

ANCHORAGE NATIVE NEWS

Alaska Native People Shaping Health Care

Summer Edition | 2024



Summer Health and Wellness

Tips for a Healthy Summer

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Southcentral Foundation to Expand Behavioral Health Services to Include Crisis Stabilization

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications



Southcentral Foundation hosted a groundbreaking on a behavioral health expansion project in Anchorage with federal, state, and local dignitaries along with community partners.

Federal, state, and local dignitaries along with community partners joined Southcentral Foundation for the groundbreaking on a behavioral health expansion project in Anchorage. The 100,000-square-foot facility at the corner of Elmore and Tudor roads will offer 23-hour crisis stabilization, crisis residential, expanded withdrawal management, and outpatient behavioral health services to all members of the community. The new center is anticipated to be completed in early 2026.

“It’s essential that when a community member is experiencing a ‘right-now’ behavioral health crisis, that we have the right service for them,” said Southcentral Foundation President and CEO April Kyle. “Far too often when somebody is in a crisis, they end up in our emergency services department, or worse, in jail.”

The 16-chair adult crisis stabilization center will provide choice, ease of access, a comfortable environment, and timely access to crisis intervention and stabilization. Care will be enhanced by ensuring individuals have their immediate needs met by a multidisciplinary team and a plan developed for discharge to appropriate inpatient or outpatient care facilities.

Individuals who need more support to stabilize can transition to the 16-bed adult crisis residential program for further observation, assessment, and treatment. Short-term care will be provided for up to seven days for individuals experiencing a mental health crisis. Services will include crisis

intervention, ongoing assessment and stabilization, individual and group counseling by master’s level therapists and peer support specialists, and case management to support discharge planning.

“Implementation of a behavioral health crisis system of care means people experiencing a behavioral health crisis get the right care, in the right setting, when they need it,” said Southcentral Foundation Executive Vice President of Behavioral Services Michelle Baker.

The existing SCF Detox program will move to the new facility and expand to 30 beds. The program is open to all Alaska residents who would like to medically detox. Medication-Assisted Treatment will be available. Program participants will comfortably detox in a shared space under 24-hour medical supervision and partner with a multi-disciplinary team to determine the next steps in recovery.

Expanding behavioral health services and providing the necessary resources to meet the needs of the community embodies Southcentral Foundation’s Vision to achieve mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

The expansion project is a testament to the collaboration between Southcentral Foundation, the State of Alaska, Alaska’s congressional delegation, Municipality of Anchorage, community partners, and health care professionals.



An architectural rendering of the 100,000-square-foot behavioral health expansion project now under construction at the corner of Elmore and Tudor roads.

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

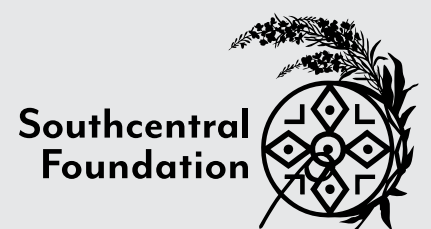
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Alaska Native Medical Center Obstetrical Team Partners With Customer-Owners

By Public Relations Specialist Jesse Holt



The Alaska Native Medical Center offers tailored obstetric care to customer-owners throughout Alaska.

Starting a family is one of life's most important decisions, and can be marked by immense joy, meticulous planning, and numerous questions and concerns. Ensuring access to prenatal care is an early and vital step. The Alaska Native Medical Center provides tailored prenatal and delivery care. Southcentral Foundation co-operates the ANMC with partner organization, the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

At ANMC, comfort is second only to the safety of mother and baby. Midwives are embedded in primary care, and mothers

with low-risk pregnancies can visit their usual primary care providers for high-quality prenatal care. For mothers who experience complications during pregnancy or who may be at high risk for developing complications, regardless of where they live in Alaska, collaborative care is available among midwives, obstetricians/gynecologists, maternal-fetal-medicine physicians, and other specialists.

"The birth of my son went better than I ever imagined," Holly Blakenly, a customer-owner who recently gave birth at ANMC said. "As an LGBTQ couple, my wife and I were worried about where we were going to give birth, but we could not have been put more at ease than with the team at ANMC."

During and after delivery, every mother experiencing hypertensive disorders or other complications receives treatment immediately. This ensures that she maintains a healthy blood pressure throughout her labor, leading to a healthier delivery and allows the mother to begin bonding with her baby more quickly.

"After my baby was born, the midwife quickly recognized something was wrong with my placenta," Blakenly shared. "The whole team worked well together and were able to address the problem."

The effort to provide the best evidence-based care continues postpartum.

"During postpartum, the nurses and certified nursing assistants were very helpful in educating us on taking care of our first child and responded promptly when I was concerned about my baby's blood sugar," Blakenly said.

ANMC Obstetrics and Gynecology promotes breastfeeding as the optimal feeding and caring method for the health of the baby. Breastfeeding education is offered antenatally and postpartum while respecting the mother's right to make the decision that is best for her family. To assist with successful neonatal feeding, an integrated lactation team is available to support new mothers and address feeding difficulties.

