

Nupuat



A quarterly publication of Chugachmiut, the tribal not-for-profit organization serving the Alaska Native peoples of the Chugach Region.

Winter 2023 Edition

Crew members on an integrated team from Denali Wildland Fire Module and Yukon Fire Crew were working on a tower while on assignment in Delta over the summer. Pictured: Apachi Rivers (underneath tower), Keenan Lacy (on ladder), Gavin Bennett (holding ladder), Ernest David (holding ladder) and Rudolf Smith – Yukon (on top of tower).



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Career Opportunities

Chugachmiut is a rapidly growing 501(c)(3) non-profit agency the Tribal consortium created to promote self-determination to the seven Native communities of the Chugach Region. We are seeking highly motivated, talented candidates to join us on our journey to excellence. At Chugachmiut, you not only start a job but a career that truly makes a difference in the lives of others. We offer robust benefits to full-time employees. Join our team!



Scan this QR code to apply and learn more about our openings.

Key Opportunities Throughout the Region

- Addictions Coordinator (Any Regional Community)
- Behavioral Health Aide (Tatitlek)
- CHA III, IV or CHP Itinerant (Any Regional Community)
- Dental Director (Seward)
- Domestic Violence Regional Coordinator (Any Regional Community)
- Human Resources Director (Anchorage)
- Medical Director (Seward)
- STEP Program Manager (Any Regional Community)
- Tribal Administrator (Nanwalek)
- Wildland Fire and Fuels Intern (Anchorage or Kenai)

Benefits for Full-Time Employees

- Medical and Prescription Insurance – 100% of premiums paid for employees, 50% for eligible dependents
- Dental & Vision plans – 100% of premiums paid for employees, 50% for eligible dependents
- Life Insurance
- Short and Long-Term Disability
- 401(a) Pension Plan
- Voluntary 403(b) TDA with Roth contributions
- Employee Assistance Program
- Aflac Voluntary Supplemental Benefits
- Subsidized Gym Memberships
- Paid time off
- 13 paid Holidays
- Bereavement Leave
- Professional Development Plans

Chugachmiut has a hiring preference for qualified Alaska Native and American Indian applicants pursuant to P.L. 93-638 Indian Self Determination Act. For any questions, please reach out to the HR department at Employment@Chugachmiut.org. See the full list of career opportunities and apply by visiting our website.

APPLY NOW

www.vscyberhosting.com/Chugachmiut

Behavioral Health Crisis Line On Call

Need support or someone to talk to? We are here for you 24/7! Reach out to our Behavioral Health Counselors and Advocates by calling us at the number below.

Chugachmiut Behavioral Health Crisis Line: 1-844-891-0444

We cover counseling, addictions, domestic violence, social services, and more. Your well-being matters, and we're ready to help.

Please share this information – we're just a call away. Quyanaa & Awa'ahdah!

Answered by people who care

Sandy Kleven, LCSW

John Yakanak, BHA III, MSCP

Chugachmiut Community and Family Services



Llangcarwik Recovery Camp in Seward

We are delighted to announce openings for our upcoming two-week Llangcarwik Recovery Camp, taking place from Jan. 22 to Feb. 5, 2024, in the beautiful surroundings of Seward. The Llangcarwik Recovery Camp is a haven for individuals seeking to make positive changes in their lives. Whether facing challenges related to substance abuse or grappling with mental health issues such as anxiety or depression, our camp provides a supportive and empowering environment for transformation.

A promotional graphic for the Llangcarwik Recovery Camp. It features a background image of a large, rustic wooden cabin with a green door and a porch. The text is overlaid on the image. At the top, it says "Ready for something better? Join us at recovery camp!". Below that, the title "Llangcarwik Recovery Camp" is written in large, bold, blue letters. Underneath the title, it says "Jan. 22 - Feb. 5, 2024" with a calendar icon and "Seward" with a location pin icon. Further down, it reads "Llangcarwik - 'A place of awakening' - offers 14 days of holistic wellness in the Chugach Region." At the bottom, it says "It's informative, fun, and a start to a better way of living—holistic, natural, and traditional."/>

Ready for something better? Join us at recovery camp!

Llangcarwik Recovery Camp

Jan. 22 - Feb. 5, 2024 Seward

Llangcarwik - "A place of awakening" - offers 14 days of holistic wellness in the Chugach Region.

It's informative, fun, and a start to a better way of living—holistic, natural, and traditional.

This camp holds a special place in the hearts of those who have completed it, with many returning as mentors and helpers, a testament to the positive impact it can have on one's life.

If you know someone who could benefit from this life-changing experience, we invite you to refer them to us. Your gesture could be the catalyst for a new beginning.

To sign up or inquire further, please reach out to our dedicated team:

- Victoria Clark at 907-252-3343 or Victoriac@chugachmiut.org
- Eydie Flygare at 907-602-8644 or eydief@chugachmiut.org
- Toll-free contact: 800-478-4155

As the new year approaches, let us come together in the spirit of support and encouragement. Join us at the Llangcarwik Recovery Camp and embark on a journey of hope, healing, and transformation.

