I’d love to be able to write an article that is upbeat about the future of public health, but as we all know, Alaska is facing the most serious budget shortfall since 1986. We will be feeling the impact of this economic shortfall for years to come, including decreases in services, elimination of programs, and a recession that will spill into the private sector. The projected operating budget represents a $4.1 billion deficit for FY2017. In these final days of the legislative session, we are watching to see how our elected officials will handle the revenue side, knowing it will not be fixed in one year.

With this dire forecast, it is even more important for ALPHA to advocate for the health and well-being of Alaskans. Based on the new strategic plan, ALPHA contracted with a lobbyist to monitor our legislative priorities. Based on the membership survey in January, we prioritized the budget and identified family violence topics as most important for ALPHA to try to impact. The Policy Committee provided testimony on a number of bills related to child custody when there is a history of domestic violence, healthy sexuality education, and, of course, the operating budget. We’ve also sent out legislative alerts on the budget. We are pleased our voice was part of the collective testimony that opposed a bill decreasing the court’s ability to consider domestic violence in child custody cases, as well as two bills that would have made it much more difficult for schools to provide comprehensive, evidence-based healthy sexuality education.

The unfortunate news is that we were not successful stopping the elimination of 30-35 public health nursing staff positions. Combined with the reductions the legislature made in 2016, this represents the elimination of 25% of our public health nursing workforce, which
Updated ALPHA Strategic Plan
- A Living Document

Contributed by Lisa Aquino, MPH, Executive Director Catholic Social Services

The Alaska Public Health Association has updated our strategic plan. Over the past year we went through a strategic planning process, facilitated by the Foraker Group. The discussions we had in developing our strategic plan revealed much good work currently being accomplished by ALPHA and additionally areas where we could do more and expand our services. In many ways, the Board was happy with our past strategic plan, so we kept elements of that, but worked to tailor it to this time period, as well as spell out some specific work that we hoped to accomplish.

Our purpose remains, the advancement of the public’s health. Our goal is that Alaska Public Health Association is a statewide leader in Alaska and fully engages Alaskans in public health. This is a lofty goal, although we all work towards this every day, we know that many obstacles stand in the way of Alaskans being knowledgeable and engaged in the health of our state’s population. However lofty though, it is critical to the success of our health and what we must strive for.

One new element we added this time around to our strategic plan was listing out how enacting our core values would look. This addition allows us as members to see specifically how the core values we live by as ALPHA fit with the specific programs and actions we do throughout the year. To me it feels like where the rubber hits the road. Sometimes in strategic planning that piece is not included, but we wanted to make sure we spoke to our actions.

I encourage you to peruse our strategic plan. Get to know it, and help the Board put it into action. This is a living, breathing document that we need to guide us, but should not dictate our decisions. Our goal of engaging Alaskans in their health is lofty, but this strategic plan to guide us, I think we can make some major steps towards reaching our goal. You can find the ALPHA Strategic Plan for 2015-2018 on our website.

Thank you for all you do to improve the health and lives of our fellow Alaskans.
The Alaska Public Health Association (ALPHA) celebrated National Public Health Week by awarding $500 grants to two organizations which implemented collaborative projects to promote public health. The selection process was very competitive and ALPHA received many outstanding proposals.

A future ALPHA Newsletter and the ALPHA website will include updates and photos from each grantee describing their activities.

The 2016 grantees:

♦ **North Slope Borough**
  
  *Community Project:* Organize a National Public Health week fair (“This is Public Health”) and offer community health presentations and health screenings.

♦ **All Alaska Pediatric Partnership Immunization Workgroup**
  
  *Community Project:* Create and post WIC bulletin boards throughout the State highlighting the value of childhood immunizations during National Public Health week.

For more information about National Public Health Week, visit the National Public Health Week website at: [http://www.nphw.org/about](http://www.nphw.org/about)

The theme for the 2016 National Public Health Week: *Healthiest Nation 2030: Let’s make America the healthiest nation in one generation.*

The [American Public Health Association](http://www.apha.org) creates planning, organizing and outreach materials that can be used during and after the week to raise awareness about this year’s theme.

The Alaska Public Health Association (ALPHA) is an affiliate of the American Public Health Association (APHA). Through our association with APHA, ALPHA is able to join forces with other affiliates across the nation in advocating for health and disease prevention. Since 1995, when the first full week of April was declared as National Public Health Week (NPHW), communities across the country have celebrated NPHW to recognize public health and highlight issues that are important to improving the public’s health.
2016 ALPHA Mini-Grant Supports Public Health Week Activities in Barrow, Alaska

Contributed by Asisaun Toovak, Project Manager, Public Health Project Team, North Slope Borough Department of Health & Social Services

The North Slope Borough was one of the two grantees for the 2016 ALPHA Mini-grants for National Public Health Week (NPHW) activities. Their proposal was to organize a National Public Health week fair This is Public Health and offer community health presentations and health screenings.