Recognizing the uniqueness of each pregnancy, care is tailored for customer-owners. For instance, if a mother faces challenges attending regular appointments, home blood pressure devices are provided. Additionally, all who provide prenatal care at ANMC recognize the role mental health plays in a healthy pregnancy, offering close consultation with behavioral health professionals.

Pregnant women find a capable ally in the comprehensive and compassionate care provided by the teams that provide obstetrical care. From addressing health disparities to offering tailored care, the ANMC health care professionals are dedicated to ensuring the best outcomes for every mother and child.

"I loved the whole birthing experience at ANMC and would recommend it to anyone," Blakenly shared.

For more information, connect with your primary care provider.

In support of LGBTQ2+ PRIDE Month

Southcentral Foundation celebrates acceptance and belonging.

We all belong. We are connected. We are all part of the unbroken circle of Nil'et dnayi, 'among relatives.'



UPCOMING HOLIDAY CLOSURES
Southcentral Foundation will be closed

Wednesday, June 19
in observance of Juneteenth.
Services will resume June 20.

CELEBRATING WIC 50 YEARS



Are you pregnant?
Do you have a baby?
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Do you have a child under 5 years old?

WIC PROVIDES:

- Healthy foods
- Healthy eating tips for you and your child
- Health referrals
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Southcentral Foundation WIC (907) 729-7277
southcentralfoundation.com/wic

Thursday, July 4
in observance of Independence Day.
Services will resume July 5.

Leading by Example – Staying up to Date on Immunizations

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

One of the most precious gifts in life is supporting others. Whether you are a parent, sibling, taking care of your parents, or a friend, chances are you have spent quite a bit of your time helping others. Among all that you give to others, do not forget to give your own health and wellness support, care, and attention. Being proactive about your health care allows you to stay healthy and continue to be a pillar for those most important to you.

Staying up to date on recommended adult immunizations is a way to show self-care and lead your family by example. It is a gift you can give your family – to stay as healthy as possible, for as long as possible. Vaccines play a vital role in preventing the spread of infectious disease and reducing life-threatening symptoms.

Immunizations in adulthood may be overlooked or forgotten, but they are essential to keeping each other, Elders, and babies safe. You may be surprised to learn that, depending on individual health, family history, and date of childhood immunizations, you may be due for immunizations. Some important adult immunizations include, but are not limited to, flu, diphtheria, tetanus, acellular pertussis, shingles, pneumococcal, hepatitis B, human papillomavirus, measles, mumps, rubella, and varicella.

If you are planning to travel, especially outside the country, immunizations play a crucial role in your overall well-being. Visiting new places may increase your exposure to new infections and diseases. Doing proper research is essential to reducing your risk of serious illnesses such as yellow fever, typhoid, hepatitis, and more. Some countries have specific requirements before allowing admission and may not permit entry if your immunization requirements are not met. Staying up to date also reduces the likelihood of introducing new illnesses to the areas you visit, as well.

Taking the first step toward a healthier you can be simple and small. The State of Alaska makes it easy for individuals and families to see their immunization status through the Docket app – a secure application that



Prioritizing your health is a positive way to lead your family.

allows you to view immunization history and share official vaccination reports for health, school, and travel. Customer-owners can also call their primary care teams directly, request an appointment on MyHealth, or send a secure message to their primary care teams on MyHealth.

Staying healthy is an investment in a brighter future for you and generations to come. Give yourself and your family peace of mind with an added layer of protection against preventable diseases. Contact your primary care team today and ask if you are up to date on immunizations.

See the graphic below for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggested schedule for adult vaccinations.

Your Guide to Primary Care

Scan the QR code to view your guide to primary care. Learn about services available and Southcentral Foundation’s relationship-based Nuka System of Care. Visit southcentralfoundation.com for more information.

Benteh Nuutah Valley Native Primary Care Center guide to primary care.

Anchorage Native Primary Care Center guide to primary care.

Suggested Schedule for Adult Vaccinations

COVID-19 vaccines are recommended for everyone ages 6 months and older

Vaccine	19-26 years	27-49 years	50-64 years	≥65 years
Influenza	1 dose annually			
Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV)	Seasonal administration during pregnancy			1 dose
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap or Td)	1 dose Tdap each pregnancy; 1 dose Td/Tdap for wound management 1 dose Tdap, then Td or Tdap booster every 10 years			
Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)	1 or 2 doses depending on indication			
Varicella	2 doses (if born in 1980 or later)		2 doses	
Zoster recombinant (RZV)	2 doses for immunocompromising conditions		2 doses	
Human papillomavirus (HPV)	2 or 3 doses depending on age	27 through 45 years		
Pneumococcal				Connect with your primary care team
Hepatitis A	2, 3, or 4 doses depending on vaccine			
Hepatitis B	2, 3, or 4 doses depending on vaccine or condition			
Meningococcal A, C, W, Y	1 or 2 doses depending on indication, contact your primary care team for booster recommendations			
Meningococcal B	2 or 3 doses depending on vaccine and indication, contact your primary care team for booster recommendations 19 through 23 years			
Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib)	1 or 3 doses depending on indication			

Recommended vaccination for adults who meet age requirement, lack documentation of vaccination, or lack evidence of past infection.