Burial Assistance Resources

Losing a loved one is one of the most difficult experiences. We updated our Burial Assistance Booklet with information to help families meet their personal obligations. The booklet has information about planning, family tasks, funeral home selection, burial plans and services, handling of estate and administrative matters, terms to know and resources to help with burial expenses.

Resources

- Chugachmiut Burial Assistance Program - Booklet and application are available at www.chugachmiut.org/social-services/general-assistance/ (scan QR code for link). The following are eligibility requirements set by the funding source:
 - The deceased must have resided in a Chugach village/community for a minimum of 6 months prior to passing.
 - Eligibility is determined by income; income documents must be provided.
 - A Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) must be attached to the application. The applicant is ineligible for assistance if a certificate or one of the acceptable documents identified below isn't provided.
 - If a Certificate of Indian Blood Degree is not available, a tribal enrollment letter is sufficient. This could be an official letter or Tribal Identification card from the tribe.
 - Chugachmiut is not allowed to cover travel costs for family or friends to attend the funeral service.
 - Contact us for assistance with the application or with any questions at (800) 478-4155.
- The State of Alaska also has a Burial Assistance Program: dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/gra/default.aspx.
- Chugach Alaska Corporation - The deceased must be a direct shareholder to qualify. Contact Chugach Alaska Corporation Shareholder Services at (907) 563-8866 for more information.
- Veterans Association (VA) Burials and Memorials: choose.va.gov/burials-memorials. See more info below.



About the VA Burials and Memorials

VA takes special care to pay lasting tribute to the memory of Veterans who served and sacrificed and their families. VA meticulously maintains 155 VA national cemeteries in 44 states and Puerto Rico and is working to increase access to accommodate Veterans and eligible family members close to home. Currently, more than 94 percent of Veterans have a burial option in an open VA, state or tribal veterans cemetery located within 75 miles of their home. Check with the cemetery to ensure coverage. Some benefits are also available for Veterans who choose burial in a private cemetery. Veterans with a qualifying discharge are entitled to VA burial benefits. Spouses and dependent children are eligible too, even if they predecease the Veteran. Learn more and apply at: <https://choose.va.gov/burials-memorials>.

Burial in a VA national cemetery

- Opening and closing of the grave for burial of casketed or cremated remains, or placement of cremated remains in an above-ground vault, also called a columbarium
- A government furnished grave liner
- Perpetual care of the gravesite
- A headstone or marker with an inscription
- A burial flag
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate
- A dedicated memorial page on the Veterans Legacy Memorial site where friends and family can upload photos and remembrances

Burial in a private cemetery

- A government headstone, marker, or medallion
- A burial flag
- A Presidential Memorial Certificate
- Some survivors may also be entitled to VA burial allowances as partial reimbursement for the costs of funerals and burials for eligible Veterans

Burial Assistance Resources

Anchorage VA Regional Benefit Office

The Anchorage VA Regional Benefit Office is at the Anchorage VA Medical Center located at 1201 North Muldoon Street, Anchorage, AK 99504. To get help with benefits, call 800-827-1000 toll-free. They are available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET. If you have hearing loss, call TTY: 711. You may also contact Frank (Ric) Epperson at 907-257-4864 or ric.epperson@va.gov with any questions.

Services provided at the Anchorage VA Regional Benefits Office include assistance with:

- Applying for benefits
- Burial claim
- Disability claim
- eBenefits registration
- Education and career counseling
- Education claim
- Family member claim
- Homeless Veterans
- Integrated Disability Evaluation System
- Pre-discharge claim
- Updating direct deposit information
- Veteran Readiness and Employment

Learn more at www.benefits.va.gov/anchorage.

Memorial Day Event by Chugach Arts Council

Memorial Day serves as a poignant occasion for reflecting upon the lives lost in service to our nation. Designated as the last Monday of May, this day stands as a solemn tribute to those who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country, leaving an indelible impact on their families, friends, and communities. In 2024, the Chugach Arts Council is organizing a special event in Whittier to honor and remember these heroes. They extend an open invitation for everyone to contribute names and photos of their cherished ones, ensuring their inclusion in the “roll call” and memorial display.

A focal point of the event will be the remembrance of six courageous men who tragically perished in a helicopter crash on Portage Glacier in 1964 during Operation Helping Hand, undertaken in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake. Notably, the tunnel into Whittier passes through Maynard Mountain, named in honor of one of these brave individuals.

Additionally, the event will spotlight a memorial dedicated to the Alaska Native and Native American individuals who have served in the military. Throughout American history, Alaska Native and Native Americans have steadfastly served our nation’s military, with recent decades showing a disproportionate dedication relative to their population. Examples include Pvt. George Fox (Unanga) from Unalaska (World War II,) and Sgt. David Henry Elisovsky (Aleut) from Cordova (Vietnam).



Pvt. George Fox



Sgt. David Henry Elisovsky

It is crucial to recognize the substantial contributions of women who have made the ultimate sacrifice. They have compiled a special memorial section featuring names and photos of these courageous women.

