



## Southcentral Foundation



## State-of-the-Art Prosthodontic Clinic Opens at Southcentral Foundation

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Brandy Gallagher

Southcentral Foundation has completely remodeled the prosthodontic clinic on the Alaska Native Health Campus. Continuing its commitment to quality and providing the best care for customer-owners, this dental specialty focuses on diagnosing and treating conditions associated with missing or deficient teeth.

The state-of-the-art facility, slated to open this fall, will provide prosthodontic services including crowns, bridges, implant-supported restorations, complete and partial dentures, and complete mouth reconstruction.

The new clinic is a tailored space, designed to enhance customer-owner experiences. Four new dental rooms were added to accommodate equipment needed for prosthodontic dentistry. The spacious rooms are also furnished with new dental chairs and equipment to improve customer-owner experience in prosthodontics. Multiple kiosk stations are located throughout the clinic, and each exam room is equipped with two computers to streamline documentation. The new configuration will improve customer-owner education related to treatment plans.



SCF's new prosthodontic clinic will also include a dental lab incorporating technology to enhance denture and crown services. The on-site lab will reduce the wait time for customer-owners to have restorative work completed by utilizing new, faster scanner technology that provides enhanced images from which the lab makes dentures.

The design process for the new clinic at the Fireweed Mountain Building started last fall, and construction began in December. The remodel is one of many steps SCF has recently taken to accomplish its corporate goal of commitment to quality. Orthodontic services previously offered at the Fireweed Mountain Building are now located at the Children's Dental Clinic in the Dr. Katherine and Dr. Kevin Gottlieb Building.

For more information about the prosthodontic clinic and available services, call Fireweed Mountain Building Dental Clinics at (907) 729-2000.



Non-Profit Org.  
US Postage  
PAID  
Anchorage, AK  
Permit No. 1022

4501 Diplomacy Dr.  
Anchorage,  
Alaska 99508



The Anchorage Native News is published by Southcentral Foundation Public Relations.

If you have questions, comments, wish to submit articles, or be added to our mailing list, please contact Public Relations.

SCF reserves the right to edit all submissions for clarity, length, and content.

Every article will be considered for publication depending upon space available.

**SCF Public Relations**

4501 Diplomacy Drive  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508  
(907) 729-4953  
SCFMediaRelations@scf.cc

**SCF Public Relations**

- Shamika Andrew
- Addi Arave
- Denise Bingham
- Kira Bouwens
- Tara Carey
- David Clark
- Tessa Clifton
- Lyla DeTavernier
- Tara Durand
- Brandy Gallagher
- Basilio Gonzalez
- Jody Hammock
- Domonique Hansen
- Connie Irrigoo
- Sharon Leighow
- Benjamin Merkouris
- Michelle Mincks
- Nicole Nordstrom
- Esther Robertson
- Karla Starbard
- Sarah Williams

**Vision**

A Native Community that enjoys physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness.

**Mission**

Working together with the Native Community to achieve wellness through health and related services.

**Board of Directors**

- James Segura (Chairman)
- Charles G. Anderson (Vice Chairman)
- Karen Caindec (Secretary/Treasurer)
- Charles Akers (Director)
- Roy Huhndorf (Director)
- Dr. Terry Simpson (Director)
- Thomas Huhndorf (Director)

**Interim CEO**

April Kyle



© 2020 Southcentral Foundation

# Customer-Owners Have an Advocate at the Alaska Native Health Resource Advocate Program

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Tara Carey

The Alaska Native Health Resource Advocate Program is here to help when hurdles get in the way of locating needed resources. ANHRAP can assist with many situations, including when away from home attending college; relocating to a new town; or having limited communication tools, transportation, or income. Dealing with life changes during COVID-19 can add to the difficulty of connecting with needed programs and support. Customer-owners and family members who may benefit from assistance have a robust resource just a phone call away.

Created in 1997, Southcentral Foundation’s ANHRAP was established to support the information and referral needs of Alaska Native people, wherever they reside — in Alaska or throughout the country. ANHRAP assists Alaska Native people and their family members by identifying, locating, and connecting them with appropriate and available health, social, educational, legal, employment, disability, treatment, housing, health insurance, and other related programs and/or services.

If you want assistance or are transitioning to a new location, it is helpful to connect with someone familiar with the programs and resources in your area to assist with the available options which you may qualify. ANHRAP Community Resource Specialist Roberta Hallam has expertise and knowledge that has helped hundreds of customer-owners and family members.


What can a customer-owner or family member expect when calling ANHRAP? The program was created to assist remotely — keeping everyone safe during interactions. Consultation to help identify customer-owners’ needs and eligibility for services begins with the initial call. Hallam will ask questions that will help locate relevant and available resources.

Customer-owners and family members, regardless of residency, have someone to guide them through the sometimes-complex systems of resources available in communities across the country. College students traveling for school, families that relocate, and people experiencing any form of life transition may benefit by calling.