National Public Health Week in Barrow was well received by the community! Our theme, “This is Public Health” showcased different areas of public health and how it matters to individuals, families and the community. We ordered NPHW pins and a banner. We were able to set up a booth on day 1 and 2 at the local Alaska Commercial Company grocery store. We shared information about nutrition and breastfeeding with the local Women, Infants’ and Children’s (WIC). We also posted on our Health Department Facebook page about our activities with NPHW.

On Day 2 we had a booth at the store and shared information about drug, alcohol and tobacco use and prevention. On the third day, we organized a mini health fair at the local hospital. We shared the health fair with the Screening for Life (breast, cervical and colon cancer program); Public Health Nursing on STDs.

BARROW NPHW ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:
- Prevention Education
- Information Sharing
- Mini Health Fair
- Screening
- Radio Show
- Spring Whaling Parade
New Public Health Work Experience Eligibility Criteria for Certified in Public Health (CPH)

In addition to students and graduates of CEPH-accredited schools and programs of public health, individuals who have at least a bachelor’s degree and at least five subsequent years’ of public health work experience may be eligible to take the CPH exam.

Applications will be reviewed based on public health work experience, indicating the scope of foundational knowledge that has been acquired based on the ten essential public health services.

Read More

CPH Computer-based Exam Dates

**Paper & Pencil exams are offered throughout the year**

- February 1 – 28
- June 1 – 30
- October 1 – 31

For more information, contact Info@NBPHE.org

On Day 4 we hosted a radio show on National Public Health Week at the local radio station. This radio show reaches the entire region. On the fifth and final day we participated in the Spring Whaling Festivities by entering our vehicle with our Banner on NPHW in the Parade and threw healthy snacks. We also volunteered to serve the community at the pancake breakfast with our North Slope Borough Health & Social Services Department.

Thank you for the grant and support! Overall we enjoyed the activities, and the community stopped and talked to us and enjoyed the different activities we did daily. We look forward to participating in NPHW annually!
2016 ALPHA Mini-Grant Supports NPHW and Infant Immunization Week Activities

Contributed by Rosalyn Singleton MD MPH, ANTHC Clinical Research Services, Guest researcher: Arctic Investigations Program-CDC, Chairman, A2P2 Immunization Workgroup

The **All Alaska Pediatric Partnership (A2P2)** was one of the two grantees for the 2016 ALPHA Mini-grants for National Public Health Week (NPHW) activities. Their proposal was to create and post WIC bulletin boards throughout the State highlighting the value of childhood immunizations.

The A2P2 Immunization Workgroup would like to thank ALPHA for the $500 Mini-grant for our Public Health Week Project. We collaborated with the 23 WIC offices around the State to highlight National Public Health Week and Infant Immunization Week by designing, printing, and mailing a 30” by 36” vinyl poster to all 23 WIC offices to display on their Bulletin Board during the month of April 2016.

The poster highlights the ages that children need the routine immunizations, to protect children and communities from serious vaccine-preventable diseases. We gave a presentation on Immunizations at the WIC staff retreat in February 2016 and presented information on the importance of on-time childhood vaccinations and how WIC staff can meet their federal mandate to review and recommend child immunizations. We mailed a copy of the poster and a Vaccine Preventable Disease Photo Book to each WIC office. In June we will review the WIC immunization rates gathered monthly by WIC staff. WIC serves high-risk low-income families and we plan to continue to collaborate with WIC to support their efforts to improve immunization rates in their clients.

For more information about the **All Alaska Pediatric Partnership**, see the article on pages 8-9.

To order resources or for questions, call us at (907) 903-6770, or email us at tamar@a2p2.org.
Message from the President (cont.)

Continued from page 1

combined with the tribal health system, represents the majority of Alaska's local public health presence. Alaska's ability to improve the health status of all Alaskans and achieve health equity depends on a strong comprehensive public health system. It is increasingly important that we work collectively to educate key stakeholders and policy makers of the need to strengthen, not curtail our state, regional and local public health systems.

We will be entering a new cycle of advocacy over the next few months as all of Alaska's state representatives, and half of the senators run for office. Now is the time to engage the candidates in the conversations, educating them on public health's role in supporting improved health and quality of life for all Alaskans. Anyone interested in learning more about ALPHA's advocacy efforts can request information via email at alpha@alaskapublichealth.org

--Jayne Andreen, ALPHA President

Release of a Joint Declaration on Climate Change and Health

Contributed by Janice Gray, RN, BSN, Alaska Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program Nurse Consultant II, Alaska Division of Public Health

National Health and Medical Organizations Urge Bold Action to Fight Climate Change

Declaration comes as new report shows every American’s health is at risk

On April 4, 2016, 17 national health and medical organizations released a joint Declaration on Climate Change and Health, urging immediate action to address the health impacts of climate change, even as the nation's leading experts sound the alarm with the new comprehensive report, The Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health in the United States: A Scientific Assessment, on the growing harms to human health from climate change.

