

# Nupuat

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



# Chugachmiut

Spring 2026 Edition

2026 Chugach Region Language Summit, page 8



© Bjørn Olson

Elders, youth, educators and language bearers gather during the 2026 Chugach Region Language Summit to strengthen and celebrate the Sugt’stun and dAXunhyuu (Eyak) languages and expand the circle of language learning. Photo by Bjørn Olson.

**Front row** (left–right): Jocelyn Joseph; Jamie Mosquito II; Nehemiah Dumont; Damian George; Shane Moonin; Savior Hernandez; Brianna “Breezy” Scott; Sophia McMullen; Aurelia Hetrick; Mia Wallace-Hayes. **Middle row** (left–right): Angelina *Kalunka* Roehl; Dorie Wassile; Lillian Elvsaa; Bernadine Atchison; William “Chief Bill” Smith; Ephimia Kvasnikoff (behind Chief Bill and Diane); Diane Selanoff; Patrick Selanoff; Charlie Moonin; Eugenia Moonin; Rhoda Moonin; John Moonin. **Back row** (left–right): Paul Paasaa McDonogh; Millie Taylor; Amanda Mendoza; Naomi McMullen; Kim Barhaug; Hayley Norris; Shyla Krukoff; Heather Sauyaq Gordon; Garrett Swenson; Pam Smith; Sandra Kleven; Alicia Ambrosio; Marissa Vinberg; Joshua Vantrease; Malia Acovak; Ephim Moonin, Jr.; Sarah Schuh; Rachel Blakeslee.

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# Careers at Chugachmiut: Benefits & Opportunities

Build a meaningful career with a team dedicated to supporting self-determination, strengthening communities, and making a positive impact every day. Chugachmiut offers a mission-focused, team-oriented workplace and a comprehensive benefits package for full-time, permanent employees. Our benefits support your health, financial future, and overall well-being so you can thrive both personally and professionally.

## Full-Time Permanent Employee Benefits Highlights

### Retirement

- 401(a) Profit Sharing Plan – Chugachmiut contributes 8% of the employee’s gross salary per year
- 403(b) Voluntary Tax-Deferred Annuity Plan with Roth provision – options for pre-tax and after-tax contributions

### Medical & Prescription Insurance

- Chugachmiut pays 100% of premiums for employees and 50% for eligible dependents
- 17 different health plans to choose from

### Dental & Vision Insurance

- Chugachmiut pays 100% of premiums for employee dental & vision and 50% for eligible dependents

### Disability Insurance (Short & Long Term)

- Chugachmiut pays 100% of premiums for disability insurance for the employee

### Life Insurance & Support Services

- Life insurance coverage of 2.5x gross salary up to \$400,000
- Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

### And more!

- 13 paid holidays
- Personal leave
- Aflac supplemental benefits
- Subsidized gym memberships
- Plus, additional offerings that support work-life balance

### Ready to Join Our Team? Apply Now!

From entry-level to specialized, we offer positions across our region in health care, behavioral health and family services, Head Start, finance/administration, public safety, and seasonal wildland fire—based in hub communities like Anchorage and Seward, as well as village and itinerant roles that serve multiple communities. To review current openings and submit your application, visit: [www.chugachmiut.org/jobs](http://www.chugachmiut.org/jobs).

### Equal Opportunity Employer & Native Preference

Chugachmiut is an equal opportunity employer. We recruit, employ, train, compensate, and promote without regard to race, religion, creed, color, national origin, age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, veteran status, or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state, or local law.

*Chugachmiut has a hiring preference for qualified Alaska Native and American Indian applicants pursuant to P.L. 93-638 Indian Self-Determination Act.*

DISCLAIMER: This overview provides a summary of Chugachmiut employee benefits but does not cover all details. In case of any discrepancies, the official documents will take precedence. For more information or clarification regarding benefits for full-time, part-time, or itinerant employees, please contact us below.



Scan QR code for link

**Apply at: [www.chugachmiut.org/jobs](http://www.chugachmiut.org/jobs)**

Please contact us with any questions about this opening at (907) 562-4155 or [employment@chugachmiut.org](mailto:employment@chugachmiut.org).

# 2026 Wildland Firefighting Opportunities

Chugachmiut has been a nationally recognized partner in wildland firefighting since 1998. Established in May 2005 as a Type II Hand Crew, the Yukon Fire Crew received Initial-Attack status in 2006. Our crews are trained and ready to support wildfire response across Alaska and the United States, and they also complete fuels reduction projects that help lower wildfire risk in priority areas. Recruitment is now open for the 2026 season. These positions offer hands-on training, teamwork, and meaningful work in support of wildfire response and prevention.