Roberta Hallam, Alaska Native Health Resource Advocate Program community resource specialist.

For more information about ANHRAP, or to access the referral services, call toll free (866) 575-6757, or email [anhra@southcentralfoundation.com](mailto:anhra@southcentralfoundation.com).



## HELP FIGHT THE FLU!


DRIVE-THRU FLU CLINIC

Monday - Friday: 8 a.m. - 6 p.m.  
Saturdays in October: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

ANPCC WEST PARKING LOT

4320 Diplomacy Drive

Customer-owners must be 6 months or older, be eligible to receive services at ANMC, and wear a mask in the drive-thru. No appointments necessary. Talk with your provider if you have any questions or concerns.



THE ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM AND SOUTHCENTRAL FOUNDATION JOINTLY OWN AND MANAGE THE ALASKA NATIVE MEDICAL CENTER UNDER THE TERMS OF PUBLIC LAW 105-83. THESE PARENT ORGANIZATIONS HAVE ESTABLISHED A JOINT OPERATING BOARD TO ENSURE UNIFIED OPERATION OF HEALTH SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE MEDICAL CENTER.

# Flu Vaccines – More Important Than Ever

SCF Public Relations



Elder Resource Specialist Louise Britton works through flu season.

Receiving a flu vaccine this fall may be more important than ever. The vaccine not only reduces your risk of getting the flu, but protects children, Elders, and those who are most vulnerable. The flu vaccine may also help prevent being infected with both COVID-19 and influenza at the same time, which may cause severe illness or death for those who are at a higher risk. Getting vaccinated also helps to preserve health care resources.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends a yearly flu vaccine as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses for everyone 6 months of age and older. The flu vaccination can help prevent you from getting the flu or reduce the severity and duration if you

do. Practicing hand hygiene, covering your cough, wearing a mask, and physical distancing from others with the flu may help slow the spread but the best way to fight the flu is to get vaccinated.

The CDC recommends that people get a flu vaccine by the end of October. Getting vaccinated too early (for example, in July or August) is likely to be associated with reduced protection against flu infection later in the flu season, particularly among older adults.

“Flu vaccines are safe and are the best protection to prevent getting sick from the flu, and to help protect others. Now is the best time to get a flu

vaccination,” said SCF Senior Medical Director of Quality Assurance Dr. Donna Galbreath.

Though they are different types of viruses, influenza and COVID-19 are both respiratory illnesses and may present with similar symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue, and sore muscles. If you are experiencing symptoms or have questions, contact your provider.

The CDC believes it’s likely that flu viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be spreading this fall and winter. In this context, getting a flu vaccine will be more important than ever to help prevent the possibility of getting the flu and COVID-19 at the same time.

Protect and respect everyone in the community this flu season by getting the flu vaccine and maintaining immunization schedules, wearing a mask, and practicing safety measures. Working together, we can keep Alaskans healthy.

If you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, flu, or need to contact your provider, if in Anchorage call (907) 729-3300. See below for a listing of Rural Anchorage Service Unit facilities and phone numbers. If you are experiencing a medical emergency, call 911.



**Wear a mask**



**Wash your hands**



**Physical distance**

## Clinic Contact Information:

**In an emergency, please dial 9-1-1.**

To contact the Alaska Native Medical Center Emergency Department, please call (907) 729-1729 or visit 4315 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage.

|  | PRIMARY        | AFTER HOURS/URGENT          |
|--|----------------|-----------------------------|
| Anchorage Native Primary Care Center                       | (907) 729-3300 | (907) 729-1729              |
| Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center            | (907) 631-7800 | (907) 729-1729              |
| C'eyiits' Hwnax Life House Community Health Center         | (907) 631-7665 | (907) 891-3750 / 911 Urgent |
| Eklutna Village Clinic                                     | (907) 688-6031 | 911 Urgent                  |
| Indian Creek Health Clinic                                 | (907) 583-2461 | (907) 230-4899              |
| Igiugig Community Health Clinic                            | (907) 533-3207 | (907) 533-6020              |
| Kokhanok Community Health Clinic                           | (907) 282-2203 | (907) 282-4121              |
| McGrath Regional Health Center                             | (907) 524-3299 | 911 Urgent                  |
| Junior “Doc” Gregory Memorial Clinic Nikolai Clinic        | (907) 239-2328 | (907) 293-2328              |
| Nilavena Subregional Health Center                         | (907) 571-1818 | (907) 571-7111              |
| Nondalton Community Health Clinic                          | (907) 294-2238 | (907) 294-2238              |
| Pedro Bay Community Health Clinic                          | (907) 850-2229 | (907) 850-4019              |
| Lake Clark Wellness Center and Port Alsworth Health Center | (907) 781-2256 | (907) 891-3750              |
| St. Paul Community Health Center                           | (907) 546-8300 | (907) 546-4202 / 911 Urgent |
| Takotna Clinic   | (907) 524-3299 | (907) 298-2214              |