Recommended vaccination for adults with an additional risk factor or another indication.

Recommended vaccination based on shared clinical decision-making.

Source: CDC.gov

Starting and Maintaining Healthy Resolutions Throughout the Year

By Public Relations Specialist Christine Adams



Exercise facilities and classes are open to all customer-owners upon scheduling an appointment with a Southcentral Foundation exercise physiologist.

With the summer equinox nearing, now is a great time to pause and check in on your health and wellness New Year's resolutions. While resolutions vary, most have the same goal — to become the best version of yourself possible. Whether you set big goals on Jan. 1, or you are planning to set a mid-year resolution, Southcentral Foundation exercise physiologists, behavioral health consultants, dietitians, and others are ready to partner with you.

When it comes to resolutions, "Think about your values and why making a change is important to you," SCF Senior Behavioral Health Consultant Desiree Compton said. "Focus on those values in order to accept that change is often uncomfortable, and consider past times when you were able to do something hard because it mattered to you."

Finding manageable exercises and activities you enjoy may increase the likelihood of maintaining consistent and sustainable changes. Trying to make too many changes too quickly may cause a loss of interest or burnout.

"Remember it takes time for habits to stick, and do not hold yourself to unrealistic expectations," Compton shared. "Start with small, realistic goals, and celebrate small gains along the way."

Customer-owners can meet with behavioral health consultants or exercise physiologists in Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, without needing referrals.

"If you are not sure what to do or where to start your exercise program, please come see an exercise physiologist. We are here to help with setting realistic goals, start a personalized exercise routine, and learn how to exercise safely and effectively," SCF Exercise Physiologist Jeff Layton advises. "It is perfectly normal to be anxious or nervous to go to the gym for the first time, or if it has been a long time since you have gone. The hardest part of going to the gym is stepping through the front door."

Healthy changes can also start in your kitchen, and SCF dietitians can assist you in achieving your goals. Dietitians assist with a variety of nutrition-related needs such as diabetes, integrative and functional nutrition, enteral nutrition, parenteral nutrition, and intuitive eating. They take into consideration your dietary needs and traditional values and develop a plan with you for the most successful, long-term results.

"Focus on what you can add to your diet instead of what you need to remove. For example, add fruits and vegetables to your diet for a goal of five servings a day, or start with two and work your way up," SCF Registered Dietitian Raina Pasiewicz said. "And remember canned or frozen fruits and vegetables have just as much nutrition as fresh produce — sometimes even more because the nutrients are preserved!"

Whether you are continuing your New Year's resolutions or planning changes, SCF is here to support you on your wellness journey. All customer-owners can connect with their primary care teams to speak with registered dietitians or behavioral health consultants. They can also call Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, and Exercise in Anchorage at (907) 729-2689 to access the gym, or the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center Wellness Center in Wasilla at (907) 631-7630.

Learn more about programs and services by visiting southcentralfoundation.com.

A Different Path to Recovery, Benteh Nuutah Four Directions

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications



Southcentral Foundation *Benteh Nuutah* Four Directions offers drop-in groups for both individuals in recovery and for friends and family who desire to support their loved ones.

Every community in Alaska is impacted by substance use. All Alaskans in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough now have access to addiction treatment and recovery services that have a history of changing lives and communities for the better. At the *Benteh Nuutah* Four Directions Outpatient

Treatment Center in Wasilla, as a result of a collaboration between Southcentral Foundation and local Tribes, the doors are open to anyone who may benefit from substance use services.

Partnering with Alaska Native families for two decades of substance use services, SCF has developed an approach that differs from standard treatment. While many treatment programs require participants to stop numbing, distracting, or escaping from their lives through abstinence (and simultaneously hope they will create lives they no longer want to escape), Four Directions equips individuals with the tools and resources to improve their lives on their own terms.

Four Directions' treatment approach is strengths-based and personalized to each individual. It respects and responds to the whole person in the context of their health needs, values, cultural preferences, families, and communities. Thus, it is designed to enhance not only the lives of participating individuals, but also their families and communities.

Four Directions focuses on creating a life where the individual wants to remain present, sober, and engaged, and no longer feels the need to escape or use detrimental coping behaviors. The central philosophy is substance use is a symptom of an underlying problem; anyone struggling with addiction is using substances as a coping strategy to deal with or avoid something in life. Understanding substance use is serving a purpose in the context of a person's life circumstances, the focus is to first address the underlying need, rather than asking the person to give up their coping strategy. Behaviors for maintaining sobriety are learned, but the core principle is to move forward toward life goals.

