wall framing and rough-in for mechanical and electrical in progress.
- Fire-proofing throughout the building continues.
- Rough-in of equipment for mechanical, electrical and comm rooms in progress.
- Installation of exterior window flashing in progress.
- Piling for retaining wall started.
- Casework mock-up reviewed by YKHC and Bettisworth North.



Mechanical room equipment rough-in



Pre-sheetrock installation

### Warehouse:

The warehouse design is 100% complete and ready for the creation of the RFP for construction when the project is reactivated.

### Daycare Center:

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



Casework mock-up (Feb 2025)

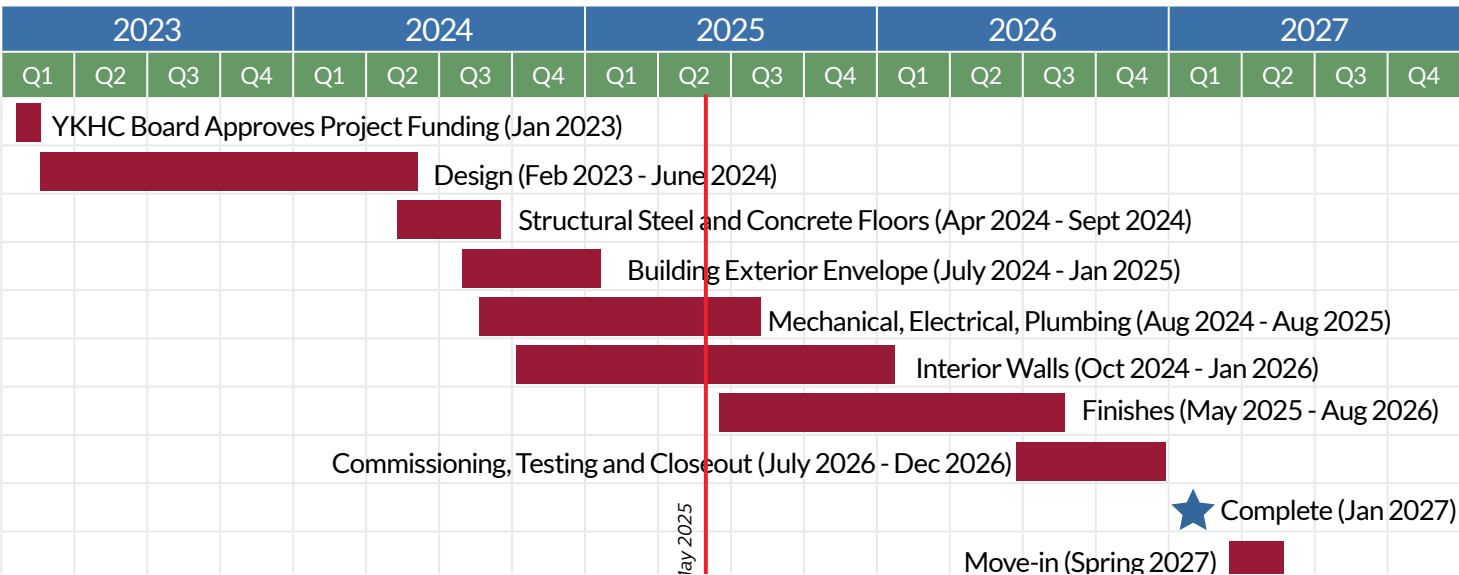


Staging sheetrock (post inspection)



Installation of rock wool at exterior

## Tuntu Apartments Project Schedule



## Village Clinics:

The Anvik clinic construction is 60% complete. Oscarville clinic is 30% complete, and Stony River construction began shortly after the arrival of the first barge of the season.



Anvik Clinic roofing and siding



Oscarville Clinic exterior construction



Stony River Clinic groundbreaking ceremony

## Staff Housing



Staff Housing exterior view to the east

## MEDICAID MATTERS

For healthcare organizations, including YKHC, Medicaid is a critical source of funding that supports services that help keep families healthy.

While the Indian Health Service (IHS) covers basic medical care for Alaska Native residents, Medicaid funding allows YKHC to provide additional services our customers rely on.

Medicaid isn't a safety net—it provides important funding that keeps healthcare accessible for everyone in the region. Medicaid contributes more than 30% of YKHC's budget, and nearly 75% of residents in the YK Region qualify for Medicaid. This funding ensures that healthcare services can meet the needs of the community, providing critical care that IHS funding alone cannot support.

If Medicaid funding were to decrease, the impact would be profound. IHS funding is already limited and significantly underfunded. Without Medicaid support, YKHC would have to scale back services, leading to reduced access to healthcare, job losses, harm to local economies and less support for our most vulnerable.

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Learn more at [www.ykhc.org/medicaid-matters](http://www.ykhc.org/medicaid-matters).



YKHC has shared ads like the one above on social media and other websites across the state to help people learn how Medicaid supports healthcare in Alaska.

If you have questions or would like assistance with Medicaid enrollments or recertification, YKHC's Medicaid Enrollment team can help!

**In person:** YKHC's Medicaid Enrollment team will be visiting communities this spring and summer. View the current travel schedule at <https://www.ykhc.org/ykhc-medicaid-enrollment-team-traveling-to-villages-this-summer/>

**Telephone:** Call 833-543-6625, and select option 4, to reach a YKHC Medicaid Enrollment team member at any time, Monday- Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## YOUR FEEDBACK ABOUT YOUR VISIT IS IMPORTANT TO US

If you have been seen or admitted at YKHC, you may receive a text, email or phone call within two weeks of your visit from an outside company, Press Ganey, asking you to take a survey about your experience.