## Project Crew

- Entry Level Crewmember

## Denali Suppression Module

- Assistant Module Leader
- Squad Boss
- Crewmember FFT2

## Yukon Fire Crew

- Superintendent
- Assistant Superintendent
- Squad Boss
- Crewmember FFT2



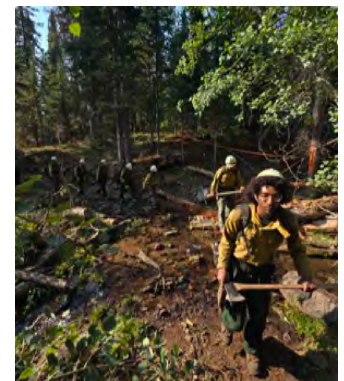
*Scenes from the line: Chugachmiut wildland firefighters on assignment.*



Photos by Aaron Kozevnikoff



Photos by Antone Ukatish



Photos by Robert Lacy



# Ukut Ilanka Parents as Teachers Program

Chugachmiut Birth to Five Tribal Home Visiting Program is excited to announce that we have chosen a new name that represents the communities and families we serve: Ukut Ilanka Parents as Teachers!

“Ukut Ilanka” in Sugt’stun reflects the core of our work by honoring family, identity, belonging, and the strong bonds that nurture our youngest children. The phrase means “This is my family.” Family is who we serve and why we do this work. Family is a child’s first teacher, their first sense of belonging, and where identity begins.

As our home visiting program expands across five communities, we are proud to highlight our Seward program, which also serves Chenega and Tatitlek. Our Family Visitors are currently assisting 10 enrolled families, with 13 children from pregnancy to age five. Each visit helps empower parents as their child’s first teacher, promotes healthy development, and lays a strong foundation for early learning.

Our Seward team actively reaches out to families through community partnerships, local events, and family referrals. Sharing information about home visiting helps ensure families know support is available from pregnancy through the early years.



Children participate in a bird-watching activity in Seward as part of the Ukut Ilanka Parents as Teachers program.

Besides family visits, the Seward program hosts events that promote connection, learning, and fun, such as community baby showers, car seat safety workshops, baby wearing and birthing classes, birding group outings, nighttime tide pooling, pizza making in Tatitlek, taco night in Chenega, and visits to the Children’s Museum and SeaLife Center. Check out some of our program activities below.



Mothers in Seward practice baby wearing and safe back-carry wrapping.



Families in Chenega enjoy gingerbread house decorating and taco night together.



Families in Tatitlek prepare pizzas together during a family program activity.

# Ukuk Ilanka Parents as Teachers Program, cont'd.



Families explore marine life during a nighttime tide pooling activity in Seward.



Families learn proper car seat installation and safety in Seward.



Families connect and learn during the Qutekcaq Tribe's Healthy Lifestyles Gathering.

In Valdez and Cordova, we are expanding home visiting services by hiring staff and enrolling families. New staff onboarding has already begun in Valdez, and we look forward to welcoming more families and growing together in our communities.

To sign up for the **Ukuk Ilanka Parents as Teachers Program** or learn more about services in your community, contact us at (907) 248-5009 or [PAT@chugachmiut.org](mailto:PAT@chugachmiut.org).



Scan QR code for link

Learn more at: [www.chugachmiut.org/social-services/head-start](http://www.chugachmiut.org/social-services/head-start).

## Scholarship Opportunities and Vocational Support

Cama'ii! Applications are now open for Chugachmiut's Higher Education Scholarship for the Fall 2026 semester. This scholarship supports eligible Tribal members who are pursuing college, university, or vocational training.

To apply, you must:

- Be 17 or older
- Have a high school diploma or GED
- Be a shareholder or descendant of Chugach Alaska Corporation

Please share this opportunity with students, parents, and future scholars in your life.

**Application deadline:** June 30, 2026 (Fall 2026 semester)

**Apply online:** [www.chugachmiut.org/higher-education-scholarship](http://www.chugachmiut.org/higher-education-scholarship)

Questions or need help? Email [477application@chugachmiut.org](mailto:477application@chugachmiut.org) or call (907) 562-4155.

Chugachmiut

### Higher Education Scholarship

Chugachmiut's Higher Education Scholarship are available for university and vocational training.

**Contact:**  
(907) 562-4155  
[477application@chugachmiut.org](mailto:477application@chugachmiut.org)

**Deadline June 30**

Apply at: [chugachmiut.org/higher-education-scholarship](http://chugachmiut.org/higher-education-scholarship)

# New Study Highlights Multi-Benefit Fuel Breaks

**Nathan Lojewski**, Forestry Director at Chugachmiut, is a co-author of a newly published article in *iScience* (January 16, 2026) on innovative fuel break strategies to help northern and boreal communities adapt to increasing wildfire risk. The paper, “Mitigating Increasing Wildfire Risk Through Fuel Break Innovations,” explains that fuel breaks are most effective when they are designed for local conditions, reflect community priorities, and are planned for the long term as part of a broader wildfire resilience approach.