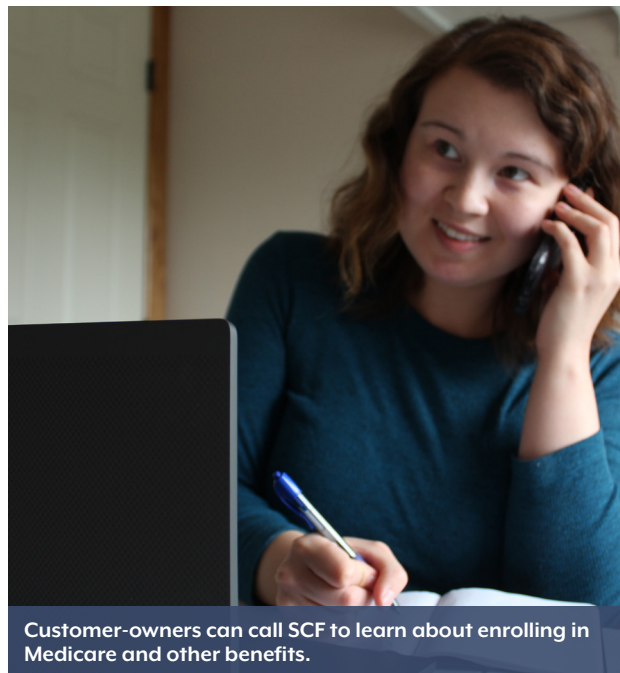


# Signing Up for Medicare is a Breeze with Family Health Resources

By SCF Family Health Resources

Applying for supplemental insurance may seem like a lot of work, but thanks to Southcentral Foundation Family Health Resources, applying for benefits like Medicare Part D can be simple. FHR has certified Medicare counselors who are knowledgeable about everything related to Medicare. They assist with Medicare enrollments, describe how Medicare interacts with other health insurance plans, answer billing and other questions related to Medicare. FHR's Medicare team has a relationship with the Alaska Medicare Information Office, and if the counselors are not able to answer a question, they have experts at their fingertips who can.

Why is this program important to customer-owners? Medicare Part D can be used to cover prescription costs while customer-owners are traveling or using non-Tribal facilities. Having health insurance provides security and assurance that customer-owners will be covered if they are not able to use a Tribal facility. It also allows greater choice and flexibility in where medications can be filled.



Customer-owners can call SCF to learn about enrolling in Medicare and other benefits.

When customer-owners use their insurance at ANMC hospital and other Tribal facilities, the insurance companies can be billed for prescription costs. Since some prescriptions can cost hundreds of dollars,

the savings for SCF and Tribal facilities are sizable. By being a part of the sponsorship program, or having Medicare or other insurance, customer-owners are contributing to SCF programs. Billing third-party insurance allows SCF to maintain and expand services and ensure services for future generations.

If you qualify for Medicare part D, you may be eligible to have your premiums paid for by SCF. The Medicare Part D Sponsorship Program for Alaska Native and American Indian people who are eligible for Medicare is administered by SCF.

A customer-owner must be enrolled in Medicare Part A and/or Part B to be eligible for the Medicare Part D Sponsorship Program. Part A covers a portion of the cost for an approved inpatient hospital stay, skilled nursing facility, some home health assistance, and hospice care. Part B helps with the cost of physician services, outpatient care, preventive services, X-rays, lab work, medical equipment, some diabetes supplies, and ambulance services. Part D generally covers prescription drugs listed on the Plan's Formulary.

The Initial Enrollment Period begins three months before the enrollee's 65th birthday, includes the month of the birthday, and ends three months after. Customer-owners may enroll in the Part D Sponsorship Program at any time during this seven-month IEP. Unless a customer-owner has a special enrollment condition, the customer-owner may enroll outside of their IEP but only during Medicare's Annual Open Enrollment Period, which runs from Oct. 15 through Dec. 7 each year. Coverage will begin on the first of January. For some, a General Enrollment Period may apply.

---

To contact a Medicare counselor at SCF, call (907) 729-7280.

## Strengthening the Voice Within

By FWWI Learning and Development Associates Polly Andrews and Roberta Richardson

Family Wellness Warriors Initiative Beauty for Ashes is a program that helps participants address their past traumas and find a better future. It is also a training program where life-altering stories are sometimes shared.



Because it blooms from the ashes of destruction, fireweed is seen by many as a symbol of hope for the future.

This is the story of a young girl, now a woman, who found her voice and strength in breaking the silence on her past abuse and connecting with others.

The little girl experienced traumatic harm in different ways throughout her childhood, and the people closest to her were not able to recognize what was happening to her, including her parents. Because she felt that no one listened to her, she grew up — holding onto her story for 41 years.