Calls or texts may arrive between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. any day of the week, including weekends. The survey will ask about your experience at YKHC. It will not ask for any health or finance related information.

**If you are contacted, please take the time to respond to the survey.** Each response is important, as it helps us know how we are doing and what we can do better. Responses to the Press Ganey survey are anonymous.

If you would like to provide feedback directly to YKHC in order to receive a reply to your comment, please fill out a comment card, which can be found at clinics and in the hospital, or email us at [customer\\_feedback@ykhc.org](mailto:customer_feedback@ykhc.org).



Feedback from our customers guide the work we do. Please take a moment to complete our customer survey if you are contacted by an outside company, Press Ganey, about your visit to a YKHC facility.

## DOG LOVERS SHARE THEIR FURRY FRIENDS' PHOTOS TO SUPPORT RABIES VACCINATION

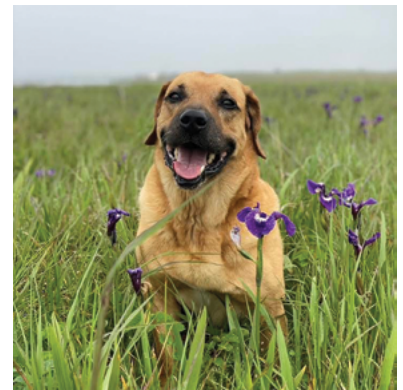
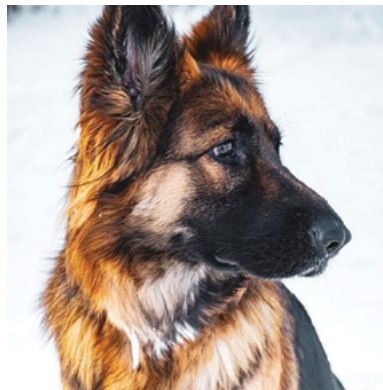
More than 100 people shared pictures of their precious pooches on social media in April to nominate them to be featured on a flyer announcing a rabies vaccination clinic in Bethel. The winner, Levi the dog, from Toksook Bay received the most votes—but all the dogs were winners by helping promote vaccinating our communities against rabies!

Rabies is a fatal disease that attacks the nervous system and is always present in low levels among western Alaska fox populations. In January, 2025, three red foxes from Hooper Bay tested positive for rabies, which confirms that rabies is in the YK region.

As part of their Rabies Prevention Program, OEHE provides vaccinations to hundreds of dogs and cats in the YK Delta ev-

ery year, including a free rabies vaccination clinic in Bethel on May 24. (Nearly 100 dogs were vaccinated!)

Rabies vaccinations are extremely effective at preventing the spread of rabies among animals and from animals to humans. The rabies vaccine can be given every year to dogs and cats three months old and up. Pregnant animals can also receive the vaccine with no harm to the fetuses. After two consecutive vaccinations, the animal is protected for three years and should receive the vaccine every three years from that point on. Keeping your pet up-to-date with rabies vaccinations is important. If your pet was vaccinated by YKHC, and you're not sure how long it's been, we can check our records! Email [oeherabies@ykhc.org](mailto:oeherabies@ykhc.org) with the owner's and pet's names.



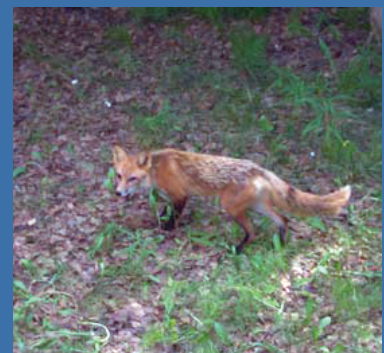
In April, we held a photo contest on Facebook to find a pup to be featured on the rabies vaccination clinic flyer. Levi from Toksook Bay (far left) was the most upvoted dog. Baby and Pugsy, (middle and right) also were top votegetters.. Qu yana to everyone that took time to post photos of their pets, and to the voters as well! If your furry friend needs to be vaccinated against rabies, please contact YKHC Office of Environmental Health.

### HOW RABIES MOVES FROM ANIMALS TO HUMANS

The rabies virus is secreted in the saliva of an infected animal and can be transmitted through a bite or scratch, and though rare, can also be transmitted through exposure of the mucous membranes (eyes, nose and mouth) to the virus-containing saliva.

In the YK region, red and arctic fox typically transmit the virus to household pets through bites or scratches. These pets, usually dogs, then have the potential to bring the virus into the human population.

Since rabies is fatal in humans without treatment and not every dog in the region is vaccinated or has a current vaccination, please contact a healthcare provider if you or any member of your family experiences a dog bite.





YKHC is making it easier to manage parts of your healthcare—right from your phone.

Here are a few secure tools to make communication more convenient.

**PRE-REGISTER FOR APPOINTMENTS:** When you get a text from registration, just fill out the forms and upload any documents. When you arrive, check in to let us know you're here.

**USE MyYKHealth:** View test results, send secure messages, see upcoming appointments, and more. Sign up by calling 907-543-6315, emailing [MyYKHealthEnroll@YKHC.org](mailto:MyYKHealthEnroll@YKHC.org), or visiting [www.YKHC.org](http://www.YKHC.org).

**TigerTouch TEXTING:** Your care team may contact you through TigerTouch, a secure, HIPAA-compliant messaging system. Verify your identity to start texting with your case manager and receive updates.

**PRESCRIPTION TEXTS:** Sign up at the pharmacy to get texts when your prescriptions are ready in Bethel or have been shipped.

**TRAVEL TEXTS:** Opt in to receive updates and communicate with our travel team about your medical travel plans—all by text.

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