The American Public Health Association and American Lung Association along with other organizations signed the declaration, calling for bold action to address climate change to protect public health, especially for the nation's most vulnerable populations: children, seniors, low-income communities, isolated rural areas, coastal and other flood-prone areas, and those with chronic diseases, all of whom disproportionately bear the health impacts of climate change.

"Today's climate and health assessment is a wake-up call," said Georges C. Benjamin, MD, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association. "Cardiovascular disease, heat exhaustion, water- and vector-borne diseases, respiratory illness, increased allergies - our communities are already experiencing the impacts. Our leaders must act without delay to reduce emissions to avoid even more hospital visits, missed school days, injuries, illness, and premature deaths."

"The science is clear: Americans across the country are experiencing the health impacts of climate change. But some communities are particularly vulnerable," said Edith Mitchell, MD, FACP, President of the National Medical Association.

The public health, disease advocacy and medical community are united in our efforts to protect the public from the risks of climate change.

- From the American Public Health Association news Release, April 4, 2016
Who are we?

The All Alaska Pediatric Partnership (A2P2) Immunization Workgroup is a volunteer workgroup whose purpose is to partner with providers and agencies to promote on-time immunizations in high-risk infants and children birth to 35 months. The Workgroup started as one of the four pillars of the First 1000 Days Initiative in 2014. We meet monthly and are engaged in projects and partnerships with agencies and providers around Alaska.

What do we do?

We provide 3 resources to support agencies around Alaska in their efforts to vaccinate infants and young children.

1. **Growth charts:**

   Stephanie Massay and the State Immunization Program created an attractive growth chart that shows ages for Well Child Care, developmental milestones and Immunizations. We have distributed over 1,000 growth charts to providers and public health clinics around the state.

2. **Vaccine Preventable Disease Photo Book:**

   Rachel Bodeen produced a Vaccine Preventable Disease Photo Book to educate parents and children about Vaccine Preventable Diseases in Alaska. We’ve distributed over 300 of the books to provider offices, Public Health Clinics, and others.

3. **“I Did It By Two” T-Shirts**

   We have distributed over 300 “I Did It By Two” T-shirts for children who finished their basic childhood vaccine series by 2 years.
Our partners

We support other agencies in their efforts to immunize children.

- We engage with Community groups such as the Polynesian Lions Club, the Anchorage Lions Club to educate their members about vaccines and participate in events like the Polynesian Flag Day event.

- RuralCap Early Headstart is using the Growth Charts to teach moms about ages for developmental milestones, well childcare, and immunizations.

- We are partnering with WIC to provide the 3 resources and an immunization bulletin board for WIC clinics.

How are we funded?

We received initial resources from the State Immunization Program and Vaccinate Alaska Coalition. We have applied for and received grants from the Matsu Health Foundation and private donors to cover the cost of resources. We hope to see our workgroup grow and continue to make a positive impact on the on-time vaccination rates throughout Alaska.

For more information: A2P2 Immunization Workgroup

To order resources or for questions, please call us at (907) 903-6770, email us at tamar@a2p2.org.

Contributed by Linda K. Worman, D.M., RN, Chair, APHN Public Health Policy Workgroup, Public Health Nursing Section Chief, Public Health Nurse, State of Alaska

**Advocacy is an integral part of the public health nurse’s professional practice.**

Indeed, advocacy is an integral part of a public health professional’s practice. Advocacy is a strategy to influence policy makers when they make laws and regulations, distribute resources, and make other decisions that affect peoples’ lives (APHN, 2016, p 7). Advocating requires expert knowledge, persistence, and an understanding of the decision-maker’s perspective.

While this review describes the *Association of Public Health Nurses Public Health Policy Advocacy Guide Book and Tool Kit 2016* (Guide Book), the information may be helpful for all public health professionals.

**Advocacy changes, enhances, or creates policy.**

Advocacy is essentially about three things:

- Creating policies where they are needed when none exist.
- Reforming harmful or ineffective policies.
- Ensuring good policies are implemented and enforced.

For public health nurses, the focus of the policy is on the population-based assessment (concerns, strengths, and goals of the community), assurances (interdisciplinary services, collective impact approaches, and access to quality services) and policy development homework (ANA, 2013, p. 10). Public health nurses live in the community, actively engage in community activities, and promote health and prevent disease.

Advocacy is participating in the democratic process by taking action in support of a particular issue or cause. Advocacy includes activities such as participating in a town meeting or demonstration, conducting a public forum or press activity, or developing an issue brief for your state or local policymakers on a particular public health issue. These types of activities do not constitute lobbying as long as you are not urging a policymaker to take a position or action on specific legislation. (APHN, 2016, p 7).
Advocacy is a strategy to influence policy makers when they make laws and regulations, distribute resources, and make other decisions that affect peoples' lives.