"Wellness is rooted in personal values and motivations," said SCF Executive Vice President of Behavioral Services Division Michelle Baker. "Our programs highlight what individuals can work toward and create in their lives through relationship and partnership on their journey toward wellness."

This Wasilla-based outpatient treatment program supports participants in becoming more aware of themselves and their expectations, so they can progress toward value-based goals. The Four Directions approach has enabled program providers to build strong relationships with those impacted by substance use and reduce barriers to engagement. These supports are invaluable for creating a vision for wellness and a roadmap for reclaiming health and well-being.

If you or a friend or family member are experiencing substance use and want support in making a change, please contact *Benteh Nuutah* Four Directions Outpatient Treatment Center in Wasilla at (907) 631-6300. This program is open to all adults in the community, accepts all insurances, and offers a sliding fee scale for uninsured participants. To reach Four Directions Outpatient Treatment Center in Anchorage, call (907) 729-6300.

2024 Living Our Values Award Recipients

The following employees embody Southcentral Foundation's Vision, Mission, and Corporate Goals. SCF's Living Our Values award is corporate-wide and based on at least one of the following: role model for other employees on how to perform job duties, notable achievements and/or high productivity in service delivery, quality improvement, customer service, risk management, administrative management, improvements in safety, health and well-being of others, family wellness, outstanding teamwork, or any other mission-related activity of SCF. Employees may also be nominated for exemplary performance above and beyond the scope of their respective positions.

Please join SCF in celebrating these employees and their contributions toward achieving SCF's Vision and Mission!



Anne Arceo
Clinical Specialist Registered Nurse
Primary Care Administration



Kristoffer "Kris" Auza
Registered Nurse Case Manager
Behavioral Health Fireweed



Michael Bilyon
Dental Assistant
Family Dental Floor 1



Delia Call
Grants Specialist
Grants



Erin Carrick
Senior Physician Assistant-Certified Primary Care Provider
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center 1 East



Theresa Castellanos
Integrated Pharmacist
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center 3 West



Cheryl Charic
Clinician
Quyana Clubhouse



Kenneth Davis
Case Management Support
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center 2 South



Ruby De Guzman
Behavioral Health Technician
The Pathway Home



Terri Draper
Psychologist
Adult Outpatient Services



Amy Fuelling
Nurse Manager
Quality Assurance



Kathryn "Chief" Godden
Learning and Development Advisor
Development Center



Basilio Gonzalez III
Manager of Creative Services
Corporate Communications



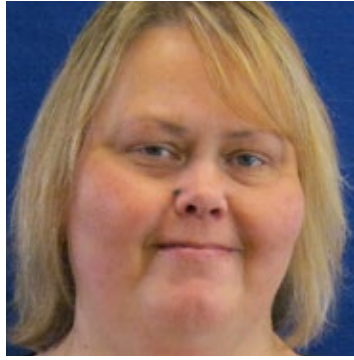
Jill Gordon
Registered Nurse Case Manager
Anchorage Native Primary Care Center 1 North



Reinou Groen
Physician
Obstetrics and Gynecology



Jennifer "Jenny" Irwin
Administrative Support
 Anchorage Native Primary Care
 Center 3 West



Dona King
Community Case Manager
Dena A Coy



Amber Kulhanek
Supervisor of Dental Assistants
 Family Dental Floor 2



Sharon Leighow
Media and Corporate Communications Advisor
 Corporate Communications



Cara Lestenkof-Mandregan
Manager
 St. Paul Community Health Center



D. Michael Lewis
Senior Application Developer
 Learning Institute



Crystle Lewis-Klayum
Supervisor of Certified Medical Assistants
 Behavioral Health Fireweed



Rochelle Lopez
Case Management Support Supervisor
 Adult Outpatient Services



Tanya Mack
Senior Registered Nurse Case Manager
 Specialty Pediatrics



Kristen Maves
Pharmacist
 Pharmacy



Jessica "Jessy" Moreland
Senior Clinician
 Adult Outpatient Services



Darilynn Moses
Registered Nurse Case Manager
 Anchorage Native Primary Care
 Center 3 East



Erica Nicklie
Registered Nurse Case Manager
 Home Visit Team and Community-Based Programs



Aline Phomphiphack
Manager
 Anchorage Native Primary Care
 Center 3 East



Amy Riley
Community Resource Specialist
 Behavioral Health Clinic



Shawna Rodgers
Supervisor
 Ambassador Drive Dental



Liliana Ruess
Administrative Support
 Elder Program



Louie Martin Seno
Certified Medical Assistant
 Detox



Cassie Stenehjem
Senior Behavioral Health Consultant
 Behavioral Health Consultant
 Community Resource Specialist



Dominic "Dom" Stoltz
Senior Registered Nurse Case Manager
Benteh Nuutah Valley Native
 Primary Care Center East Program



Shellbie Tanner
Human Resource Generalist
 Human Resources



Kalina Torres
Dental Assistant
Benteh Nuutah Valley Native
 Primary Care Center Dental Clinic