While fuel breaks are often viewed through a wildfire suppression lens, the study highlights their potential as multi-purpose community infrastructure. In practice, that can mean pairing fuel break planning with community goals, such as trails and recreation, subsistence gathering areas, berry habitat enhancement, and protection of infrastructure like roads, airstrips, and development near communities.

As Nathan shared, the working group reframed the conversation around fuel breaks as community infrastructure, not just a fire tool. “The fuel breaks are important community infrastructure. Previously, we put them in purely from a fire perspective. This group got together and asked, ‘Can we do something more than just fire?’” Lojewski said. “Yes, there are other things you can do, like put in a trail, a subsistence gathering spot, or you might need more sunlight for berries.”

The study also notes that fuel breaks require ongoing maintenance to stay effective. Designing them with additional community uses in mind may help encourage shared stewardship over time.

Read the article: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.isci.2025.114391>.



The team developed practical tools for community planning, including a hands-on map activity with hexagon-style cards to identify priorities such as trails, wood gathering, berry habitat, infrastructure, and fuel break placement. A step-by-step guide also supports locally informed fuel break planning.

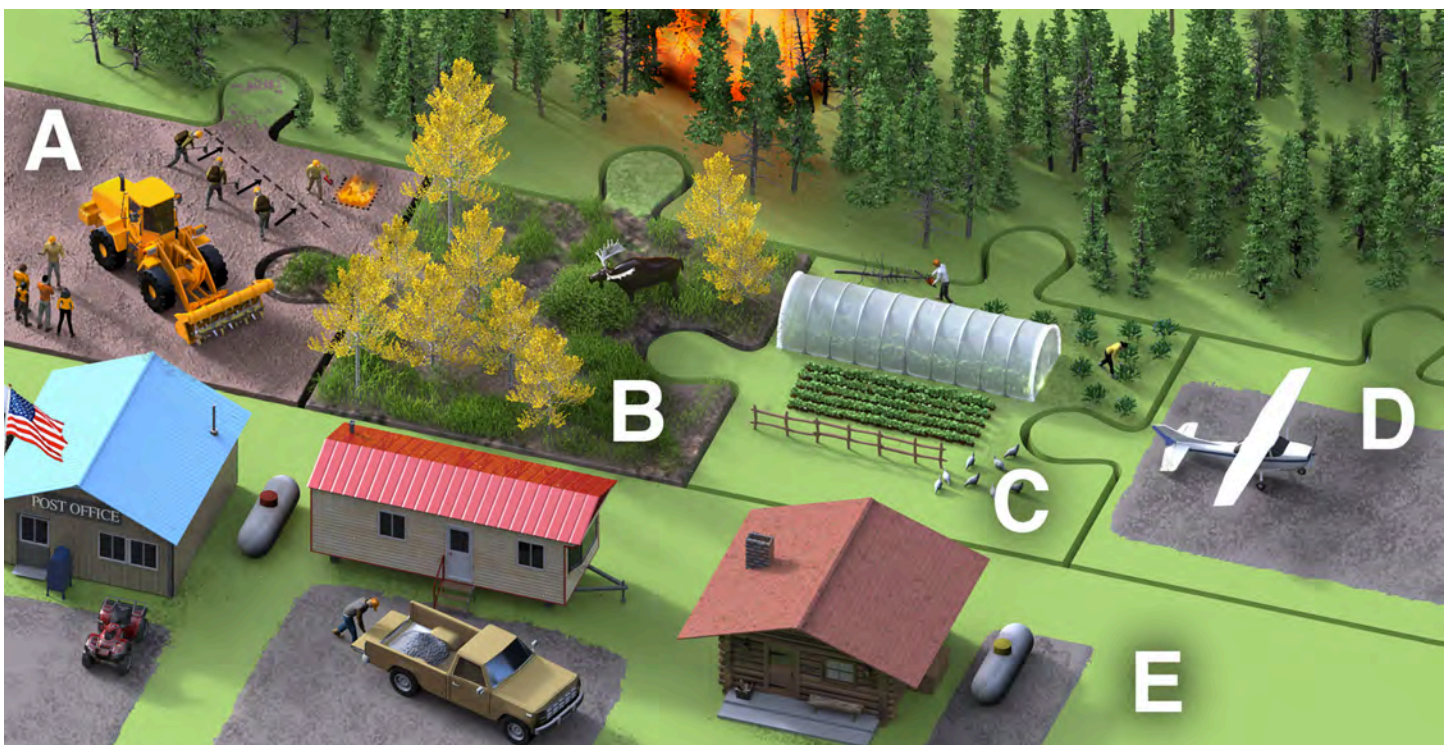


Illustration from the *iScience* article showing four fuel break planning scenarios: fire management, ecological restoration, food and subsistence resources, and infrastructure or recreation, all centered on wildfire risk reduction.