The Guide Book provides information about development of position and thus guidelines for policy development and advocacy. Once APHN develops a position on a public health matter, there is opportunity for advocacy. As noted in the Guide Book, advocacy happens through coalitions, partnerships, communication with legislators, and public engagement. There are "rules" to effective advocacy such as knowing your topic, respect, follow up, and collaborating with others to get the message to those who make the decisions for the public at large.

Whether testifying in person, developing letters, making phone calls, or attending an in person meeting, one needs to know how a Congressman’s office runs and how to present one's policy perspective most effectively.

This Guide Book provides a review of the Federal Budget process, invaluable information when one needs to plan for large-scale endeavors. Changing policy at the Federal level, such as tobacco product labeling and advertising or alcohol labeling, requires numerous levels of involvement. Advocating requires persistence in order to facilitate a policy change. There are varieties of tools that may be helpful. One tool reviewed in this document is the "Straight to the Point" advocacy tool (APHN, 2016, p. 35). Finally, there are numerous resources provided such as at the Presidential, Congressional, and Judicial levels.

If you would like to access the Guide Book, it is located at http://phnurse.org/Advocacy-Tool-Kit. In addition, there is a webinar reviewing the information and walking participants through the application process, putting advocacy to work at one’s community level. Please access this free resource and 3.0 Continuing Nurse Educations credits webinar at http://phnurse.org/Advocacy-Tool-Kit.

References:
How does Alaska measure up promoting health and preventing harm?

The CDC Prevention Status Reports (PSRs) highlight—for all 50 states and the District of Columbia—the status of public health policies and practices designed to prevent or reduce problems in 10 important public health topics.

These are summaries of how the Alaska Prevention Status ratings compare in 2013 and 2015 and how Alaska ratings compare to the National Prevention Status ratings in 2015.

How the PSRs Are Organized:

Each health care problem report follows a simple framework:

✓ Describe the public health problem using state and national data

✓ Identify potential solutions to the problem drawn from research and expert recommendations

✓ Report the status of those solutions

For details of each PSR health care topic report:

♦ CDC Prevention Status Reports
♦ CDC Prevention Status Report - Alaska

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<th>Alaska Ratings</th>
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The Alaska Safe Children’s Act

Contributed by Katie Reilly, MPH, Adolescent Health Project Coordinator at State of Alaska, DHSS, Division of Public Health

Last June, the Alaska legislature passed House Bill 44, which included the “Alaska Safe Children’s Act.” The Act, which goes into effect June 30, 2017, ensures that Alaskan students and school staff implement policies that provide training to staff and students on sexual abuse prevention education grades K-12 (known as Erin’s Law) and dating abuse awareness and prevention education grades 7-12 (also known as Bree’s Law). Bree’s Law is named after Breanna (Bree) Moore, a young woman born and raised in Alaska, who was shot and killed by her boyfriend in Anchorage in 2014. Her family members actively advocated for the passage of Bree’s Law, which they believe could have helped prevent her death and that of others, as well as Erin’s Law.

House Bill 44 required the establishment of a ten-member Alaska Safe Children’s Act Task Force to provide recommendations to the Department of Education & Early Development regarding model curricula and training materials for school districts related to:

- Suicide prevention training (for staff)
- Sexual abuse and sexual assault awareness training and prevention (staff and students K-12)
- Dating violence and abuse awareness training and prevention (staff and students grades 7-12)
- Alcohol and drug related disabilities training required for teachers and staff
- Alcohol and drug abuse education (for students K-12)

The Task Force—with the support of teachers, counselors and other stakeholders—is currently reviewing curricula and will release its recommendations by June 30, 2016.

Last July, Gov. Walker stated, “With the signing of the Alaska Safe Children’s Act, our state is one step closer to protecting the future health and safety of our children and next generations.”
Effectively communicating public health data is an ongoing challenge. When a CDC training opportunity was offered to attend a course in mapping data, we applied to be one of the states included.

The State of Alaska was chosen to receive Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Training for Surveillance of Heart Disease, Stroke and Other Chronic Diseases. GIS is an information system designed to use the format of a map to analyze and display data. The overarching purpose is to enable a person or group to communicate data in a way that is easily understandable. Instead of always using paragraphs, graphs, and tables to display data, GIS offers the option of using maps.

This project helps state health departments integrate the use of GIS into daily operations that support surveillance and chronic disease prevention. Offered through the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors, the CDC, and the Children's Environmental Health Initiative at Rice University, a series of three classroom-based software trainings are offered at no cost to selected health departments. Normally 4 staff members travel to a university in the south or east for training, but because of the distance the CDC and Rice University offered to bring their classes to us. This gave us the unique opportunity to offer the training to 20 individuals instead of 4.

