



## NORTHWEST AIDS EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTER

# HIV Care in Rural and Underserved Areas

## HIV Care in Alaska

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# Ryan White Part C Early Intervention Services (EIS)

**Available for treatment and case management  
consultation for providers caring for HIV+ Alaskans**

- Beth Saltonstall, MD
- Terri Bramel PA-C, Clinical Specialist
- Patient case managers:
  - Thor Brendtro, RN SCF
  - Lisa Rea, RN
  - Jule Witmer, RN
  - Linda Hogins, CMA Assistant Case Manager
  
- 729-2907
- 1-888-855-8006

# HIV/AIDS Education & Training Center

- Joe Cantil, 729-3956
  - Training coordinator
  - Local Performance Site for NWAETC
  - Contact for preceptorships

# Areas of Discussion

- Our numbers
- Our state
- Our barriers
  - Geography
  - Recognition of dz
  - Help!



# Our Numbers

# Some Alaska Facts

- Total square miles of the state: 663,267
  - 20% the size of the contiguous lower 48
- Total population of the state : 710,231
- Therefore: 1.07 person per square mile
  
- Median age is 33
  
- 14% are AN/AI with an ~50:50 of male to female



# Alaska Native Peoples and Languages



# HIV/AIDS Numbers Alaska 2013

- Of the 1,540 cases reported to the state since January 1982:
  - 36% known to have died
  - 574 PLWHA continue to live in Alaska
- 2013:
  - 59 cases reported to the state
  - 24 were dx IN the state
    - 3 cases /100,000
  - 9 dx with AIDS at time of HIV dx = 38%



# ANTHC EIS Numbers

- 181 total HIV + in “active” care in our CW database
- 73 in Anchorage
- 159 AN/AI
- Age range: 12-87 years of age