The Chugach Arts Council invites submissions and encourages participation in any manner you may choose. For submissions and inquiries, please contact Marie Wagner at wagner7design@gmail.com or 623-703-4453.

Realty Department Update

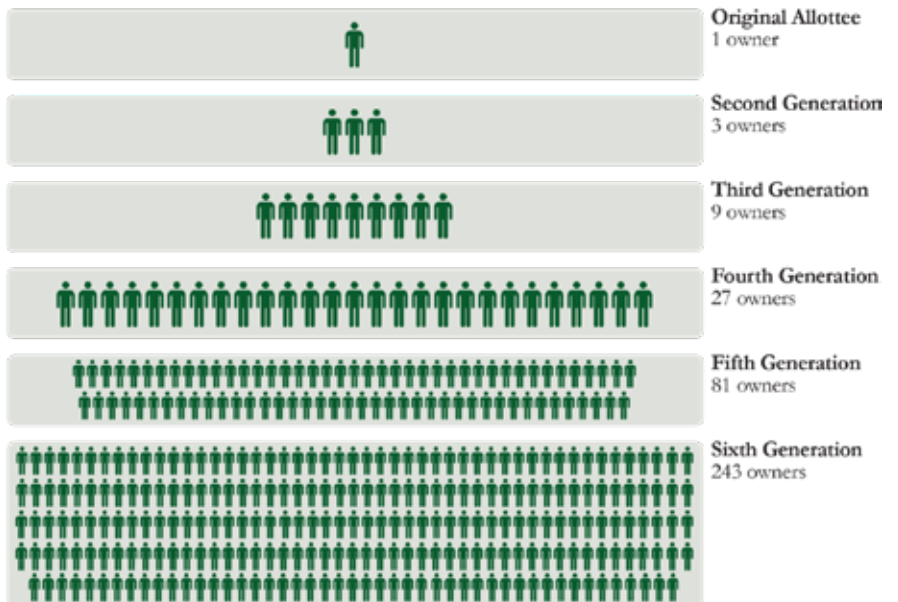
Probate Made Easy: Inheriting and Preserving Your Restricted Properties



Losing a loved one is never easy. However, dealing with the probate process for Restricted Native Allotments and Restricted Townsite Lot owners and their heirs doesn't have to be overwhelming. **Probate** is the legal process that occurs when someone passes away and owns land or other assets, such as bank accounts. A **will**, a legal document providing instructions on how to distribute property and assets, ensures that the deceased's wishes are honored. In the absence of a will, the heirs (those set to inherit) are determined by the laws of the State of Alaska.

Chugachmiut Realty offers a service that involves probating restricted estates, a common transaction transferring ownership of restricted property. If you've lost a loved one, please reach out to our office. Transferring restricted property to heirs requires completing a Federal Probate, and we're here to assist you throughout the process.

Having a completed will is crucial to ensuring your land goes to the intended recipient. It's advisable to identify one person, as this helps prevent future issues with land use. Without a will, the probate process for multiple heirs over time can lead to **fractionation** of land (example at right). When there are numerous owners, it can create challenges for land use, which may often result in frustration and conflicts among family members. The land becomes difficult to use as intended by ancestors unless all owners can reach an agreement.



Graphic courtesy of U.S. Department of the Interior

Alaska Legal Services Corporation provides free legal services for completing wills for eligible Alaska residents. Chugachmiut Realty collaborates closely with Alaska Legal Services to ensure the inheritance of restricted property aligns with the landowner's wishes. Alaska Legal Services' application emphasizes considering the best use of the property if passed along to one person. Hence, selecting one heir who is likely to use, protect, and/or share the property with family members is beneficial.

If you own an interest in a restricted property and need assistance with creating a will or have a certified will to provide, please contact Chugachmiut Realty. While we may not live forever, our land will endure. Ensuring the land is used as intended is a shared responsibility among all restricted landowners.

If you have any questions, contact the Realty Department at realty@chugachmiut.org, 907-562-4155, or toll free 800-478-4155. Learn more about Alaska Legal Services Corporation's resources at www.alsc-law.org.

Kanarlluk Bear Gut Raincoat Workshop

Quyanaa and Awa'ahdah to those who joined us at Kanarlluk Bear Gut Raincoat workshop at the First Alaskans Institute Elders & Youth Conference! This workshop was made possible through funding through Chugachmiut's Accessing Choices in Education (ACE) program. Presenters were June (Simeonoff) Pardue (Sugpiaq/Iñupiaq) and Dawn Randazzo (Sugpiaq/Iñupiaq). They shared about the Kanarlluk revitalization project they participated in last summer in Cordova along with Diane Selanoff (Sugpiaq), Joyce Kompkoff-Peterson (Sugpiaq), and Brooke Mallory (Sugpiaq).



June Pardue demonstrates waterproof stitching



Dawn Randazzo helps youth with stitching



Participants practicing stitching

Resource: Visit the Chugachmiut Heritage Library & Archive to learn more about this subject and more! Go to archive.chugachmiut.org.