In February 2016, 17 individuals representing many State of Alaska programs, sections and divisions as well as 3 people from our partner organizations started the GIS training courses.

The training helps participants to learn GIS skills and apply them to:

- Documenting geographic disparities in chronic diseases
- Strengthening community partnerships
- Informing chronic disease policies and program development
- Facilitating collaboration among chronic disease units within a health department

The training not only has offered the opportunity to learn new GIS software and data management skills, but also provided an opportunity to access proprietary data sets and for colleagues from many departments and partners to build new relationships.

For more information:
- CDC GIS Training Program Information
- GIS Map Gallery
- GIS Highlights
Reducing the Incidence of Suicide in Indigenous Groups – Strengths United through Networks (RISING SUN)

Contributed by Roberto A. Delgado, Jr., PhD, Scientific Program Manager Office for Research on Disparities and Global Mental Health (ORDGMH), National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Under the current U.S. Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the National Institute of Mental Health, in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Office of Global Affairs at the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of State, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, as well as with international partners from Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, the Inuit Circumpolar Council, and Norway, is leading a mental wellness initiative, RISING SUN, focused on suicide prevention and community resilience.

Suicide is a global public health threat, and indigenous communities, especially those in the North, are among the most heavily affected.

RISING SUN is designed to create a common way to evaluate suicide prevention efforts across the Arctic.

The use of common assessment outcomes and measurements – developed in collaboration with indigenous peoples’ organizations, community leaders, and mental health experts– will facilitate data sharing, evaluation, and interpretation of interventions across the Arctic region. The ultimate goal is to generate shared knowledge for a toolkit that will aid health workers in better serving their communities, and help policy-makers measure progress, evaluate interventions, and improve cultural understanding.

The method for achieving the objectives of RISING SUN is through adaptation of a consensus-building exercise known as the Delphi method, as well as through regional face-to-face meetings with local stakeholders.
For the Delphi method, an international panel of several hundred scientific, technical, and indigenous and local knowledge experts was invited to reach general agreement over the period of the initiative. Panel members were selected to represent the diverse advocacy, clinical, policy, research, and survivor groups with interests in and experience with suicide prevention among Arctic indigenous communities.

To incorporate the viewpoints of additional key stakeholders, three regional face-to-face meetings and focus-group discussions in selected communities are serving to integrate local perspectives in consensus-building and priority-setting.

The first of three workshops was held in Anchorage, Alaska, 19-20 September 2015, with the purpose of understanding the current suicide prevention landscape across the Arctic and the accomplishments of partnering countries, reviewing the aims of the RISING SUN initiative, and eliciting feedback on efforts to develop an Arctic-specific suicide prevention toolkit. Presently, RISING SUN is continuing with the consensus-building activity and planning for the second workshop, scheduled for Spring 2016 in Tromsø, Norway.

A third workshop will be held in Canada in early 2017 and, by the end of the initiative, RISING SUN will result in a toolkit of common outcomes and their measures to evaluate suicide prevention efforts. These are not meant to dictate how programs are run, but rather to reflect communities’ views on the critical outcomes of any suicide prevention activity. A final report synthesizing results of the described activities will be delivered by the end of the U.S. Chairmanship in May 2017. We are also working to share this process and our findings with the broader global community.

For more information:
For more background information, biographical sketches of the Scientific Advisory Group, and a summary report of the Anchorage workshop, please visit the RISING SUN website: http://www.nimh.nih.gov/about/organization/gmh/risingsun

Arctic Council: www.arctic-council.org

U.S. Arctic Council Chairmanship: http://www.state.gov/e/oes/ocns/opa/arc/uschair/
National Health Observances

Contributed by Janice Gray, RN, BSN, Alaska Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program Nurse Consultant II, Alaska Division of Public Health

Every month health care issues are recognized to increase awareness and hopefully improve health. Please visit the linked sites to learn more about these important topics and spread the word to your colleagues and the public.

Here are some of the many Health Observances coming up in the next few months:

May

- National Stroke Awareness Month
- National High Blood Pressure Education Month
- Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month
- Arthritis Awareness Month
- Mental Health Month
- National Physical Fitness and Sports Month
- National Bike to School Day (May 4)
- National Women’s Health Week (May 8-14)
- HIV Vaccine Awareness Day (May 18)
- World No Tobacco Day (May 31)

June

- National Scleroderma Awareness Month
- Men’s Health Month
- National Safety Month
- Fireworks Safety Month (June 1-July 4)
- Cataract Awareness Month
- Men’s Health Week (June 13-19)

July

- International Group B Strep Awareness Month
- World Hepatitis Day (July 28)

August

- National Breastfeeding Month
- National Health Center Week (August 7-13)
- National Immunization Awareness Month