Lara VanHoozer
Physician Assistant-Certified Team Coverage
 Anchorage Native Primary Care
 Center 1 West



Katherine "Katie" Weathers
Physical Therapist
 Physical Therapy, Occupational
 Therapy, and Exercise



Sarah Wood
Senior Registered Nurse Case Manager
 Specialty Pediatrics

Nu'iju Healing Place Team



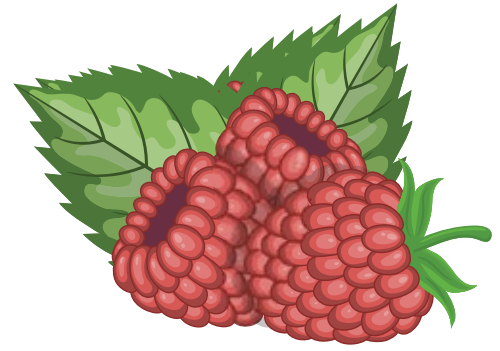
Chet Adkins
Learning and Development
Training Specialist
Family Wellness Warriors



Clarina Adkins
Learning and Development
Clinical Training Specialist
Family Wellness Warriors



Austin Brown
Learning and Development
Training Specialist
Family Wellness Warriors



Snow Removal Team



Kevin Burgamy
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Patric Catalano
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Wassily Changsak
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Frederick Elvsaas Sr.
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Dylon Failor
Maintenance Technician
Valley Facilities



Timothy Grosdidier
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Charles "CW" Harter
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Colton Hilligas
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Elias Mayac
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Chris McDonald
Supervisor of Maintenance
Facilities



Sean Moore
Maintenance Technician
Valley Facilities



Wilhelm Shade
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Sean Stewman
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Ian Ticket
Courier
Facilities



Tristen Ticket
Maintenance Technician
Facilities



Building Relationships and Careers to Support the Native Community

By Public Relations Specialist Erik Judson

Kristina Okamoto was preparing to return to Alaska after college. Starting her professional life in Anchorage, she wanted to better understand health care options, so she called her mother to ask about services on the Alaska Native Health Campus.

“She got so excited and she’s like, ‘Let me tell you all about it,’” Okamoto said.

Okamoto, Athabascan from Fairbanks, grew up immersed in her culture – visiting her grandfather’s trap line that was a two-day dog sled ride out of Holy Cross, participating in the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics, and numerous Alaska Native events her family attended.

“My mom grew up in foster homes, and, back then, her culture was kind of pushed out. So, throughout my childhood, she worked really hard to bring her culture back in and show us her culture,” Okamoto shared.

While empaneling with Southcentral Foundation, Okamoto met Dr. Patty Ko, who explained the Nuka System of Care. This conversation about SCF values and community stayed with her.

“I would want to work somewhere like this,” she recalled thinking.

When Okamoto found herself looking for a career change 15 years later, she called SCF recruitment and joined the Administrative Support Training Program to begin her employment journey with SCF.

“Participating in ASTP set the foundation for my passion to work with the Native Community,” Okamoto shared. “This is where the mission to achieve wellness through health and related services was initiated in my heart and mind.”

During New Hire Orientation, Okamoto met Improvement Advisor Wanda Holzer. After sharing backgrounds and talking for a while, Okamoto

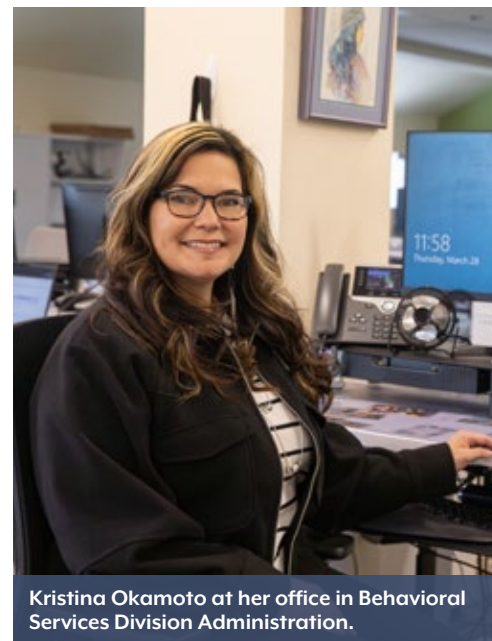
expressed interest in working together. A year later, a check-in with Holzer led to Okamoto becoming a program coordinator in the Behavioral Services Division Administration. A single mom of four at the time, her kids grew up around SCF during her years at BSD Administration.

“You have all these people who made such an investment in my children,” she shared. “They were very welcoming.”

Okamoto moved to a supervisor position in Behavioral Health Fireweed and Adult Outpatient Services, then an executive coordinator position for Intergovernmental Affairs and the Employee and Community Assistance Fund, before returning to BSD Administration.