Experiences with sexual abuse and domestic violence in childhood greatly affect the way people function later in life. In adulthood, while she thrived in her career, she started to realize the trauma she experienced affected her daily life as an adult in subtle ways. Protective walls grew thick around her, and when

she found herself in vulnerable situations, she did the only thing she knew to do as a child — stay silent and wait for it to pass. Little did she know, the way she coped — using silence — chipped away at her emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, and her physical health began to suffer as she developed fatigue, pain, and chronic health conditions.

Eventually, a friend invited her to attend Beauty for Ashes, a program that opens the door for Alaskans to share their stories and heal from past trauma. In 2016, she walked through the doors of the Southcentral

Foundation Nuka Learning and Wellness Center for her first Beauty for Ashes. She entered the safety of her learning circle, took the risk, and shared what the little girl needed to say all those years ago.

Through participating in Beauty for Ashes, emotional progress was made. "I was able to make connections between my past and my present. Because of that, I have begun my healing journey," she realized.

She learned to grasp her health in a holistic way — attending learning circles, seeking help through SCF's Traditional Healing Clinic, and reaching out to other support systems at SCF.

"Instead of surviving, I'm finally learning to thrive. I feel community, I feel supported, and I feel alive."

After 41 years, the little girl was finally finding her voice.

She knows that connection with others is a strength that will walk her through the presence of uncertainty. Physical distancing has presented its challenges, and she leans on maintaining connections in other ways such as hosting a virtual tea event with a phone or a Zoom chat call with a trusted friend, or connecting with community on social media. For each of us, connection looks different but is more important than ever.

Oftentimes life shifts, and our worlds may change in a moment; this season has brought sudden change that has left many of us in isolation with limited support. The depths of physical distancing highlighted a crucial need — the need to reach out and find someone with whom you can share your challenges, your voice, and your story. Above all, and through it all, you are not alone. Your voice matters, your story matters, like the little girl who learned through her healing journey, connection is our strength.

---

For more information about Southcentral Foundation's Family Wellness Warriors Initiative, please call (907) 729-5440, or visit [fwwi.org](http://fwwi.org).



# Thank You, Veterans!

They are our neighbors, coworkers, community leaders, and family members – they’re also our nation’s veterans. On Veterans Day, we extended our gratitude to those who have served and those currently serving in the U.S. military. Our appreciation extends to the families of veterans and those who support service members.

By answering the call of duty, our veterans put the needs of others before their own to keep our country safe. Today, over one million men and women serve on active duty including more than 31,000 of Alaska Native and American Indian descent. Alaska is proud to have the highest number of veterans in the nation per capita.

To help meet the needs of the veteran community, Southcentral Foundation provides comprehensive health care services for Alaska Native and American Indian customer-owners many of whom are veterans. And through a partnership with the Veterans Affairs, SCF provides primary care services to veterans at the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center.