September

- Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month
- National Childhood Obesity Awareness Month
- Fruits & Veggies—More Matters Month
- National Atrial Fibrillation Awareness Month
- Prostate Cancer Awareness Month
- World Alzheimer’s Month
- National Sickle Cell Month
- National Recovery Month
- National Preparedness Month
- National Traumatic Brain Injury Awareness Month
- National Suicide Prevention Week (Sept 5-11)

October

- National Breast Cancer Awareness Month
- National Domestic Violence Awareness Month
- Health Literacy Month
- National Bullying Prevention Month
- Mental Illness Awareness Week (Oct 2-8)
- World Food Day (Oct 16)

November

- American Diabetes Month
- COPD Awareness Month
- Lung Cancer Awareness Month
- National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month
- Great American Smokeout (Nov 19)
- National Family Health History Day (Nov 24)

December

- World AIDS Day (Dec 1)
- National Influenza Vaccination Week (Dec 4-12)
Ten New Graduates in the UAA Master of Public Health (MPH) Program

Contributed by Nancy A. Nix, MD, MPH&TM, MEd, CHES, Associate Professor of Public Health, University of Alaska Anchorage

The University of Alaska Anchorage’s Master of Public Health (MPH) Program in Public Health Practice prepares public health practitioners who will protect and promote the health of populations in diverse communities across Alaska, the circumpolar north, the nation, and the world. After all of their core and elective courses are completed, each student is required to work with a community partner to complete a practicum and to develop and implement a final capstone project or thesis study. This Spring Semester 2016, ten UAA MPH students successfully defended their final MPH projects!

Laila Allen, with the State of Alaska Division of Public Health
♦ Project - "Healthy Alaskans 2020 Implementation Pilot"

Olivia Barrow, with Wildflower Long Term Care Facility, Juneau, AK
♦ Project - "An Evaluation of Oral Health Training for Long-Term Care Facility Staff and Its Relation to Residents’ Dental Plaque Levels"

Jessika Beam, with the Alaska Food Policy Council
♦ Project - "Teaching Food Systems in Alaska"

Jewelz Crandall, with Tyonek Tribal Conservation District
♦ Project - "Community-Specific Health Education Curriculum for Rural Community Gardens"

David Fitzgerald with the Virginia Cooperative Extension, Prince William County, VA
♦ Project - "Program Evaluation of the Living Well with Diabetes Program"

Jason Hahn, with Trailblazer Foundation in Siem Reap, Cambodia
♦ Project - "Community-Scale Biosand Filter Project in Cambodia"

Elizabeth King with faculty in the UAA College of Engineering
♦ Project - "An Analysis of Rainwater from Rural Alaska Catchments: Findings and Recommendations for Healthy Utilization"

Tracey Martinson, with the Golden Valley Electric Association Power Plant in Healy, AK
♦ Project - "Development of a Crystalline Silica Management Plan for a Coal-fired Power Plant"

Jean Tsigonis with Banner Health - Tanana Valley Clinic, Fairbanks, AK
♦ Project - "How to Prolong the Career Life of a Practicing Physician: Assessing the Causes and Extent of Burnout in a Primary Care Setting"

Andrew Tooyak with the United Caribou Association of the Nunamuit (UCAN)
♦ Project – "The United Caribou Association of the Nunamuit"
Membership Approves ALPHA Bylaws Changes


During 2015, the ALPHA Bylaws Committee, Jayne Andreen, Masayo Nishiyama and Diane Peck, reviewed and updated the bylaws. The changes were mostly format changes to maintain consistency throughout the document, but there were also some content changes to clarify position duties and procedures. These changes were sent out to the membership in March and approved. If you would like to read the new bylaws, they can be found on the ALPHA website.

Alaska Public Health Nursing Website Gets a Makeover

Contributed by Sheli DeLaney, MA, Public Health Informaticist, Alaska Section of Public Health Nursing, Alaska Division of Public Health

As leader of the Section of Public Health Nursing’s Website Workgroup, I’d like to announce that our Public Health Nursing website has undergone some very important changes over the past year. The workgroup, formed in 2014, worked with leadership to make our website not only more client friendly, but also a useful tool for staff, a handy resource for stakeholders, and appealing and informative to potential job applicants.

The new changes include the following:

♦ Cleaned up URL for print materials, business cards, emails, etc.: publichealthnursing.alaska.gov
♦ Tabs on the Home Page for most common client-based information: Forms, Locations, and Services
♦ Registration forms with live fields that can be filled out online and printed ahead of appointments: Forms
♦ Individual pages for all of the public health centers in the state: Locations
♦ Strategic Plan, Performance Measures, and Return on Investment documents available on the Home Page (for stakeholders, legislators, etc.)
♦ Expanded definitions of our Services, and links to resource pages for more information
♦ Recruitment materials promoted on Home Page for job seekers, and extensive information available in the Career Opportunities section, including new Employment FAQs

And we’re still building more every month. Visit often! Publichealthnursing.alaska.gov

Any questions, please contact sheli.delaney@alaska.gov
2016 Alaska Maternal Child Health and Immunization Conference

Contributed by Bridget McCleskey, Conference Coordinator, (907) 854-9470

You are invited to the Alaska MCH and Immunization Conference organized by the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (EpiCenter) and the Alaska Division of Public Health, Section of Women’s, Children’s, and Family Health. We are excited to provide an opportunity for rural and urban Alaska health professionals to come together to learn about best practices, tools, and surveillance data related to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of women’s, children’s, and adolescent health issues in Alaska.