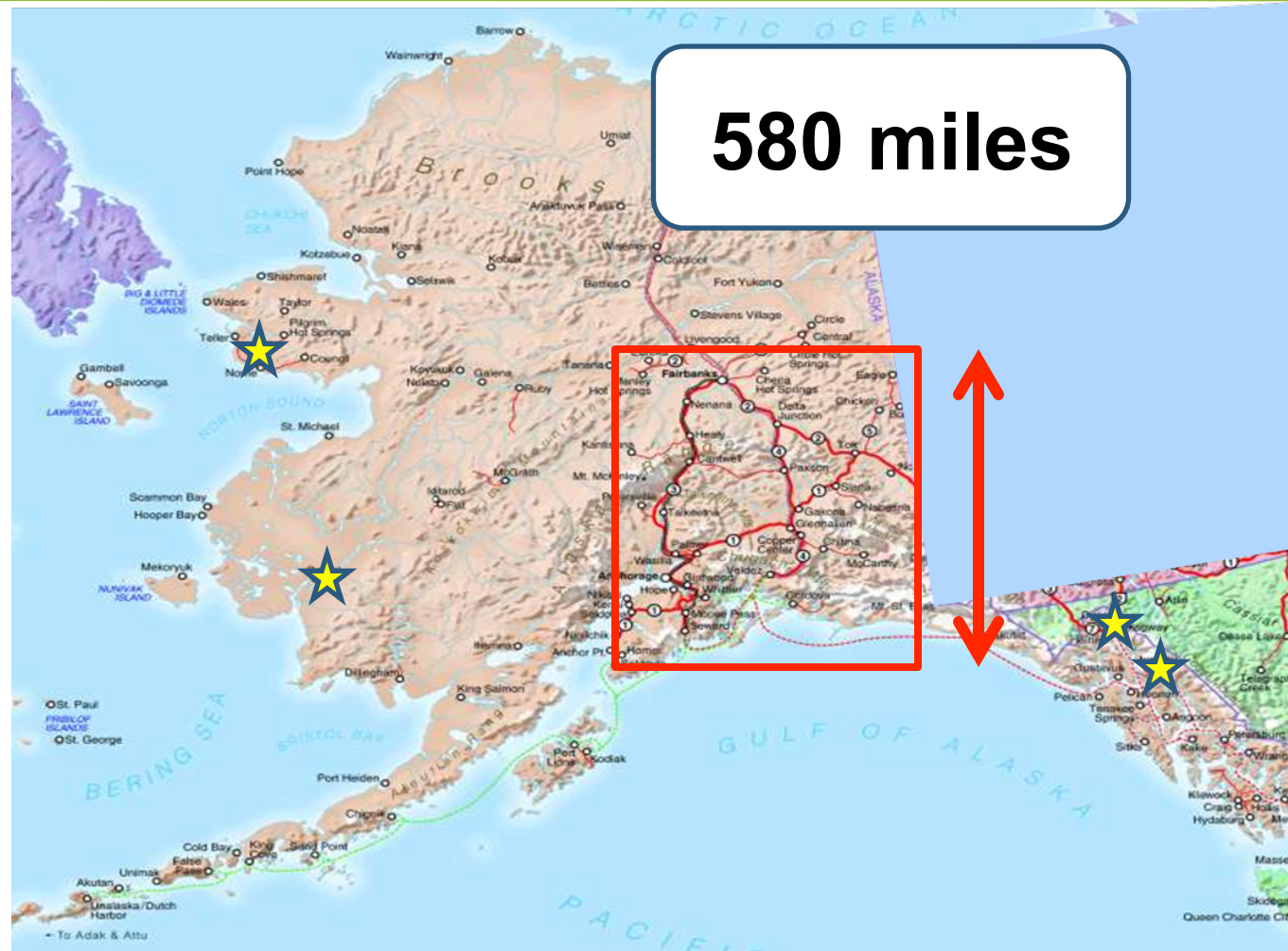


# Geography

# Bush Alaska

“Any community not on the road system”

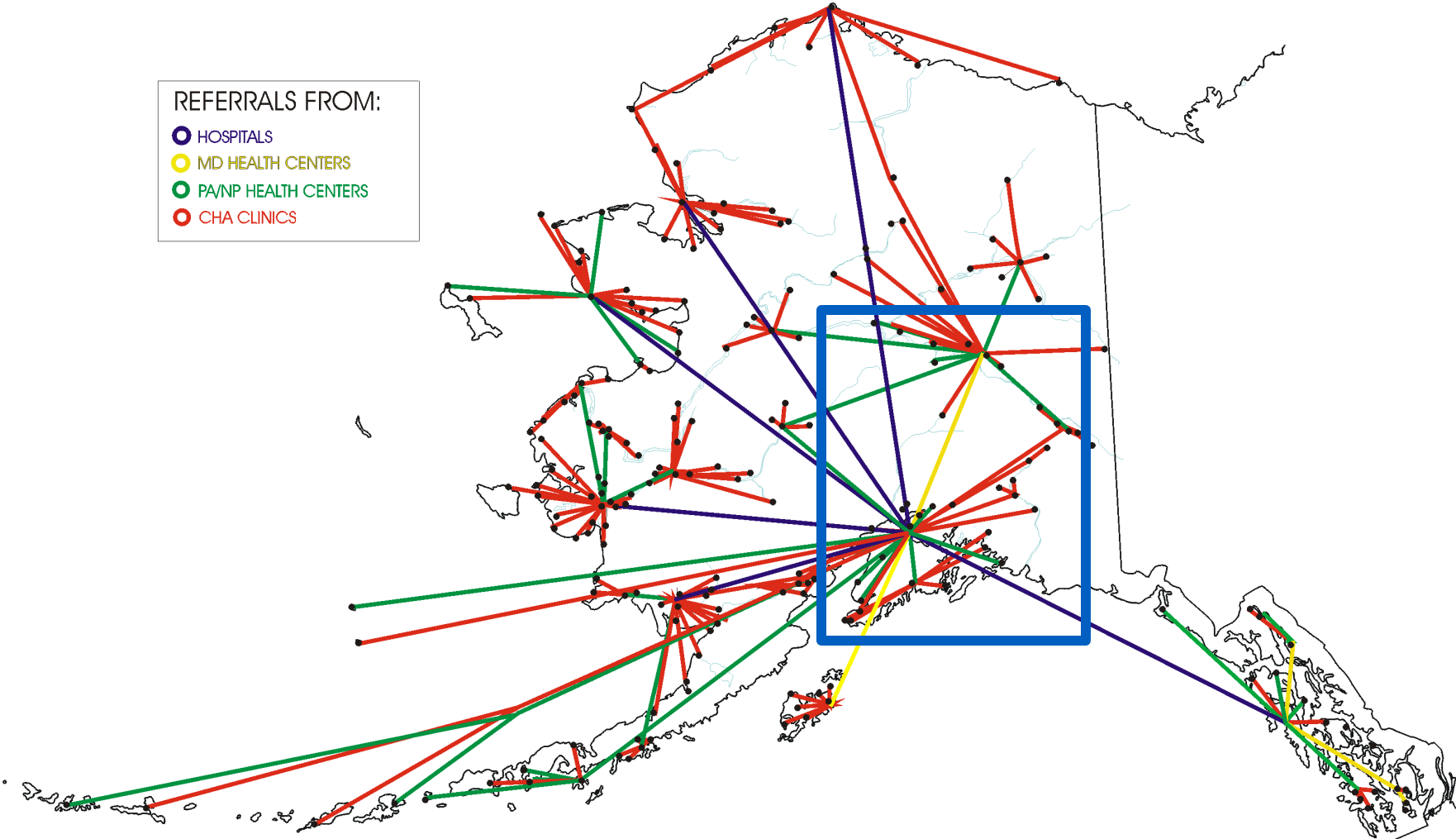
- 200 of 336 communities accessible only by airplane or boat