# Adventure Therapy Camp in Seward

Chugachmiut's Adventure Therapy Camp will take place in Seward on July 19–25. The camp will offer a week of outdoor experiences, skill-building, and supportive connection in a safe and encouraging environment.

Adventure Therapy combines time outdoors with guided activities designed to help youth build confidence, strengthen communication skills, and develop healthy coping strategies. Through hands-on experiences and group-based activities, participants will have opportunities to challenge themselves, work as a team, and reflect on personal growth.

The camp is open to youth ages 12–17 who currently live in Nanwalek, Seward, Port Graham, Chenega, or Tatitlek. Travel, lodging, food, and gear will be provided. Space may be limited, and registration is required by July 1. We look forward to offering this opportunity for youth to connect, grow, and experience the outdoors together this summer.

Contact Becks Jacobs, LPC-S, at [BecksJ@chugachmiut.org](mailto:BecksJ@chugachmiut.org), (907) 334-0135, or toll-free at (800) 478-4155. Register at: <https://chugachmiut.jotform.com/260626243977869>.



Scan QR code for link

# Llangarwik Recovery Camp: Healing Together

Llangarwik Recovery Camp will be held in Soldotna, May 3–18, 2026. If you are facing alcoholism, addiction, depression, anxiety, or trauma, you do not have to do it alone. Join us for two weeks of healing and wellness that combine proven approaches with meditation, art, crafts, singing, games, and time on the land. Recovery Camp offers a safe and supportive space to begin your healing journey.

To attend, pick up an application at your Behavioral Health office or your local clinic, or by contacting: **Alicia Ambrosio** at (907) 334-0157, (800) 478-4155 toll-free, or [AliciaA@chugachmiut.org](mailto:AliciaA@chugachmiut.org). Upcoming Camp: August 11–24, 2026, Soldotna



# Applications Open - Housing Improvement Program



**Deadline: November 3, 2026**

Applications are open for Chugachmiut's Housing Improvement Program (HIP), a Bureau of Indian Affairs grant program that helps eligible American Indian and Alaska Native individuals and families who lack access to safe, standard housing. To qualify, household income must be at or below 150% of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines. HIP may provide help with home repair, renovation, or replacement for modest homes, as well as down payment assistance for a new home.

Apply by November 3, 2026 at [www.chugachmiut.org/capacity-building/land-use-planning](http://www.chugachmiut.org/capacity-building/land-use-planning). For more info, contact **Georgina Sumstad**, Executive Assistant, at [georgina@chugachmiut.org](mailto:georgina@chugachmiut.org).

# 2026 Chugach Region Language Summit

For the third year, Chugachmiut brought together language bearers, learners, teachers, and youth for the annual Chugach Region Language Summit, continuing a growing regional effort to strengthen and sustain our Native languages. The 2026 theme, “Our Language, Our Legacies: Expanding Our Language Circle,” reflected a commitment to widening the circle of people engaged in language learning and teaching. Together, participants shared knowledge, celebrated progress, and explored ways to support the long-term vitality of Sugt’stun and dAXunhyuu (Eyak) in the Chugach region.



Breakout discussion. Photo by Millie Taylor

As in past years, the summit emphasized learning across generations. Participants took part in cultural activities, song workshops, storytelling, and language-learning exercises designed to strengthen confidence and connection with the language. A Sugt’stun song workshop and practice sessions gave participants the opportunity to learn together, while interactive activities, including dance and a Sugt’stun “Hokey Pokey,” brought energy and laughter to the group.

Dedicated breakout sessions created space for Elders, youth, and other participants to share perspectives and experiences. On the second day, the agenda shifted at the request of participants, allowing breakout sessions to continue with storytelling from both the male and female sides. These conversations highlighted the importance of mentorship, listening to community knowledge, and creating welcoming pathways for new learners. In at least one Elder breakout group, the discussion was especially moving, reflecting how language work can also be healing.



Elder breakout discussion. Photo by Angela Gonzalez



Participants play a language game. Photo by Angela Gonzalez

During the youth panel, students spoke thoughtfully about why language and culture matter to them and what they hope to carry forward. One youth shared, “It is up to us. We can do it in the near future,” while another said they want to “be closer to Elders, learn more and pass unto my kids.” Youth also spoke about their learning goals, including wanting “to be able to speak fluently in Sugt’stun,” and, simply, “Teach my kids.” Together, their reflections showed how strongly youth connect language learning with responsibility, identity, and future generations.