By attending this conference participants will be better able to:

- Describe how to access and use resources which are available to assist in their work.
- Employ at least two best practices or tools for the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of key women’s, children’s, and adolescent health issues in Alaska.
- Identify at least one research trend of concern to health professionals and policy makers in rural and urban Alaska.

For more information:
- 2016 Alaska Maternal Child Health and Immunization Conference

2016 Alaska Maternal Child Health & Immunization Conference

Hilton Anchorage
September 27-28, 2016

alaskaMCHconference.org

Abstracts due April 15, 2016
Continuing education credits information online

"Advancing Wellness Across the Lifespan"
2016 ALPHA Award Winners

The Alaska Public Health Association ALPHA awards were presented at the Health Summit on February 3, 2016.

★ Alaska Meritorious Health Service Awards:
  Charles Utermohle, PhD & William Jonathan “Dr. Jon” Lyon, MD
★ Barbara Berger Excellence in Public Health Awards:
  Mary Bell, RN, BSN, NCSN & Rachel Bodeen, RN, BSN
★ ALPHA Award for Long Term Service: Alison Kulas, MSPH
★ Alaska Health Equity Awards:
  Nutaqiivik Program, Southcentral Foundation & Elsa DeHart, MS, FNP-BC, APHN-BC, SANE-A
★ Alaska Community Service Awards for Health:
  Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic & Danny Consenstein, SED
★ Alaska Health Achievement Award: Suanne Unger, MS

Congratulations to all the deserving winners!

Alaska Meritorious Health Service Award

Charles Utermohle: Look behind the Informed Alaskans Initiative and you will find Dr. Charles Utermohle, who has been the catalyst for the development and creation of the Instant Atlas (IA) Health Maps and the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services’ Indicator-Based Information System (AK-IBIS). His passion for making this resource available to community leaders, researchers, service providers, students and others is well known and acknowledged across the Department of Health and Social Services. Never one to rest on his laurels, Dr. Utermohle continues to fuel this important resource through his tireless efforts to expand surveillance capacity, implement system improvements and provide training in its use to a wide audience.

Alaska Meritorious Health Service Award

William Jonathan “Dr. Jon” Lyon: Jon Lyon was a long time pediatrician, community organizer and advocate for children’s health in Alaska. Jon was a co-founder of LaTouche Pediatrics, which he started with his partner Dr. Phyllis Kiehl in the 1980s. He was a leader in creating the Children’s Hospital at Providence. He was instrumental in the creation of School Based Health Clinics in Anchorage. Jon was the first site director for the Pediatric WWAMI program, where he helped teach and mentor medical students in Alaska, and he was instrumental in setting up the Alaska Track Pediatric Residency program in conjunction with the University of Washington. Jon recently passed away – far too early, but his legacy of health improvements to our state and in particular to the children of Alaska, will live forever. Alaska is indebted to the amazing work he did throughout his life.
2016 ALPHA Award Winners

Barbara Berger “Excellence in Public Health” Award

Mary Bell: As School Nurse Consultant for the Alaska Division of Public Health, Mary Bell serves a unique role bridging the gap between health department staff and a common target audience of many of public health interventions: school-based staff and administrators. Her 17 year career as a KPBSD School Nurse provides unique insight to what it takes for a health program to take root in an Alaskan school district. Mary has published an impressive number of guidance documents during her 6 years in Public Health. Her guidance on topics ranging from Diabetes Management to Disaster Preparedness; Emergency Medications Administration to Infectious Disease Management will benefit Alaskans for years to come.

Barbara Berger “Excellence in Public Health” Award

Rachel Bodeen: Rachel Bodeen partnered with Dr. Rosalyn Singleton in the First 1000 Days Initiative Immunization Workgroup. After hearing the challenges faced by Alaskan families, she researched and developed an Alaska-specific child “Growth Chart” that features the immunization schedule for distribution to provider offices and home-visited nurses. Rachel developed and produced a Vaccine-Preventable Disease Photo Book that was distributed to providers’ offices around the state. She has been a great advocate for childhood vaccination in her role in the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership workgroup. Rachel exemplifies the dynamic attitude and collaborative spirit which will help to raise Alaska’s child immunization rates and prevent epidemics.