She is now pursuing a second bachelor’s degree in psychology, hoping to work as a parenting coordinator and mediator. She would like to bring this work to SCF to share with the Native Community.

“I really appreciate the relationships that have been built here over the years,” Okamoto said. “This is my second family.”

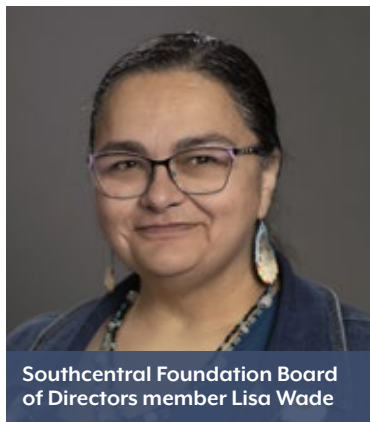


Kristina Okamoto at her office in Behavioral Services Division Administration.

For more information about career opportunities at SCF, visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/careers.

Lisa Wade, Martha Cotten Celebrated as 2024 Heroes in Health

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications



Southcentral Foundation Board of Directors member Lisa Wade

The National Indian Health Board honored two Southcentral Foundation leaders at its 2024 Heroes in Health Awards Gala May 21. Lisa Wade and Dr. Martha Cotten received Area Warrior Awards for their outstanding contributions to improving community health. Wade serves on the SCF Board of Directors, as well as the *Benteh Nuutah* Valley Native Primary Care Center Joint Operating Board and the *Ce’yiits Hwnax* Life House Community Health

Center Advisory Committee. Cotten is the longtime SCF Rural Anchorage Service Unit medical director and has also made a significant impact on the Alaska Community Health Aide Program. Working in partnership with the families and communities they serve, both have gone above and beyond to enrich and improve health care services and optimize the quality of care in rural Alaska.



Southcentral Foundation Medical Director Martha Cotten

The evening gala took place in Rapid City, South Dakota, on the second day of NIHB’s 42nd Annual National Tribal Health Conference. The conference offers workshops and plenary sessions covering a range of health care issues, from public health policy and legislation to health promotion and disease prevention.

Quality Assurance Leader Honored by Baldrige Foundation

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications



Southcentral Foundation Director of Quality Assurance Michelle Aregood

Southcentral Foundation Director of Quality Assurance Michelle Aregood was selected as a 2024 recipient of the Baldrige Foundation Award for Leadership Excellence in Healthcare. She received her award at a luncheon at the Baldrige Foundation’s Quest for Excellence® Conference just outside of Washington, D.C.

Aregood was recognized as an exceptional leader who actively supports and promotes performance excellence throughout the United States. Personal dedication and self-sacrifice are also factors in the selection process.

Aregood has worked in support of the Alaska Native Community for 17 years. Her responsibilities include quality of care, risk management, accreditation, safety and security, workers’ compensation, grievance resolution, and collaborating with partners in these areas for the co-management of the Alaska Native Medical Center. Aregood values customer-centered excellence and a systems perspective as she leads her team of 30 employees. Her values align with the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program’s leadership behaviors and were key to her selection for this prestigious award.

Established by Congress in 1987, the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award is conferred by the U.S. president to U.S. organizations for achieving the highest levels of performance excellence. The Baldrige Foundation was created in 1988 as the private-sector partner to the Baldrige Performance Excellence Program.

To view coverage of the awards, please visit youtube.com/@BaldrigeFoundation/videos.

Safety Tips to Protect Your Skin From UV Rays

By Public Relations Specialist Shamika Andrew

Skin cancer is one of America's most diagnosed cancers. The good news is it is also one of the most preventable forms of cancer. While skin cancer is cancer you can see, it often goes undetected in the early stages. A large percentage of this form of cancer is associated with exposure to ultraviolet radiation from the sun. To lower your risk, protect your skin from UV rays from the sun and from artificial sources such as tanning beds and sun lamps.

Spending time outside is a great way to promote physical activity, reduce stress, and get vitamin D. While enjoying the benefits of being outdoors, you can decrease your risk of developing skin cancer by using sun protection. Protection from UV rays is important all year, not just during the summer. UV rays can reach you on cloudy and cool days, and they reflect off surfaces like water, cement, sand, and snow. Protect your skin while enjoying the sun by following these simple safety tips:

- Use sunscreen every day. Apply it at least 15 to 30 minutes before going outside and reapply every two hours. Make sure it is water resistant and has an SPF of 30 or higher.
- Wear a long-sleeved shirt and long pants when you know you will be spending hours in the sun. Dark clothing made with tightly woven fabric blocks more sun than white or loosely woven fabric.
- Wear sunglasses and a hat that shades your face, neck, and ears.
- Be cautious if you are taking medications that may make your skin more sensitive to the sun.
- Keep babies and small children in the shade and covered during extended periods of time in the sun.