# 2026 Chugach Region Language Summit



Photos by Millie Taylor



One highlight of the summit was a film screening featuring *Our Languages, Our Legacies*, a movie created from the 2025 OLOL gathering, along with *Sur de Bout de la Langue (On the Tip of Our Tongue)*, which explores Eyak language revitalization. These screenings sparked thoughtful conversation about shared challenges, successes, and the ongoing work of language renewal.

The summit also welcomed videographer **Bjørn Olson**, who recorded breakout sessions on the first day and, on the second day, interviewed Elders, participants, and youth. He is creating a new film that will reflect their responses and experiences from the summit.

Additional activities included Native Youth Olympics demonstrations and breakout sessions on cultural education resources such as the Identity Project and Culture Kits. Participants also heard updates on regional language grants and ongoing projects. Paul introduced partner organizations involved in the summit and shared information about their support and educational grant opportunities.

This year, the summit also welcomed new partners from the Bristol Bay Foundation, the Kenai Mountains Turnagain Arm National Heritage Corridor, and Project GRAD Kenai Peninsula. Staff from each organization are building relationships with communities across the region as they begin multi-year partnerships with Chugachmiut in support of youth from Chugach region communities.

At its heart, the summit remains a gathering centered on relationships between Elders, speakers, teachers, apprentices, and young learners. By bringing these voices together, the Chugach Region Language Summit helps ensure that the region's languages continue to be heard, spoken, and passed on to future generations.



Team building activities. Photo by Angelina Roehl



Photo by Angela Gonzalez



Photo by Angela Gonzalez



Photo by Millie Taylor

# Health Services Division News

## Team Highlights

### Welcoming New Team Members

To support continued service coverage and reliable healthcare delivery across the region, we have been actively recruiting for critical roles. We're pleased to welcome new team members:

- **Sarah Spanos**, Inventory Support Specialist
- **Seneca Wood**, Health Administrative Assistant
- **Priscilla Susook**, Health Administrative Assistant
- **Beth Kinagak**, Health Administrative Assistant
- **Destinee Foxglove**, Itinerant CHA-III

## Annual Health Fair Events

With spring approaching, we are planning a series of community health fair events focused on wellness education, healthy nutrition, balanced portion sizes, and meal preparation.

- In **Tatitlek** and **Chenega**, we are partnering with Alyeska Pipeline to bring the traveling health fair. The health fairs have been postponed. We will announce new dates once they are rescheduled.
- In **Seward**, the Health Services Division will be at the community health fair on May 23, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. In addition, primary health event activities will take place at Qutekcaq Native Tribe's Annual Healthy Lifestyles Picnic on June 6, from 2 to 5 p.m. This event provides an opportunity to connect with community members and promote healthy lifestyle activities and wellness resources.
- Health fairs are planned for August 4 in **Port Graham** and August 6 in **Nanwalek**. The Health Services Division and the Community and Family Services Division will work together, in partnership with external stakeholders, to bring engaging, fun, and educational health events to Kachemak Bay communities. Planned partners include the Homer Farmers Market, the ANTHC Environmental Health team, and others to help make the events meaningful and beneficial for all ages.

### Upcoming Health Fairs

#### Seward

May 23

Community Health Fair,  
AVTEC Gym

June 6

Annual Healthy Lifestyles

#### Port Graham

August 4

#### Nanwalek

August 6

#### Tatitlek & Chenega

\*TBD

## Emergency Medical Services Training Update

EMS Training Officer Robert Bowler has been actively planning his training calendar to align with community needs while continuing to support regional emergency response training and preparedness. We are grateful for this continued investment in local training and capacity-building, which strengthens emergency response and helps keep our communities safe.

Community	Training
Chenega	April 6-11
Tatitlek	June 1-7
Nanwalek	June 15-20

### Emergency Preparedness: Keeping Our Communities Ready

In our last newsletter, we shared tips to help households prepare for emergencies, including severe weather, power outages, and travel disruptions. Taking time to get ready at home can help families, Elders, and neighbors stay safer when conditions change quickly.

Spring is a good time to **review household emergency plans and supplies**. Households should check expiration dates on stored food, medications, and batteries, replace or rotate items as needed, and ensure flashlights, headlamps, and battery packs are working properly. It also helps to keep important documents and medication lists current and easily accessible.

# Health Services Division News

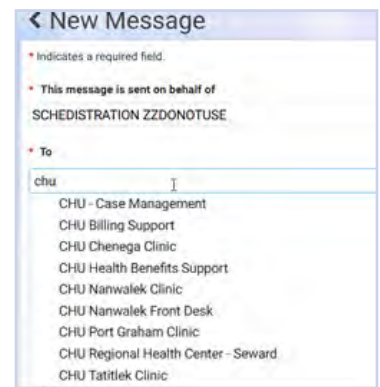
Families should **review their household emergency plans** together. Discussing in advance where to gather if separated, who will check on Elders and neighbors, and how to communicate if phone or internet service is down can make a big difference during an emergency.