# THE ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

## Typical Referral Patterns

- REFERRALS FROM:
- HOSPITALS
  - MD HEALTH CENTERS
  - PA/NP HEALTH CENTERS
  - CHA CLINICS



# The Alaska Range



# Chugach Range



# Tundra



# Weathered In or Out



Digging out — Winter of 2006 On weather hold for three days.  
Photo Credit: Carl Evans





# Aniak



# Recognition of Disease



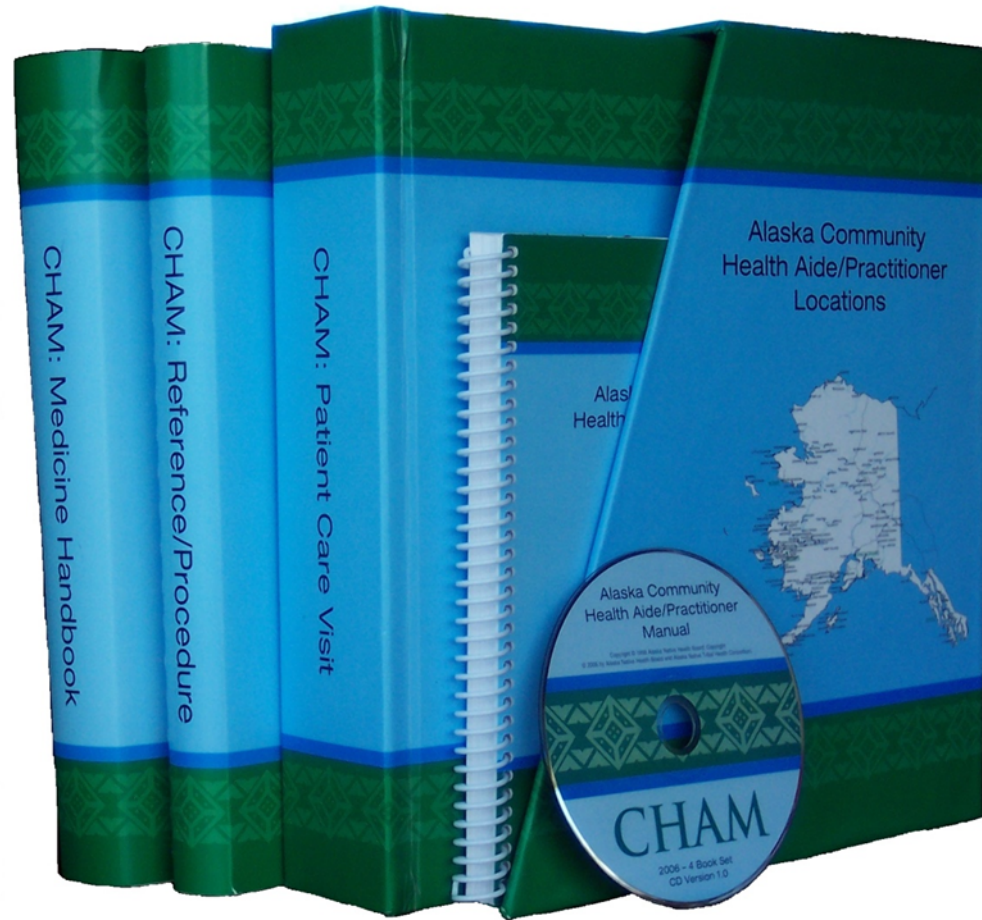
[http://dcra.commerce.alaska.gov/PHOTOS/HooperBay/HOOPER\\_B117.JPG](http://dcra.commerce.alaska.gov/PHOTOS/HooperBay/HOOPER_B117.JPG)