“In addition to focusing on UV and sun protection, which can include protective clothing and using a good sunscreen, regularly examining any moles and blemishes on your skin and going in early to see your primary care provider if you notice any changes in color or size is one the best



Protect yourself from harmful ultraviolet rays this summer!

things you can do to prevent or treat skin cancer,” Anchorage Native Primary Care Center Medical Director Dr. Michael Cooper shared.

Get to know your skin. Check yourself in the mirror, and keep these three simple words in mind: new, changing, and unusual. A change in your skin is the most common sign of skin cancer. This could be a new growth, a sore that does not heal, or a change in a mole. Not all skin cancers look the same. Early detection of changes to moles or spots on the skin could save your life.





If you have questions about skin cancer, or would like to schedule an evaluation, reach out to your primary care provider to discuss your concerns. If you are diagnosed with a dermatologic condition, your provider will partner with you to create a treatment plan, which might include a referral to the Alaska Native Medical Center Dermatology Clinic.

Diagnostic Test Explained: Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI)

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications


Magnetic resonance imaging, or MRI, is a painless medical scan that uses strong magnets and radio waves to create detailed pictures of your organs, bones, and soft tissues. Unlike X-rays, MRIs do not use radiation, making them a safer option for some situations. This makes MRIs a valuable tool for diagnosing a wide range of conditions.

Here are some reasons you might get an MRI:


-  Joint pain or injuries: MRIs can reveal ligament tears, cartilage damage, and other issues within a joint.
-  Spine problems: An MRI can assist in diagnosing herniated discs, pinched nerves, and other spinal conditions.
-  Brain abnormalities: MRIs are crucial for detecting tumors, strokes, and other brain disorders.
-  Internal organ concerns: MRIs can be used to examine the liver, kidneys, heart, and other organs for abnormalities.

It is important to know MRIs are not always the best choice for diagnosis. There are certain clinical findings that must be met before an MRI can be ordered. Based on the criteria for medical need, MRIs must be preauthorized for payment by the Indian Health Service or private health insurance before being scheduled. Your provider will determine the best treatment and if an imaging test is a medical necessity based on your specific symptoms and medical history.

If you are experiencing persistent pain, weakness, or other concerning symptoms, schedule an appointment with your provider. For immediate medical attention, please call 911 or your local emergency line.



Family Wellness Warriors is now offering two weekly learning circles in person and virtually on Thursdays at the Anchorage Native Primary Care Center on the Alaska Native Health Campus.

<p>WOOCHEEN: HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS strengthens healthy relationship skills across generations. 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.</p>	<p>GRIEF AND LOSS supports the healing journey in a safe circle. 1-2 p.m.</p>	
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For more information about learning circles and FWW, scan the QR code.



Southcentral Foundation's
Nuka Conference
June 24-28

For more information contact the Learning Institute at SCFNukaEvent@southcentralfoundation.com
SCFNuka.com | (907) 729-6852

Looking Forward to Summer, Raise Interns are on Campus

By Senior Public Relations Specialist Tara Carey

The summer sunshine beams across the Alaska Native Health Campus, and Raise interns are full of excitement as they begin exploring and experiencing career and cultural opportunities offered at Southcentral Foundation. With the summer internship program in full swing, you will find the interns learning valuable workforce skills in departments across campus.

Before embarking on their internships, the youth attend an orientation and choose the area they wish to focus on during the summer. The interns also learn how to apply for jobs and complete job applications.

While exploring career options in health care or administrative-related fields, interns attend classes that focus on life skills, workforce development, and culture.

Raise interns also have the unique opportunity to attend cultural classes where they learn to bead and make traditional kuspuks and drums.

Emergency trauma technology training is also offered. The emergency trauma technology training introduces interns to the field of health care. It is a hands-on course that teaches medical terminology, CPR, and the assessment and treatment of illnesses and injuries. Upon completion, interns earn a certificate of completion that meets the requirements for State of Alaska ETT or First Responder certification.

The Raise Program holds an Administrative Support Training Program boot camp for interns who are 16 years and older. It focuses on developing administrative skills to assist interns be successful in their careers.

After a summer immersed in learning about health and administrative-related careers, the interns shift gears. They participate in subsistence fishing practices and visit the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's educational fishery during a field trip to Spirit Lake on the Kenai Peninsula.

While reflecting on her own internship experience, former Raise intern Marlee Leu stated, "The Raise Program was a great opportunity, and I



Former Raise intern Marlee Leu holds a freshly caught salmon while visiting an educational fishery made available by Kenaitze Indian Tribe and Salamatof Native Association.

made great friends and memories during my time there. My favorite part was definitely the camping trip!"

The end-of-season field trip allows the interns to take in the wonders of nature, learn traditional practices from Elders, and enjoy storytelling. The Raise summer program draws to a close each August, and the excitement among interns continues as they head off to their next adventures in school, work, and life.

For more information about the Raise Program, call (907) 729-5015 or visit www.southcentralfoundation.com/careers/raise-program.

**14th Annual
Tribal Celebration and Health Fair**

Hosted in partnership with the Knik Tribal Council, Chickaloon Village Traditional Council, and Native Village of Eklutna.