2024 Statewide Elders & Youth Council Representatives Elected

Congratulations to Elders and youth representatives who were voted in for First Alaskans Institute's 2024 Statewide Elders & Youth Council! Their roles will encompass gathering feedback and articulating region-specific concerns, contributing innovative ideas for conferences, and generously sharing their invaluable leadership skills. This achievement is a clear demonstration of their commitment to the community and the trust placed in their leadership.

Prince Williams Sound Representatives



Left-right:
Pamela Smith (Eyak), Cordova
Kaden Abbott (Sugpiaq), Anchorage
Samantha Eleshansky (Sugpiaq), Cordova
Cheryl Eleshansky (Sugpiaq), Cordova

Southcentral Representatives



Left-right:
Eugenia Moonin (Sugpiaq),
Nanwalek
Rhoda Moonin (Sugpiaq),
Nanwalek



Imya Hernandez
(Sugpiaq),
Nanwalek

Celebrate 50 Years with Chugachmiut



As Chugachmiut marks its 50th anniversary this year, we invite you to be a part of our celebration. Join the conversation and share your unique stories with us. Whether it's how Chugachmiut has touched your life, influenced your community, or the exceptional services you've experienced, your stories form the heartbeat of our history. Have an achievement or a milestone within Chugachmiut's 50-year journey that you're particularly proud of? We'd love to hear about that too!

Share your memories, experiences, and proud moments here. Your contributions will help us commemorate this special milestone in a way that truly reflects the spirit of our community. Let's come together to honor our past, celebrate the present, and look forward to the future.

Share your memories, stories, photos or videos by emailing media@chugachmiut.org or share at: <https://forms.gle/EX1FF3o6j7hREqA87>.



Scan this QR code for more info

Nunaka: My Village Wins Again!

Exciting news – Nunaka: My Village has clinched the prestigious Gold Medal in the Serious Play Award Program's annual international competition! This victory, the second since its summer release, underscores the game's exceptional quality. Crafted in collaboration with our communities, and proudly presented by the Chugachmiut Heritage Preservation Program, FableVision, and the Chugachmiut Birth to Five Head Start Program, Nunaka is not just a mobile game but an immersive journey into the Alaska Native Sugpiaq culture. It serves as an engaging tool for teaching the Sugt'stun language and is tailored to address crucial school readiness goals for children aged 3 to 5. A heartfelt thanks to the U.S. Department of Education for their generous support, making this endeavor possible.

But the excitement doesn't stop there – Nunaka is now a finalist in the Kidscreen Awards' Best Learning App-Original category! The winners will be unveiled on February 5, 2024, at the Kidscreen Summit.

The Serious Play Awards Program praised Nunaka as “an educational game developed for Preschool Education training cited for excellence in the 2023 International Serious Play Awards Program.”

Don't miss out on the fun – to experience Nunaka: My Village, simply search for it on the Apple and Google Play app stores. Join us on this incredible journey of cultural exploration and early childhood education!



Story Submission from Chugach Regional Writers

Our Beloved Red Salmon By Mandy Wood

“Hah! The red salmon are here?” I meet her excitement with, “Yes!”

The kids have been prepared to play the charade and so the stage is set.

I hadn't seen my mother in what feels like forever although we'd lived with her for the past five or so months. If I'm lucky I'll see her reassuring smile or that knowing spark in her eyes. Alzheimer's has made the connection static. I really miss my mom. The unfair reality is, I lose her a little every day.

It had been a few days and she wouldn't eat. So, I had my husband pull last year's red salmon out of the freezer to fry. He'll later get credit from her for catching this year's first red salmon. Beaming in pride she'll boast loudly even in church, “Nick was qapiranaq and caught the first red.”

Which I would've been embarrassed about if I hadn't been home in bed crying, grieving the loss of someone who is still here but gone. Struggling to accept the pink elephant Emma sees in the room. I told my kids to just agree it is there, too. The transition of being cared for to caring for was bittersweet as I fought to accept reality.

A truly sweet moment came later, when the real first red salmon is caught by my nephew. He brings it in a taasiq to Mom and I see that spark, again.

We take her out to the fish cutting table to cut and clean the red salmon. Her skilled hands slice open head to tail, like she never forgot. I record the moment on my phone and replay it often. Watching it causes a lump in my throat, that I can barely swallow down.

When I watch it now, I'm filled with gratitude for that moment. We had her for a good hour that time. To Mom it was a summer of 30 years ago, with my sister and I shucking ears of corn and eating pineapple chunks. In reality, it was my daughters' faces looking at us, with the smell of frying red salmon wafting through the room just like it did those many years ago.

Back then, my mouth would water walking down from the lake trail smelling Mom's red frying. We would be welcomed home to a house full of aunts, uncles, cousins, and Mom, feasting on our beloved red salmon.

Quyanaa to **Heather O'Domin** for sharing her art (at right) to accompany this submission and to **Mandy Wood**. Mandy is a member of Chugach Regional Writers. She was born and raised in rural Alaska. She is the mother of five and wife of Nicholas for 18 years. She is a recovering alcoholic with a little over four years of sobriety. She has found solace and healing in the arts ranging from writing and painting to earring making. Every day, she braves the cold in her exposure exercise of dipping in the ocean to help fight depression. She wrote this piece in honor of her late mother Alice Greene who had Alzheimer's disease.