Community partnerships also play a vital role in preparedness. Local tribal councils, Chugachmiut, the State of Alaska, and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Environmental Health team all provide resources and guidance to improve emergency readiness and response.

**Preparedness is an act of care.** By maintaining supplies, reviewing plans, and staying vigilant for each other, we can help build safe, prepared, and resilient communities. If you need assistance with medical emergency preparedness or have questions about medications, please contact your local clinic.

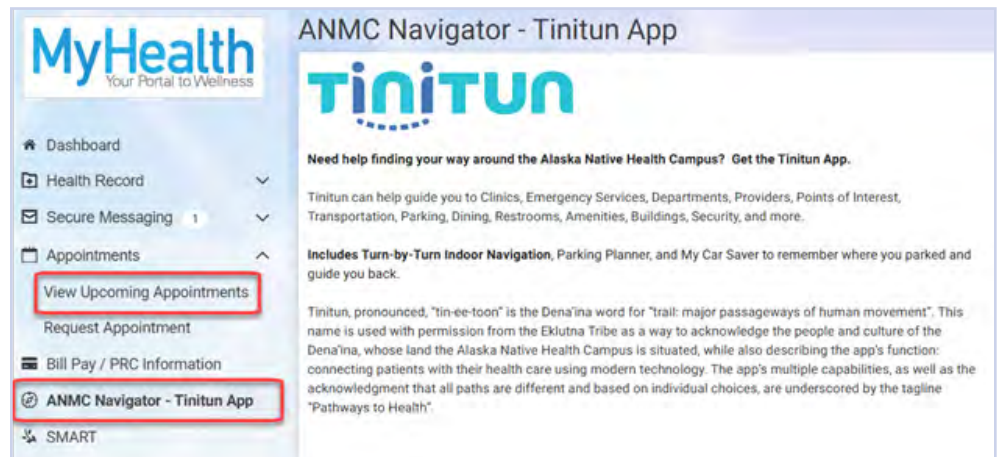
## MyHealth Patient Portal: Messaging, Appointments, and Tinitun Access

**MyHealth Portal Messaging** has recently been updated to make it easier for patients to communicate with their care team. In the Messaging feature, type CHU to view available options, then select the one that best fits your needs for secure, confidential communication about questions, care coordination, and other needs.



Patients can also use the **Appointments** feature in MyHealth to request, cancel, or reschedule appointments. Simply choose the option that best matches your location and complete the form.

For patients traveling to Anchorage, MyHealth provides easy access to **Tinitun**, the ANMC wayfinding app. It offers directions across the Alaska Native Health Campus, and can help users find clinics, emergency services, providers, parking, dining, restrooms, amenities, and more. Look for “Tinitun” in the App Store or Google Play.



## Your Voice Matters: We Want to Hear from You!

Patient satisfaction surveys help us understand the experiences of the people we serve. They give patients a confidential way to share feedback about their care, provider communication, clinic services, and overall visits. Responses show what is working well, where improvements are needed, and how staff are providing outstanding care. Please consider completing the confidential survey at the end of your appointment on an iPad or by scanning the QR code with your smartphone. Your feedback helps healthcare teams improve services and provide the best possible care for patients and families. Quyanaa!



# Health Services Division News

## Health Education: Monthly Health Focus

We link clinical quality measures to health observance and recognition months to provide timely education, resources, and support for staff and community members. We highlight a health topic that helps strengthen prevention, early intervention, and overall wellness across the communities we serve. For more information, resources, or to speak with a healthcare provider, please contact your local clinic.

Month	Topic
April	Opioid Safety
May	Stroke Prevention & Physical Fitness
June	Tobacco Screening & Cessation

## April: Opioid Safety

*In recognition of Mental Health Awareness Month*

Prescription opioids can help manage pain, but they also carry risks for dependence, misuse, and overdose. Community education, safe medication use, and early response can help reduce harm and save lives.

### Risk Factors

Anyone who uses opioids, whether prescribed or not, can experience an overdose.

- **High doses:** Larger amounts increase the chance of a dangerous reaction.
- **Mixing substances:** Using opioids with alcohol, benzodiazepines, or other sedatives can slow breathing.
- **Reduced tolerance:** After stopping opioids for a time, the body may no longer handle the same amount as before.
- **Unintentional misuse:** Taking too much or using someone else's prescription can be dangerous.
- **Unknown content:** Some drugs may contain fentanyl or other powerful opioids without you knowing.

### Know the Signs

Recognizing an overdose quickly can save a life.