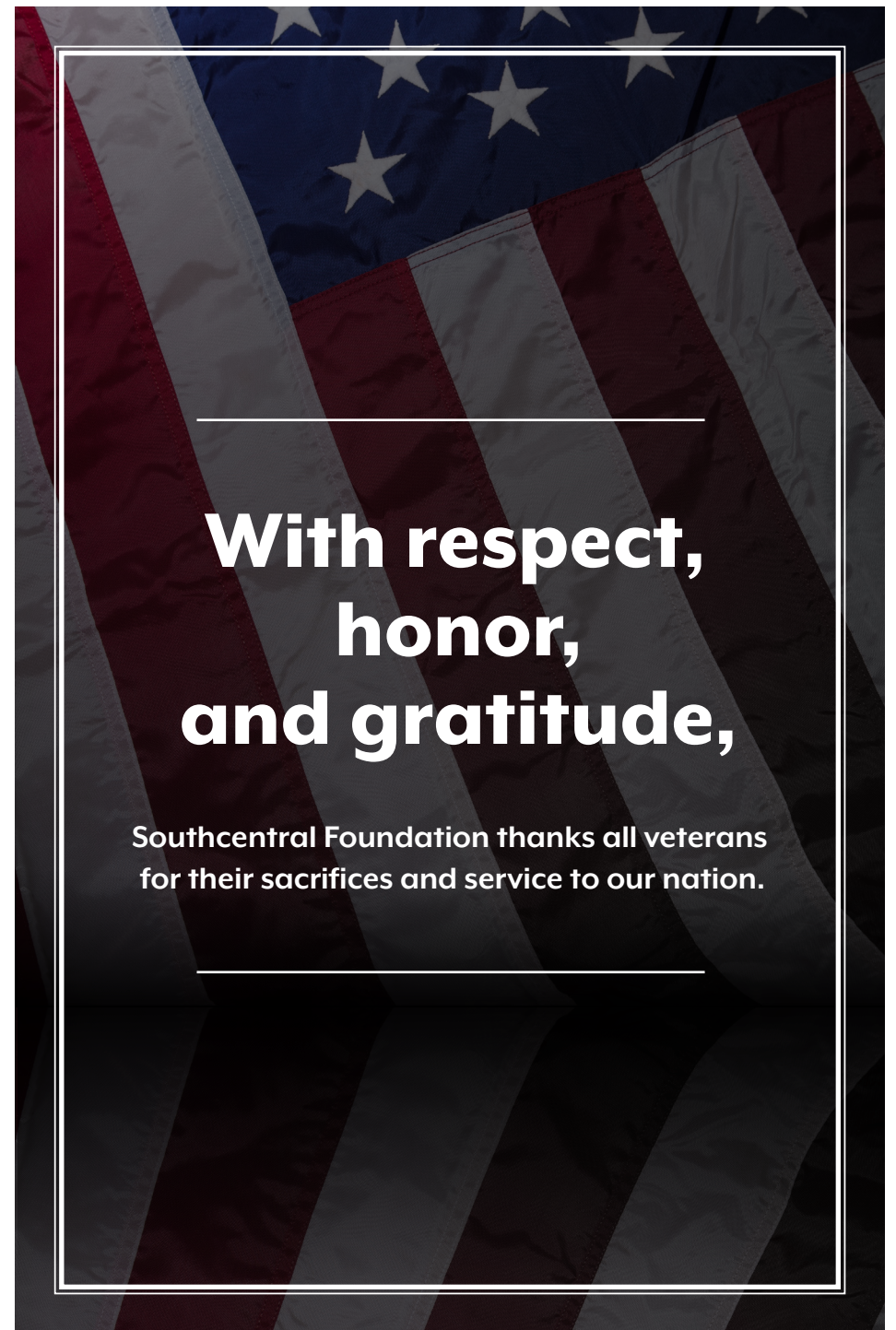
SCF’s Soldier’s Heart program is also available to combat veterans. The program, developed by veterans and first responders, helps address and understand the effects of post-traumatic stress. Soldier’s Heart also offers peer-led learning circles.

To the veterans residing in Alaska, across the nation, and around the world – thank you for your service and sacrifice.

---

For more information about Soldier’s Heart, please call (907) 729-6671 or (800) 478-3343, or email [soldiersheart@southcentralfoundation.com](mailto:soldiersheart@southcentralfoundation.com).

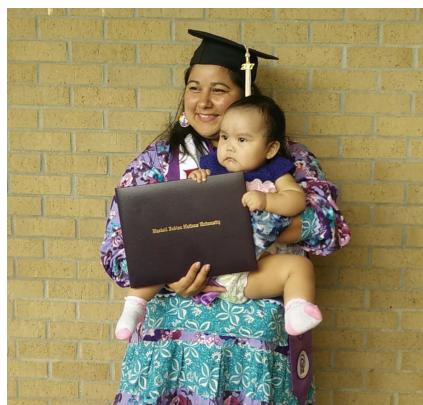
Sources: National Museum of the American Indian, Alaska Department of Military and Veteran Affairs



# Tips for Securing Higher Education Funding

By Public Relations Specialist Esther Robertson

The cost of tuition at public four-year colleges is soaring. According to the U.S. Department of Education, the cost has doubled over the past 30 years, even after adjusting for inflation. The thought of pursuing higher education at a college can be intimidating, especially when considering funding.



Shannon Hawkins and her niece celebrating her success of graduating from college.

First-generation college student Shannon Hawkins, part Inupiaq with roots in Nome, Wales, and Little Diomed, is a supervisor with the Southcentral Foundation RAISE Program and shares her tips for finding funding to help pay for higher education.

“I worried about how I was going to pay for college. Thankfully, I looked into my mother’s regional corporation, where there are many scholarships for shareholder descendants. These scholarships covered most tuition costs while I attended college. Another great resource for Alaska Native or American Indian students is the American Indian College Fund. Without these two groups, I would not have been able to earn my bachelor’s degree.”

When preparing to search and apply for scholarships, it will help to have the following items to reference: Free Application for Federal Student Aid form, letters of reference, GPA or transcripts, an idea of schools you want to attend, admission letter, and Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood.

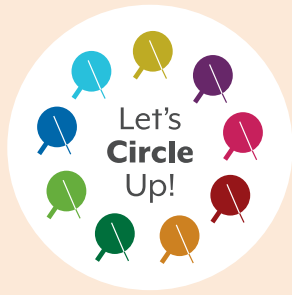
---

For more information, contact the RAISE program at (907) 729-5015.