Chugach Regional Writers comprises five members who gather weekly to share their writing and receive feedback. They enthusiastically welcome new members who are dedicated to the craft of writing and aspire to publish their work. Meetings take place every week, and newcomers are encouraged to join. For more information, please reach out to Sandra Kleven at sandrak@Chugachmiut.org.



Trust & Land Management Division Update

Denali Wildland Fire Module

The Denali Wildland Fire Module (DWFM) began training and preparations in April and had a very busy season with a variety of projects. They conducted wildland fire fuel mitigation work that included cutting, chipping, and piling brush at Resurrection South Trail. They also cut, chipped, and piled brush and felled trees at Crescent Creek Campground & Boat Launch. They mainly focused on chipping at the Russian River Campground. The Crew also conducted fuel mitigation at Devils Creek. They built tables at Quartz Creek Campground and in Moose Pass. They were later integrated into the Yukon crew.



Trust & Land Management Division Update



Chainsaw Workshop in Nanwalek

We hosted a three-day chainsaw workshop in Nanwalek in December. Quyanaa to the community for their patience in light of weather delays that postponed the workshop. Instructors discussed OSHA Safety requirements involving proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and safe chainsaw bucking, limbing, and felling procedures that will be useful to analyze, identify, and make safe and effective decisions in any given situation. Troubleshooting and maintenance were also covered to help prolong chainsaw life and performance. Participants gained a better understanding of chainsaw operations and safety. Their field capabilities will undoubtedly improve because of their understanding of safe handling practices. Common uses for this course can be integrated into gathering firewood or safely eliminating hazardous trees that pose a threat to life or structures. **Keenan Lacy** and **Gavin Bennett** coordinated the training.



Health Services Division News

November 9th marked the 25th-year work anniversary for **Teresa Swartz**, CMA, from Seward. She is a valuable member of our team, and we are grateful for her continued commitment, perseverance, and the invaluable contributions she has made to our division's success throughout the years!



Left to right: Gala Davis, Teresa Swartz, Melody Wallace, Heather Bardarson, Linda Lynch, Mae Silook and Albi Tatum.

Join the Health Services Team! Growing to Serve

Anchorage

- Advanced Practice Provider Itinerant Pool
- CHA III-P Itinerant Pool
- Dentist Itinerant
- Dental Assistant Itinerant

Chenega

- Health Administrative Assistant
- Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant
- Community Health Aide Trainee (CHAT) to Community Health Aide Practitioner (CHP)

Port Graham

- Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant
- CHAT to CHP

We welcomed Raisa Gust, a Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant, to the team in Nanwalek and welcomed Eric Gardner, a Certified Medical Assistant, to the team in Seward!

See the full list of career opportunities and apply at: <https://www.vscyberhosting.com/Chugachmiut/>. See inside front cover for other opportunities throughout the region.

Seward

- Medical Director
- Dental Director
- CHAP Director
- Village Advanced Practice Provider
- Dental Coordinator/Dental Assistant
- Health Benefits Specialist

Tatitlek

- CHAT to CHP
- Health Administrative Assistant
- Health Administrative Assistant Itinerant

Chugachmiut Regional Health Center

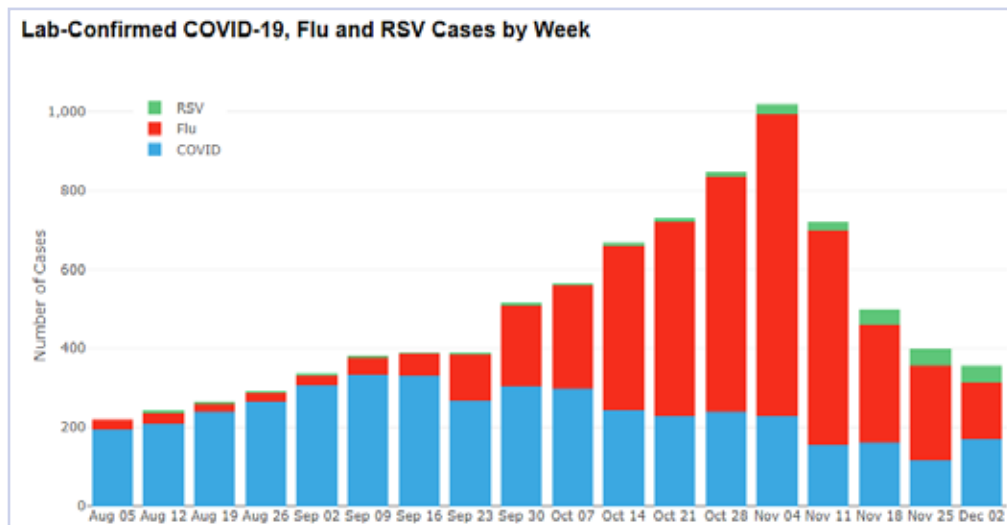


This quarter, we finalized the design for the region's health center, and we anticipate an opening date in January 2025 in Seward.