- Slow or stopped breathing
- Blue or gray lips
- Unable to wake the person
- Choking or gurgling sounds
- Pinpoint pupils

### What To Do

If an overdose is suspected:

- Call emergency services immediately
- Give naloxone if available
- Stay with the person until help arrives

### Naloxone Saves Lives

Naloxone, often known by the brand name Narcan, can quickly reverse the effects of opioids and restore breathing. It is designed for easy use by family members, friends, and community responders, and it is safe to give in a suspected overdose. If you would like to learn more about overdose prevention or obtain a naloxone response kit, please contact your local clinic.



## May: Stroke Prevention & Physical Fitness

*In recognition of American Stroke Month and National Physical Fitness and Sports Month*

Maintaining a healthy weight through regular movement, balanced nutrition, and routine screening can help lower the risk of stroke, diabetes, and heart disease. Small daily habits can make a meaningful difference for individuals, families, and communities.

**Know Your Numbers:** Body Mass Index (BMI) is a screening tool that helps healthcare providers determine whether weight is in a healthy range for height. BMI is often reviewed along with blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar to better understand overall health risks.

### BMI categories for adults

- Underweight: Below 18.5
- Healthy weight: 18.5–24.9
- Overweight: 25.0–29.9
- Obesity: 30.0 or higher

# Health Services Division News

## Healthy Movement

Regular physical activity supports heart health, improves circulation, and helps maintain a healthy weight.

- **Stay active daily:** Walking, stretching, and regular movement all count.
- **Include traditional activities:** Hunting, fishing, berry picking, dancing, and other cultural activities support physical wellness.
- **Support heart health:** Movement helps strengthen the heart and improve circulation.
- **Promote mental wellness:** Physical activity can also reduce stress and improve overall well-being.

## Healthy Eating

Balanced nutrition plays an important role in lowering stroke risk and supporting long-term wellness.

- **Traditional foods:** Fish, marine mammals, berries, and other traditional foods support good nutrition.
- **Limit processed foods:** Cutting back on added sugars, sodium, and unhealthy fats can lower health risks.
- **Eat balanced meals:** Include a variety of fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and whole foods.
- **Stay hydrated:** Water is a healthier choice than sugary drinks.

Ask your local clinic or Community Health Aide/Practitioner about your BMI during your next visit.

## June: Tobacco Screening & Cessation

*In collaboration with World No Tobacco Day on May 31*

Routine tobacco screening helps providers identify patients who may benefit from support and connection to resources. Brief counseling, education, and treatment can improve the chances of quitting successfully.

### Why Screening Matters

- **Early identification:** Providers can quickly recognize current tobacco use or risk.
- **A chance to talk:** A brief conversation may encourage someone to consider quitting.
- **Better health outcomes:** Quitting lowers the risk of heart disease, stroke, lung disease, and cancer.
- **Healthier homes:** Less tobacco use means less secondhand smoke exposure.
- **Long-term wellness:** Screening and support can help people quit successfully.

### It's Never Too Late to Quit

- **Immediate benefits:** Heart rate and blood pressure begin to drop soon after quitting.
- **Lower disease risk:** Risks for heart disease, lung disease, and cancer decline over time.
- **Improved breathing and energy:** Many people notice better lung function and stamina.
- **Benefits for loved ones:** Quitting reduces secondhand smoke exposure for others.
- **Support is available:** Counseling, medications, and quit programs can improve success.

### Quit Resources

- **Chugachmiut Health Services – Wellness & Prevention Programs:** Offers culturally responsive support, counseling referrals, and access to medications and other quit supports.
- **Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium – Tobacco Prevention & Control Program:** Provides education, outreach, and resources to reduce tobacco-related harm.
- **Alaska Quit Line – 1-800-QUIT-NOW:** Free, confidential coaching, quit plans, and nicotine replacement therapy for eligible participants.

Quitting tobacco is an act of care for yourself, your family, and future generations. If you are interested in quitting or would like to learn more, please contact your local clinic.



## Employee Spotlight – Beth Kinagak

Based in Seward, **Beth Kinagak** is a Health Administrative Assistant who joined Chugachmiut in 2025. Her Yup'ik name is Agyaq. She was born and raised in Bethel, the hub of the Kuskokwim River. Beth grew up traveling the river, ice fishing, spending summers on the tundra, and attending fish camp with her family.



Before joining Chugachmiut, Beth worked at Alaska Airlines, where she gained strong customer service skills. She later worked in registration at the Kenaitze Indian Tribe's Dena'ina Wellness Center. She also earned her CDL license. Beth moved to Seward in April 2025 and quickly fell in love with the community after hiking and picking highbush berries along local trails. Beth is excited to be part of Chugachmiut and looks forward to meeting people in Seward and the villages Chugachmiut serves.