## Southcentral Foundation Learning Circles



In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Southcentral Foundation will continue to evaluate learning circle services in the coming months, and schedules may be subject to change. Currently, Family Wellness Warriors Initiative is offering the following learning circles virtually through Zoom video conferencing:

### LGBTQ2 Support

**Thursday evenings, 6 - 7 p.m.**  
Meeting ID: 847 8211 5499  
Password: 1TdyCA

### Power of Hope

**Last Thursday of every month, noon - 1 p.m.**  
Meeting ID: 959 7817 7527  
Password: HealthEd

[southcentralfoundation.com/learning-circles](http://southcentralfoundation.com/learning-circles)

As we all take precaution to avoid the spread of germs, Southcentral Foundation would like to remind customer-owners that the pharmacy offers mail-out services. Avoid waiting in lines by calling the refill hotline.



### Refill Hotline

**(907) 729-2117**  
**or 877-320-4321**

Please call seven days in advance

**Rural Clinic Refills**  
**1-877-365-1104**

Please call two weeks in advance

## Diabetes: Be Aware and Know Your Risk

By SCF Public Relations

Approximately 1.5 million Americans are diagnosed with diabetes every year, and Alaska Native and American Indian people are more prevalently affected than any other race or ethnicity. Although diabetes is a manageable condition, if left undiagnosed, the condition may worsen and become more difficult to manage. Signs and symptoms are often disregarded because they first appear mild. Understanding diabetes and knowing the risk factors are the first steps to diabetes prevention and treatment.

There are two conditions associated with diabetes: type 1 and type 2. Both conditions affect the way the body produces or uses insulin, a hormone that helps the cells in the body to absorb glucose (sugars) from blood.

People who have type 1 diabetes produce very little insulin or none at all. This limits sugar absorption by the body's cells, resulting in high blood sugar, which can cause serious damage to blood vessels that supply blood to vital organs. Risk factors for type 1 diabetes are not as clear as those for type 2 diabetes. Type 1 is more likely to develop in children, teens, or young adults than any other age group. It's also recommended to consider a family history of the condition. Type 1 diabetes management requires insulin therapies, treatments, and healthy lifestyle changes.

Concerning type 2 diabetes, cells do not respond normally to insulin, so the pancreas produces more. Eventually the pancreas cannot keep up with the demand, and blood sugar levels rise. This can cause serious health problems, including heart disease, vision loss, and kidney disease. Risk factors for type 2 diabetes include:

- Having prediabetes (blood sugar levels are higher than normal, but not high enough yet to be diagnosed as type 2 diabetes)
- Being overweight
- Being 45 years or older
- Having a parent or sibling with type 2 diabetes
- Doing little to no physical activity

- Having ever had gestational diabetes (diabetes during pregnancy) or given birth to a baby who weighed more than nine pounds
- Being African American, Hispanic/Latino American, American Indian, or Alaska Native

Treatment for type 2 diabetes can require insulin therapy but can often be managed by healthy eating and physical activity. Southcentral Foundation has resources designed to aid in type 2 diabetes management, including the Lose to Win program. Lose to Win is an evidence-based weight management program that focuses on healthy lifestyle changes. Contact SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689 for upcoming Lose to Win program dates.

It is important to know your risk factors and have your blood sugar tested accordingly. Diabetes can develop and be present in the body for years before any symptoms arise. However, some potential symptoms to note include:

- Frequent urination
- Excessive thirst
- Excessive hunger
- Weight loss
- Blurry vision
- Numb or tingling hands or feet
- Drowsiness
- Dry skin
- Slow-healing sores
- Infections

If you or your child identify with any of these risk factors or symptoms, connect with your provider and ask about the possibility of diabetes.

### Sources:

- [cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/type2.html](http://cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/type2.html)
- [cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/type1.html](http://cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/type1.html)
- [cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/symptoms.html](http://cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/symptoms.html)
- [cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/risk-factors.html](http://cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/risk-factors.html)
- [diabetes.org/resources/statistics/statistics-about-diabetes](http://diabetes.org/resources/statistics/statistics-about-diabetes)
- [diabetes.org/diabetes](http://diabetes.org/diabetes)



# Quit Tobacco Today for Better Health Outcomes

By Public Relations Specialist Connie Irrigoo

Choosing to quit tobacco is one of the best choices you can make for your overall health. Many people like customer-owner Karen Stephan have quit, and so can you. Keep in mind that quitting tobacco is a process. It may take some people several tries before they quit completely, others may quit on their first try. Every step toward quitting is a success.

You can learn the skills needed to quit tobacco for life. Southcentral Foundation tobacco educators can provide you with the tools and resources to help you be successful. If you have any questions, talk to your health care provider or a tobacco educator at SCF.

Stephan is originally from the Colorado Indian Tribe in Parker, Arizona; she lives in Anchorage with her husband, Ray. She remembered seeing and reading information about the Quit Tobacco program at an annual SCF Gathering. Stephan later learned that she had to quit tobacco to have knee replacement surgery.