Health Services Division News

Respiratory Virus Activity

We continue to monitor respiratory virus activity, including influenza, COVID-19, and Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) in Alaska. **Alaska is currently number one in the nation right now for influenza.** The good news is that we know how to effectively curb the spread of these viruses, and we have successfully implemented preventive measures several times over the past couple of years.



Report by Alaska
Department of Health &
Social Services Report

All clinics have the 23/24
COVID-19 vaccines and
flu shots available for
those interested.

Vaccinations

- The new **COVID-19 vaccines** are expected to keep more people from getting seriously ill with the virus through the winter when infections and hospitalizations tend to increase. There will be better protection against severe disease, hospitalization, and death for COVID-19 in the coming months now that newly updated (2023-2024 formula) mRNA COVID vaccines are available. These updated vaccines are for everyone ages 6 months and older.
- All clinics have **flu vaccines** available to cover patients from 6 months and up, and a special high-dose formulation for ages 65 and up.
- The newly approved **RSV vaccines** will be available in December. RSV is an upper respiratory illness that can infect the lungs and cause difficulties breathing, as well as fever and a cough. It can range from very mild to very severe, and is the leading cause of hospitalizations for infants in the U.S. According to the CDC, it is often most serious for infants and children under 5, older adults, pregnant woman, and immunocompromised people.

COVID-19

October was the first month since the start of the pandemic that our region hasn't experienced any positive COVID testing results and we continue to see a significant decrease for COVID from January to December 7, 2023.

Beginning late November, every home in the U.S. became eligible to order four additional free at-home tests.

To order, visit COVIDTests.gov or call 1-800-232-0233 TTY or 1-888-720-7489.



Health Services Division News

Medicaid Redeterminations

Alaska returned to the regular pre-pandemic process of Medicaid annual renewals. When it is your turn for renewal, the state will recheck your eligibility to make sure you still qualify for Medicaid coverage.



Get Ready to Renew!
Be sure you stay covered.
5 things you need to know about your Medicaid Renewal.

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

 **Have Questions?**
For more information and to sign up for email updates with news about renewals, visit our website: medicaidrenewals.alaska.gov
Accommodation and language interpretation available at no cost upon request at 800-478-7778. TDD: Alaska Relay, 711.



There are two steps you need to take to make sure you complete your renewal on time and stay covered:

Step 1: Make sure your contact information is up to date with the Division of Public Assistance so that important information about your coverage gets to you.

Step 2: Check your mail for important information about your coverage. You will receive a letter in the mail for the Division of Public Assistance sometime in the next 12 months. This letter will tell you if your coverage has been renewed, or if a response is needed. If you receive a renewal form in the mail, fill it out as soon as possible and return.

This process is already having a major impact on people. We stand ready to assist anyone who needs help with providing information to the Division of Public Assistance to ensure continued coverage.



Enrollment is open!
Make sure you and your loved ones are covered!

Keep your family healthy and strong.

Open enrollment for Medicare and the Marketplace is here.

Marketplace Enrollment is open until January 15, 2024.

For more information, contact your local health care provider, visit HealthCare.gov, or call 1-800-318-2596.

Health Services Division News

Purchased and Referred Care (PRC)

PRC has been working with HAA's in each community along with patients to attain required Certificate Degree of Indian or Alaska Native Blood (CDIB). The clinics can help with applications and even provide birth certificate assistance. We appreciate all the community members so far that have allowed us to assist them.

Eligible beneficiaries benefits for vision and hearing devices available:

- Corrective Vision Devices - The current maximum amount is \$400 for corrective lenses or frames purchased every two years through the Chugachmiut-preferred Optician. Costs over the maximum shall be the responsibility of the eligible person.
- Hearing Devices - Hearing aid(s) or hearing devices are permitted once every two years, only through ANMC Audiology Clinic. The current not-to-exceed amount is \$2,000 every two years. Costs over the maximum shall be the responsibility of the eligible person.

Prior authorizations are required and must be approved before receiving vision and hearing devices. PRC is considered the payer of last resort, and the use of alternate resources (insurance) is required when such resources are available and accessible to the individual. Chugachmiut PRC funds are limited. Necessary medical services are to be provided by the Chugachmiut Healthcare Providers and/or other IHS or Tribal facilities or providers, such as Alaska Native Medical Center, Southcentral Foundation or Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, except when there is an emergent need for services to prevent death or serious impairment. If you have any questions or wish to ask about eligibility, please contact your local clinic.

MyHealth Enrollment

Join MyHealth and enjoy instant access to your medical records, eliminating the wait for lab results. View immunization records and communicate directly with your healthcare team. We've surpassed our goal of 95 enrollments and now aim for 150. Take control of your health—sign up at your local clinic today!



Dental Services

We have dedicated our efforts to the recruitment of new dental team members to ensure consistent dental services across the region. We are delighted to announce that interviews have been conducted successfully, and in 2024, we will welcome an additional dentist and dental assistant to our team! Stay tuned for the 2024 dental service visit schedule in our upcoming newsletter update.