Newtok, bike riding on boardwalk

<http://dcra.commerce.alaska.gov/PHOTOS/Newtok/NEWTOK6.JPG>

# Community Health Aide/Practitioner Manual



## HIV or AIDS

### General Information

#### HIV or AIDS in the Village

1. Every village in Alaska is at risk to have patients with HIV or AIDS, because there is a lot of travel to and from the village.
2. The CHA/P's main job is to help reduce the spread of HIV in the village. The best way to do this is to teach people how to protect themselves from getting HIV.
3. A person who is HIV positive may or may NOT tell anyone, and may choose NOT to be treated. In the village, a main reason for secrecy is fear that everyone will find out about the HIV.
  - One of the most important things that the CHA/P must do is maintain patient confidentiality. This includes:
    - Discussing the patient ONLY with referral doctor or HIV team.
    - Keeping medical records private.
    - Making very sure that conversations between CHA/P and patient are NOT overheard.
      - Never ask patient what medicines he/she takes in front of other people. Many people know names of HIV medicines (from television, internet). If someone is taking a certain medicine, people will know patient has HIV.
4. A patient with HIV or AIDS has a very complex illness that needs frequent care by a doctor and medical team experienced with these problems.

#### Role of the CHA/P

1. There are HIV/AIDS specialists who provide case management and can give you advice about a patient's care.
  - Your supervisor or referral doctor can help you contact these people.
2. Your role as a CHA/P is to:
  - Do a good History and Exam, and report.
  - Provide health and patient education.
    - This is very important to prevent the spread of HIV, and to decrease fear.
    - People who understand how the disease is spread will know they cannot catch it from casual contact, and should be less afraid of being around someone with HIV.
  - Refer for testing.
    - If you think a person is at risk for HIV, talk to him/her about getting a test.
      - Suggest they take a friend or family member they trust to provide support.

- If test is negative, patient can practice prevention methods.
  - If test is positive, patient may start treatment early in the disease.
  - Provide an important support system for the patient.
3. If you find out there is a person with HIV in your village, tell your referral doctor right away.
  4. How much you do as a CHA/P will depend on:
    - Your ability to maintain confidentiality.
    - Your own level of comfort about sex and HIV.
      - It may be hard to talk about sexual behavior with a patient who is a family member or close friend.

#### What are HIV and AIDS?

1. HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) is a virus that is passed from one person to another by contact with blood or body fluids.
  - It infects the body and weakens the body's immune system by attacking and killing a type of white blood cell called CD4 cells (T cells), which control the immune system's response to infection.
    - If the number of CD4 cells is too low, the body can NOT fight infection.
  - If NOT treated, a person with HIV can develop AIDS within 2 to 10 years.
  - A person with HIV may NOT feel sick, may NOT even know they have HIV, but they can spread it to others.
2. AIDS (Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome) is the disease that happens after HIV has severely weakened the immune system.
3. A person is said to have AIDS if:
  - CD4 cell count is less than 200.
  - The person has signs of a weakened immune system.
    - This means the person gets unusual problems, such as:
      - Pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP).
      - Kaposi's sarcoma (a type of skin cancer).
      - Frequent bacterial pneumonias.
      - Oral thrush.
      - Recurrence of tuberculosis.
    - These are the most common problems, although patient may have others.
  - At this time, it is believed that all people with untreated HIV will develop AIDS. There is NO cure for HIV or AIDS, but with medicines and lifestyle changes to maintain their health, they can live long and healthy lives.
  - At this time, there is no vaccine for HIV or AIDS.

continues >

# Stigma...

“In the village, a main reason for secrecy is fear that everyone will find out about HIV”



Help!



L2C

Linkage to Care

Connecting people with HIV  
to the care they need.





- Melissa Boyette
- 907 269-8057
- <http://www.epi.alaska.gov/hivstd/l2c/>



ANHC



**Anchorage's**  
Health Center is your  
**HEALTH CARE HOME**

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# Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association

- RW Part B funding
- Social case management
- Housing
- Testing
- Etc, etc, etc



# WRAP IT UP ALASKA Condom Designs




# iknowmine.org



# iwantthekit.org

What's your risk of having an STD?

Visit "I Want the Kit (IWTK)" on  What's your risk of having an STD?



Self collected  
swabs for GC/CT/  
trich testing

## I want the kit

Info contact Brenna Simons, PhD [bcsimons@anthc.org](mailto:bcsimons@anthc.org)



# Overcoming Beariers... Quayana!