“I called [SCF] Health Education to help me quit tobacco before surgery to replace my knee,” said Stephan. “Health Education set me up with gum and patches; in 49 years, I never tried to quit smoking. I had to have my knee replaced, so I gave it a try.”

Today, Stephan is nearly a year tobacco-free. She encourages others to try, even if they are unsure whether they will be able to quit. Stephan noticed that she initially gained weight but has since lost it. Since Stephan has quit smoking food tastes better, she can smell better, and pain from the surgery and rheumatoid arthritis has subsided. She no longer



After smoking for 49 years, Karen Stephan worked with an SCF tobacco specialist to successfully quit tobacco.

needs her inhalers, and her wheezing has stopped. Stephan attributes all this to quitting tobacco.

Quitting smoking greatly reduces many health risks, including the risk of oral cancer. People who use tobacco are at a higher risk of being diagnosed with oral cancer. Men in particular are twice more likely to have oral cancer than women, and Alaska Native people are nearly one-and-a-half times more likely to be diagnosed with oral cancer.

The American Dental Association recommends checking your mouth regularly for any lumps or sores if you are at increased risk. Schedule routine annual dental exams, talk with your primary care provider, or call a tobacco cessation specialist to discuss how SCF can help you make healthier choices.

Schedule a routine dental exam (when operations return to normal in SCF Dental), at (907) 729-2000, or call SCF Health Education to join a virtual tobacco cessation learning circle for Alaska Native and American Indian people in the Anchorage Service Unit. The tobacco cessation program offers one-on-one counseling, follow-up services, group counseling, and access to nicotine replacement therapy.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689 or the Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center Wellness Center at (907) 631-7630.

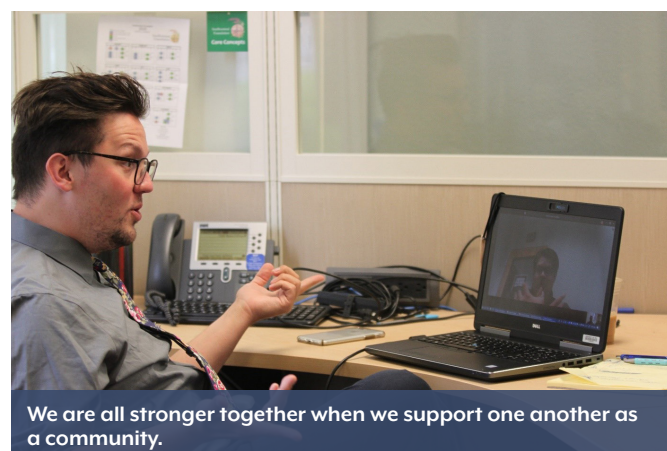
## Creating Safe Spaces for Customer-Owners to Build Community at SCF

By Behavioral Services Clinical Supervisor Nicole Tracy

In the Alaska Native Community, it is important to consider how work and activities pertain to meeting personal physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual wellness goals, as well as helping others in the community meet their own wellness goals. Southcentral Foundation offers over 85 learning circles across the organization, where participants learn how to share and respond to story around a variety of topics, thus building community in a supportive environment. These are spaces where everyone is encouraged to support each other, wherever they are in their personal journeys to wellness and personal improvement.

This year, National Coming Out Day was celebrated on Oct. 11. It is important for the community to hold space with each other to be able to reflect on the unique experiences of LGBTQ2+ people. SCF's newest learning circle, where LGBTQ2+ customer-owners meet virtually to discuss topics concerning culture and identity within the small community, is a great start to creating a safe space to share stories and experiences.

About two years ago, there was no learning circle in place for LGBTQ2+-identified Indigenous people. In response to this need in our community, Madalene Mandap, an SCF integrated pharmacist, and I began co-facilitating the LGBTQ2+ Support learning circle. This is an open-learning support circle for the LGBTQ2+ community at SCF. Each Thursday night, the learning circle customarily starts with an introduction, sharing the



pronouns we use, and then opens the space with an invitation to share before we discuss a certain topic. Not all participants are Indigenous, and we welcome all LGBTQ2+ relatives into the space to share and heal. This space has proven to be a sacred place for individuals to openly share what may not be shared in other spaces — to name and express their traumas safely. It provides an opportunity to learn, grow, and to be ourselves.

Lucas Nora, of Cup'ik descent comments, “The circle helped me find a sense of community within our Alaska Native Community. Sometimes it's hard being a two-spirited person, but coming together with others helps me feel closer to my people.”

Another participant states, “The LGBTQ2+ learning circle at SCF has provided me with a safe space for mutual validation and exploration of identity, both Alaska Native and LGBTQ2+, as well as self-expression. The circle has also helped to foster a network of truly supportive, affirming people and resources I probably would not have found elsewhere.”