Patient Rights and Responsibilities

We at Chugachmiut want you to know about Patient Rights and Responsibilities, so you can make the best choices about your health and receive the highest quality of health care possible. Posters are now displayed in our health facilities and brochures are also available.

Find the Patient Rights and Responsibilities online at: www.chugachmiut.org/patient-rights-responsibilities.



Scan this QR code to view online

Health Services Division News

Preventive Care - Cancer Screenings

Alaska Native men and women face a higher risk of cancer diagnosis in their lifetime. However, the good news is that early detection and prevention are powerful tools against breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer. Regular screenings, immunizations, and understanding your family history are the first steps towards a healthier future. Screening is not just about finding problems – it's about preventing them. Embracing preventive care is a positive and proactive choice for your well-being. By getting recommended screenings, you empower yourself to detect and address health concerns early, increasing the likelihood of successful treatment.

Cancer Screening Guidelines

Your health is a priority, and preventive care screenings play a vital role in safeguarding it. Let's take proactive steps together – because early detection saves lives and ensures a brighter, healthier tomorrow.

1. Colon Cancer:

- Target Audience: Men & Women
- Starting Age: 40
- Screening Exam: Colon cancer screening
- Recommendation: Regular screenings can prevent 4 out of 5 colorectal cancer cases.

2. Lung Cancer:

- Target Audience: Men & Women
- Age Range: 50-80
- Criteria: Current smoker or history of smoking
- Screening: Low-dose CT scan annually
- Statistics: Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide.

3. Breast Cancer:

- Target Audience: Women
- Starting Age: 40
- Screening: Mammogram every 1-2 years
- Risk: One in eight women in the U.S. affected by breast cancer
- Importance: Early detection improves treatment success.

4. Cervical Cancer:

- Target Audience: Women
- Starting Age: 21
- Screening: Pap smear every 3-5 years
- Considerations: Frequency may vary based on factors like multiple sex partners, tobacco use, HPV, and previous abnormal Pap.
- Impact: Pap test significantly reduced cervical cancer death rates.

5. Prostate Cancer:

- Target Audience: Men
- Starting Age: 40 (if recommended)
- Screening: Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) blood test and digital rectum exam
- Discussion: Consult with a healthcare provider for personalized advice.
- Statistics: About 1 in 8 men diagnosed with prostate cancer during their lifetime.

Important Notes About Cancer Screenings

- If a close relative has cancer, talk to your local provider. You may need additional exams to start screening earlier or have exams more frequently than listed above.
- Find and treat cancer early! You are important.
- Survival rates improve when cancer is detected and treated early.

Health Services Division News

Diabetes Program

November was National Diabetes Awareness Month. Here is some information and resources.

What is diabetes? Diabetes means your blood sugar is too high. Your blood always has some sugar in it. Your body needs sugar for energy to keep going, but too much sugar in the blood is not good for your health.

What is pre-diabetes? Pre-diabetes means your blood sugar levels are higher than normal but not enough for diabetes.

- People with pre-diabetes are at higher risk for getting type 2 diabetes and heart disease.
- You can reduce your risk of getting diabetes. You may be able to have normal blood sugar levels again. This may happen if you lose a small amount of weight by eating healthy and being more physically active.

What is type 2 diabetes? People get type 2 diabetes because the cells in their muscles, liver, and fat do not use insulin properly. Overtime, the body also cannot make enough insulin. This leads to high blood sugar. Having high blood sugar for some time can lead to serious problems with your eyes, heart, kidneys, and nerves. [Type 2 diabetes is the most common type in Alaska Native and American Indian people.](#) This type of diabetes can happen at any age, even in children.

What factors increase my risk for getting pre-diabetes and type 2 diabetes?

- Being physically inactive
- Having a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- Having the kind of diabetes which can happen during pregnancy
- Being overweight

What are the signs of type 2 diabetes? Signs can be severe, very mild or none at all. This depends on how high blood sugars have become. Look for these signs: increased thirst, increased hunger, fatigue (feeling tired most of the time, increased urination, unexplained weight loss, and blurred vision.

How can I find out if I have pre-diabetes or diabetes? A blood test to check your blood sugar will show if you have pre-diabetes or diabetes. Ask your health care provider about getting tested and where you can get more information.

Can type 2 diabetes be managed? Yes. Taking care of your diabetes every day will help keep your blood sugar in a healthy range and it will help you prevent problems that diabetes can cause over the years.

Where can I get help with pre-diabetes and diabetes?

- Your health care team (doctor, nurse, diabetes educator, dietitian, psychologist, fitness coach, social worker) can help you.
- Talk with them about diabetes. They can help you make a physical activity and healthy eating plan that will work for you. Many people also need medication to treat diabetes.
- Get help from others. Talk with your family and friends and ask for support.

If you have any questions, contact [Joseph Nyholm, MS, RDN, Registered Dietitian/Diabetes Program Coordinator](#), at JosephN@Chugachmiut.org.