Awards were presented by:
Lisa Aquino, ALPHA Past-President

ALPHA awards provide an opportunity to recognize our colleagues and acknowledge their contribution to the Alaska Public Health Association and to public health in Alaska.
2016 ALPHA Award Winners

**ALPHA Service Award for Long Term Service**

**Alison Kulas:** Alison Kulas began her involvement with tobacco prevention and control as the AmeriCorps Program Coordinator with the Rural Alaska Community Action Program (RurAlCAP) and then worked for the Alaska State Tobacco Prevention and Control Program for 8 years, starting as the Community Grants Coordinator, promoted to Deputy Program Manager and then to Program Manager. Her dedication and skillful, collaborative management guided Alaska’s Tobacco Prevention and Control Program statewide efforts to an expansion of programs and policies such as smokefree workplaces, increased tobacco prices, promoting Alaska’s Tobacco Quit Line, and using social media to educate the public.

**Alaska Health Equity Award**

**Elsa A. DeHart:** Elsa DeHart is a Public Health Nurse and the Team Leader at the Kodiak Public Health Center. Elsa has put her heart and soul into preventing and responding to domestic violence and sexual assault. In her work, Elsa supports individuals who have been affected by domestic violence and sexual assault. She also works at the community level to educate youth on healthy relationships and at the system level to improve community response.

**Alaska Health Equity Award**

**Nutaqsiivik Program, Southcentral Foundation:**

In 1994 the Nutaqsiivik home visiting program and clinic began as an approach infant mortality. Socially high risk families were identified as the target population; risk factors were identified and used by clinical staff as a screening tool for referral of families to the Nutaqsiivik home visiting program. Nutaqsiivik families are partnered with a registered nurse who offers pregnancy, infancy, and toddler education and support, breastfeeding support, promotion of home safety, and care coordination across Southcentral Foundation’s health care setting and the municipality.
2016 ALPHA Award Winners

Alaska Community Service Award for Health
Danny Consenstein: In 2010, Danny Consenstein was appointed by President Obama to serve as the State Executive Director for the USDA Alaska Farm Service Agency (FSA). He is a founding member of the Alaska Food Policy Council and continues to actively serve on the Governing Board. Danny embodies the term “collaboration” and has built strong partnerships with state agencies, universities, foundations, health organizations and non-profits to strengthen the food system for all Alaskans. He is a strong voice for local foods in the media and with legislators and policy makers.

Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic: Since 1983, the Kachemak Bay Family Planning Clinic has offered low cost, comprehensive family planning and related preventive health services to the women, men and teens of the lower Kenai Peninsula. In addition to the high quality clinical services they provide, KBFPC established the R.E.C Room (a Youth Resource & Enrichment Co-op), in 2009, to offer teens ages 12-18 a safe and welcoming environment to socialize with friends after school and get connected with positive activities and educational opportunities for youth.

Alaska Health Achievement Award
Suanne Unger: In 2014, Suanne Unger, in collaboration with the Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association, wrote and published the book “Qaqamiigux, Traditional Foods and Recipes from the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands”. The book is a cultural, historical, and nutritional tribute to the traditional foods from the region. The book includes hundreds of recipes, all with nutrition information, traditional values and stories, historic and current photos, and information on the role traditional food plays in the prevention of dietary-related diseases.
Alaska Public Health Association

c/o Information Insights, Inc.
212 Front Street, Suite 100
Fairbanks, AK 99701

Phone: 907.450.2459
Fax: 907.450.2470
E-mail: alpha@alaskapublichealth.org
Web: www.alaskapublichealth.org

Alaska Public Health Association

Mission: Advancement of the public’s health.

Goal: Serve as a hub that connects all health groups in Alaska.

Core Values:
- Equity: All Alaskans have the right to live under conditions that promote and protect health.
- Integrity: Our actions will always be ethical and based on the best available information.
- Excellence: We will strive to be effective in all our undertakings.
- Leadership: We will forward a vision that inspires action.

Towards this end, ALPHA will:
- Work to identify, raise awareness about, and advocate for public health in Alaska;
- Strive to educate, guide and influence issues affecting the public’s health;
- Partner with other public health advocates on targeted initiatives;
- Advocate for and encourage public involvement in the Alaska public health process to improve public health outcomes;
- Participate in the development and advocacy of sound public health laws and policies, using best practices; and
- Promote efforts to develop and sustain the public health workforce.

The ALPHA and APHA Connection

Alaska Public Health Association (ALPHA) is an affiliated association of the American Public Health Association (APHA). Since 1918, we have collaborated with APHA to grow stronger as organizations, to share expertise, influence, and resources, and to advocate for common priorities at the local, state, and federal levels.

American Public Health Association (APHA) is the national voice of public health and champions the health of all people and all communities. They strengthen the profession of public health, promote best practices and share the latest public health research and information. APHA is the only organization that combines a 140-plus year perspective, the ability to influence federal policy to improve the public’s health and a member community from all public health disciplines and over 40 countries.

Promoting Quality of Life for All Alaskans