Many participants are at different places on their journeys when they attend the circle. Some are still exploring their own identities and may not be “out” with friends or family. Young adults have acknowledged the value of hearing from those further along in their journeys, as well as older participants expressing gratitude for learning about the younger generation's experiences. Employees, providers, and travelers stopping in from other communities all within the LGBTQ2+ community and from all walks of life have attended. Facilitators' role is to help others, but many find that through this community building and mutual support, they are rewarded with growth both for themselves and those that participate.

For more information about the Virtual LGBTQ2 Support Learning Circle, please contact Nicole Tracy, behavioral health clinician, at (907) 632-5114.



# Tribal Doctor Shares Traditional Knowledge About Aging Well

By SCF Health Education

Elders carry knowledge and wisdom that is important in guiding future generations. This wisdom is gathered through the twists and turns of life, and it is through this journey that you find meaning and purpose.

Southcentral Foundation Tribal Doctor Lois Law has gained many insights on her journey.

"In my Indigenous world as a Gwich'in Athabascan, our life is a circle... Everything that I do in my life comes from my spirit. I learn with my head, but my heart is the center of all that I am today," she shares.

SCF strives to support Elder customer-owners in their journeys in the circle of life, providing tools and resources to help age well.

One of the many resources SCF offers for Elder customer-owners includes the aging well program. Aging well involves many parts of our life. Wellness is often viewed through the lens of physical health; however, physical health is only one part of wellness among many.

"Aging is not only about how we look on the outside. Aging is where you are at mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically," Law said. She also highlights the interconnectedness of these different areas of wellness.

"When we feed our mind good things, not only does our mind get healthy, but our body and spirit is very healthy."



SCF Tribal Doctor Lois Law shares wisdom about how to reach goals while aging well.

Some suggestions Law provides for self-care and finding balance are to stay active, eat healthy, practice healthy sleeping habits, and always keep a curious mind. Aging well means taking small steps every day to nurture your mind, body, soul, and spirit, as these are all intertwined and come together to complete a whole picture of wellness.

Everyone's aging experience is unique, and each person's values and goals serve as the compass to guide the aging well journey. In her practice as a Tribal doctor, Law uses her traditional healing knowledge and western health practices to help customer-owners find wellness in ways that are meaningful to them. Law asks customer-owners to first describe where they are in their mind, body, soul, and spirit and then uses this as a guide to help map out where they want to be.

"Everybody is different," she explains, "wellness goals vary from person to person and often extend beyond physical health."

Goals may be the ability to go fishing or berry picking, to participate in community activities, or to achieve financial security. Using one's voice to share what matters most helps create a plan to meet individual wellness goals. SCF has integrated care teams to support customer-owners through this journey. Elder customer-owners can reach out to their care teams to learn more about resources that may benefit them on their paths to wellness.

"Aging is a really beautiful place to be when you are ready for it," shared Law.

For more information about the aging well initiative or others services for Elder customer-owners, please call SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689, or visit [www.southcentralfoundation.com](http://www.southcentralfoundation.com).

Out of an abundance of caution and in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on social distancing for higher risk populations,

**SCF has suspended all in-program activities at the Elder Program.**

For more information, call the Elder Program at (907) 729-6500.

### Easy

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|   |   |   | 8 |   | 3 |   | 1 |   |
|   | 8 | 7 | 1 |   |   |   |   | 9 |
|   | 1 |   |   | 6 |   |   | 3 | 5 |
| 8 |   |   |   |   |   | 4 | 9 | 6 |
| 6 |   |   |   |   |   |   | 5 | 2 |
|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   | 5 |   | 4 |   |   | 7 |   |
|   |   |   |   | 2 |   |   |   | 8 |
| 4 |   |   | 7 | 3 |   | 6 |   |   |

### Number Puzzle

Sudoku is easy to play and the rules are simple. Fill in the blanks so that each row, each column, and each of the nine 3x3 grids contain one instance of each of the numbers 1 through 9.

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| 8 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 3 | 7 |
| 3 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| 7 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| 2 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 9 |
| 6 | 9 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 8 |
| 5 | 3 | 8 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 9 |
| 9 | 6 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 3 |
| 4 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 5 |

Solution

### Important Phone Numbers

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Alaska Native Medical Center..... (907) 563-2662                   | Food Bank of Alaska ..... (907) 272-3663            |
| American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)..... (907) 272-1444 | People Mover ..... (907) 343-4536                   |
| Anchorage Police Department (non-emergency)..... (907) 786-8500    | Salvation Army Meals on Wheels ..... (907) 349-0613 |
| Anchor Rides..... (907) 343-2550                                   | Senior Benefits ..... (907) 352-4150                |
| Cook Inlet Housing Authority..... (907) 793-3000                   | Southcentral Foundation ..... (907) 729-4955        |
| Division of Public Assistance ..... (907) 269-6599                 | SCF Elder Program Event Hotline..... (907) 729-6588 |