Chugachmiut offers a wide range of preventative care services, addressing issues such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular interventions. The State of Alaska provides a selection of free preventative programs through **Fresh Start** (freshstart.alaska.gov) that you can complete online or over the phone at your own pace, regardless of your location. Find the program that's right for you or someone you know. For those who prefer in-person learning, you can also connect with your local clinic to arrange a preventative care-focused appointment.

Health Services Division News

Community Health Aide Program

We are thrilled to share the latest achievements and aspirations of our dedicated health aides. From successful certifications to ongoing training and future ambitions, our team is committed to enhancing healthcare in our communities. Here's a glimpse of recent accomplishments and future endeavors:

- **Tania Romanoff, CHA-I**, from Nanwalek was successfully certified as a CHA-I and completed her Session II training in October. She is working on her post session learning needs for her to be certified as a CHA-II. Once she is a CHA-II, she will be able to be on-call in her community in addition to providing expanded services within her scope.
- **Betty Howard, CHP**, will attend the Advanced Diabetes Course in Anchorage in December and will be traveling to Seward to complete biennial skills training required for continued certification this quarter. These comprehensive skills validations are now required every 2 years before a health aide can recertify.
- **Tania McMullen, CHA-IV**, from Port Graham has expressed a desire to obtain her CHA-Practitioner certification and will travel to Seward for preceptorship to get certified as a Community Health Aide Practitioner (CHP) this quarter.
- **Melonie Kashevarof, CHA-III**, from Chenega attended an EMT-1 refresher course in Anchorage hosted by Southcentral Foundation in November and successfully completed her EMT-1 renewal.
- **Emerson Kvasnikoff, CHA-IV**, from Nanwalek has also expressed his interest in furthering his certification to a Practitioner and we hope to be able to arrange for his preceptorship during the 2nd quarter of FY24.

2023 Christmas Card Design Contest

Cama'i! Quyanaa and Awa'ahdah to those who entered the 2023 Christmas Card Design Contest. Congratulations to Levi McMullen of Port Graham – Grand Prize Winner of the 2023 Christmas Card Design Contest! Congratulations to runners up Jonah McMullen of Port Graham and Antone Ukatish of Nanwalek!

Grand Prize Winner!



Drawing by **Levi McMullen** (age 11)

Runners Up!



Drawing by
Jonah McMullen
(age 8)



Bidarki card by
Antone Ukatish

Employee Spotlight

Alison “Ali” Smith

Ali Smith was born and raised in Seward. She is grateful to experience small-town Alaska living, which instilled in her a fierce independence and love for the outdoors. She obtained her license as a massage therapist in Hawaii in 2007. In 2015, she began her journey into allopathic health care by first becoming an EMT in Colorado. She then attended San Juan College’s competitive nursing program in New Mexico and had first-hand trauma experience by training in the intensive care unit during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ali is passionate about health and fitness. She and her partner love outdoor activities, like snowboarding, split boarding, hiking, fat tire biking, cross-country skiing, and camping.

Ali joined Chugachmiut in 2022 as a Village RN Case Manager. She works directly with Community Health Aides, administrators and providers, and coordinates care for clients who live in Nanwalek, Port Graham, Tatitlek and Chenega. She travels regularly with Amy Velsko, NP, to provide clinic nursing and case management services. The most rewarding part of her job is the connections she’s made with colleagues at Chugachmiut and ANTHC. She says, “Whether it be through the case manager’s committee, of which I am acting chair, or providing direct patient care in the clinic, my job is always exciting and challenging.”

Ali says, “It may surprise people to know that I have experienced homelessness and have a heart for those suffering from addiction.” She currently provides insight to a panel of tribal health medical providers from across the nation who are working to improve substance abuse treatment for American Indian/Alaskan Native peoples.



At left: Ali is skiing with her mom from their house to school. At middle: Her mom threw a “Dare” themed birthday party, which is one reason she loves playing games and planning activities. At right: Ali with partner, Julianne.

Money Monday Newsletter

The Money Monday newsletter is a weekly publication by the Chugachmiut Grants Department that highlights relevant and current funding opportunities. It provides an overview of the grants in a wide range of areas including healthcare, infrastructure, natural resource management, heritage preservation, economic development, and more. The Grants Department carefully curates the list and only includes opportunities that are of potential interest to communities in the region. The featured grant opportunities have application deadlines set at least 30 days in advance, allowing ample time for communities to prepare and submit competitive applications. To receive the Money Monday newsletter in your email, subscribe by contacting us at grants@chugachmiut.org or call 907-562-4155 and ask for Victoria.

To access the newsletter, visit www.chugachmiut.org or check our Facebook page.



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A seven-member Board of Directors governs Chugachmiut; each board member selected by their tribal government. The Board of Directors appoints the Executive Director who manages the day-to-day operations of the organization.

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Executive Director

Nupuat Newsletter - Call for Submissions

Have a story, essay, or poetry to share? Have some suggested topics or feedback for our newsletter? We welcome submissions from Tribal/community members, councils and employees. To submit ideas, articles, stories, poetry, pictures for use in the Nupuat, please email to media@Chugachmiut.org.