11 a.m.-3 p.m | Saturday, June 15

Alaska State Fairgrounds Raven Hall

Join family and friends for drumming and dancing, craft vendors, health care vendors, fun family activities, traditional foods, barbeque, and more. Admission is free and everyone is welcome to attend!

Connecting Kids to Coverage

Medicaid and Denali KidCare health insurance programs can cover the cost of the care needed to keep your kids healthy.

For more information, contact Southcentral Foundation Family Health Resources at (907) 729-4470.

Do you receive Medicaid or Denali KidCare?
Be prepared for your renewal.




- Step 1** **CONFIRM** your mailing address, phone number, and email address are up to date with the Division of Public Assistance.
- Step 2** **CHECK** your mailboxes, residential and email.
- Step 3** **RESPOND** to DPA when they reach out. Complete and submit renewal packet when requested.

Southcentral Foundation Family Health Resources can assist in updating your contact information, call (833) 729-4470.

Schedule your child's **BACK-TO-SCHOOL** annual appointments

I'm Ready!



- Immunizations
- Vaccines
- School physicals
- Vision
- Physical exams

Healthy Eating for Aging Well

By Southcentral Foundation Corporate Communications

As we age, our health needs evolve and change with time. Nutrient requirements also shift at each stage of life. Eating healthy is a foundational component of aging well and influences a person's ability to maintain mobility, energy, and strength.

"A healthy diet is among the controllable elements that can help deter age-related illnesses and maintain general well-being as we grow older," Southcentral Foundation Registered Dietitian Keriann Shine shared.

Maintaining a diet that includes balanced meals and nutritious foods increases an Elder's ability to continue to participate in most everyday activities.

Being mindful of the physiological shifts that occur as we age allows individuals to adapt their lifestyles and habits according to their individual abilities and goals. The body naturally changes in composition, resulting in a decrease of muscle and an increase in fat tissue over time. Sensory changes impact smells and tastes and tend to decrease as we get older. Appetite decreases and eating smaller portions to feel satiated is a common occurrence. The general absorption of nutrients also decreases. All of these changes can initiate a decline in getting the basic vitamins and minerals necessary to maintain energy levels.



Myrtle Van Dorn harvests fresh vegetables from the SCF Elder Program Wellness Garden.

Focus on these four quality nutrients to preserve overall good health.



Protein is vital to help keep Elders strong. Traditional foods including salmon, caribou, moose, shellfish, whale, and seal are excellent sources of protein.



Vitamin D supplements of at least 800 IU daily can help maintain bone strength in conjunction with calcium-rich traditional greens, including dandelion, stinging nettles, and currants.

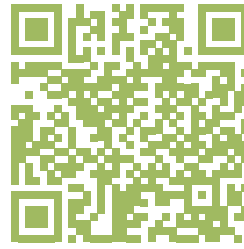


B vitamins are known to maintain energy levels and are abundant in most fruits and vegetables.



Water keeps you hydrated. The dietary recommendation is to aim for at least six and a half cups per day to stay hydrated, assisting in the further breakdown of vitamins and increasing nutrient absorption.

Aging well can mean many things to different people, and being informed is a great way for Elders to achieve wellness in all aspects.



For more information, visit:

southcentralfoundation.com/aging-well
or scan the QR code.

For more information about how to connect with a dietitian, call your primary care provider or the Elder Program at (907) 729-6500.

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>Behavioral Health Consultant 10 a.m.-noon</p> <p>•Shopping 12:30-2 p.m.</p> <p>•Please call the Elder Program at (907) 729-6500 for transportation. Space is limited.</p>	<p>Culture and Traditions 10 a.m.-2 p.m.</p> 	<p>Family Health Resources 10 a.m.-noon</p> <p>Bingo Noon-2 p.m.</p> 	<p>Yupik Drum Group 9-11 a.m.</p> <p>••Health Education and Exercise Noon-2 p.m.</p> <p>••Please call SCF Health Education at (907) 729-2689 for more information.</p> 	<p>Nurse Practitioner Services 10 a.m.-2 p.m.</p> <p>Elder Jam Noon-2 p.m.</p>

SCF Elder Program | 4501 Diplomacy Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99508 | (907) 729-6500

Important Phone Numbers	
Alaska Native Medical Center.....	(907) 563-2662
American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).....	(907) 762-3388
Anchorage Police Department (non-emergency).....	(907) 786-8500
Anchor Rides.....	(907) 343-6543
Cook Inlet Housing Authority.....	(907) 793-3000
Division of Public Assistance.....	(800) 478-7778
Division of Senior and Disabilities Services.....	(800) 478-9996
Food Bank of Alaska.....	(907) 272-3663
People Mover.....	(907) 343-4536
Salvation Army Meals on Wheels.....	(907) 349-0613
Southcentral Foundation.....	(907) 729-4955
SCF Elder Program Event Hotline.....	(907) 729-6588