## Employee Spotlight – Jacob Talbert

**Jacob Talbert** is the new Village Public Safety Officer (VPSO) for Nanwalek. After living in Alaska for the past decade, he has developed a deep appreciation for the strength, resilience, and close-knit spirit of its communities. His family's Alaska roots go back to the days when the railroad was built, giving him a strong respect for the hard work and perseverance that helped shape the state.



Before joining Chugachmiut, Jacob held public service roles. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he worked at Fred Meyer in Palmer, helping community members access essential goods during a challenging time. He later worked as a DMV Clerk, assisting Alaskans with driver's licenses, vehicle titles, and registrations. These experiences helped build the patience, professionalism, and public service mindset he brings to his new role.

Jacob is married to a member of the Nanwalek community and is the proud father of a large family, with children ranging from 15 to 1. When Jacob first arrived in Nanwalek, he was immediately drawn to its natural beauty and strong sense of community. He cares deeply about serving others and is committed to serving Nanwalek with integrity, respect, and dedication in his new role.

## Preserving Stories: Community Archiving Workshop

Chugachmiut will host a **Community Archiving Workshop on May 28–29 in Anchorage** for representatives from Tribes within our consortium. The two-day workshop will offer hands-on training in cataloging, digitizing, inspecting, inventorying, and organizing audiovisual materials to help preserve important historical items locally.

Hosted in partnership with the Community Archiving Workshop organization, the training supports long-term preservation and access while encouraging conversation about the future of village-based collections and the Chugachmiut collection in Anchorage.



To attend or learn more, contact Archivist Madeline Frieser at (907) 562-4155, ext. 159, (800) 478-4155, or [MadelineF@Chugachmiut.org](mailto:MadelineF@Chugachmiut.org).

# Chugach Regional Writers

## *Bends by Gail Evanoff*

Stories are told in many ways,  
One of my favorites touches my heart every time I see it.  
The Grandmas are quiet  
Sitting on the Banks overlooking the beach  
Hands resting on their laps  
Legs crossed at the ankle  
And calico skirts flapping in the breeze.  
It's not unlike Grandmas to sit out in the sun, in fact, that's what they do best  
Grandmas are timeless, pillars, wisdom!  
It's truly uncanny

She'll sit and watch where the birds perch, the butterflies land, seagulls fly, the direction of wind is blowing, and make her move. Her eyes learned to see from many years of experience. She can sense it is time.

She will tell her story with her hands. How many bends in the road? Or banks, how tall, short, if it's good or not, and so on? Her hand will weave, either fast or slow, as it cuts through the air to make a point. The pat on the back means, "It's Ummak time," or on the lap to sit. A wash tub or buckets on the floor plank means it's berry picking time.

On this day, the woman folk, surrounded by children of all ages, sit near the bow. The boys run the boat from the back, hands on the outboard, or oars, in case the boat goes aground on a sandbar, or to pole the boat in shallow water.

She is the "captain," no matter where she sits, steering the boat or not. Once the boat gets "on step," she will start navigating with simple hand gestures. The boat will traverse from one end of the channel to the next by the point of her finger, to take which band, or sand bars up ahead, wood floaters. She will curve her hand to indicate the distance to take a bend, and show how many bends to take before a destination is reached. She will extend out her arm if it's far, or keep it close to her body if it's close. The boys will watch her as much as they watch where the boat is going. Not paying attention could almost mean some kind of disaster.

A slight nod of the head means you did good. No eye contact could almost mean you're in trouble. Sometimes, motioning with your hand could mean food on the table or not. Without a word spoken, the hand speaks loudly and with purpose.

### **Chugach Regional Writers**

Chugach Regional Writers gather weekly and are dedicated to the craft of writing. If you want to share your stories and build connections with other writers, contact Sandra L. Kleven at (907) 764-1945 or at [sandrak@chugachmiut.org](mailto:sandrak@chugachmiut.org).

**Gail Evanoff** has been a Behavioral Health Practitioner in Chenega since 2012. In recognition of her work, she received the Rising Star Award from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium in 2014. Gail has served as a board member for Chugachmiut and the Chenega Tribal Council. She has raised four children and has been married for 56 years to her high school sweetheart.



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

## *Chugachmiut Board & Executive Leadership*

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

**Fran Norman**, *Chair*  
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**William Smith**, *Director*  
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Eyak

**Angela Vanderpool**  
Executive Director

## *Nupuat Newsletter - Call for Submissions*

Do you have an update, story, essay, or poem to share? We welcome submissions from Tribal and community members, councils, and employees. Please email your ideas, articles, poetry, and photos to [media@chugachmiut.org](mailto:media@chugachmiut.org). The submission deadline for the next edition is Friday, May 29, 2026.