Keeping Subsistence Harvesting Safe

ALSO INSIDE:
- KANA Annual Meeting Goes Virtual
- Every Alaskan Counts!
- Patient Satisfaction Survey
- Employee Spotlight
- September is Suicide Prevention Month
- Healthy Kodiak 2020
Greetings,

This year has been one of innovation, as communities and neighbors come together to face the extraordinary circumstances of 2020. We have all been asked to be more thoughtful of our actions, to take more care keeping ourselves and loved ones healthy, and to approach familiar activities in new ways. I am proud of the role that KANA has played in preventing, preparing for, and responding to the spread of COVID-19 in our region this year. From bringing essential emergency supplies and equipment to the island in collaboration with ANTHC, to supporting elders and village residents with grocery assistance, to providing free on-demand testing to community members and travelers at testing sites, KANA's efforts have evolved to meet the changing needs of the public health climate.

Within this newsletter, you will read about our new approach to Healthy Kodiak events in 2020; it’s never the wrong time to make a new healthy lifestyle goal, and by offering a year-round schedule of health challenges, workshops, and educational opportunities we hope that it’s easier than ever before to get involved with #HealthyKodiak activities.

You’ll also read about KANA’s 2020 annual meeting and election in October, which will be held virtually for the first time. Like many other local organizations, we are taking this new approach with online events in order to promote social distancing and avoid unnecessary risks that could spread COVID-19. For members of the Chapters participating in this year’s election, please keep a look out in the coming month for your ballot coming to you by mail, because it’s more important than ever before that voters return their ballots in a timely fashion.

KANA’s patient satisfaction survey results are included for the first quarter of 2020. As always, I encourage you to use this survey to communicate your experiences with KANA services, so that we can learn and grow to better serve you, our Alaska Native Beneficiaries. The patient survey is one way to deliver direct feedback to myself, the KANA Board of Directors, and your KANA Providers, so take a moment after your next visit and let us know how you feel we’re doing at http://kodiakhealthcare.org/survey/.

Respectfully,

Andy Teuber, President & CEO
2017-2020 Incumbent Directors

Loretta Nelson
Native Village of Afognak

Loretta Nelson has served on the KANA Board of Directors representing the Native Village of Afognak since 2004, while also serving as Board Chairperson for more than a decade.

She is the daughter of Willis and Martha Nelson from Afognak and Port Lions. Born in Kodiak, raised in Afognak until the 1964 tsunami, and relocated to Port Lions with her family, Nelson developed a desire to serve her community at an early age. She began as a KANA Community Health Aide in Port Lions.

After the Exxon Valdez oil spill, Loretta relocated to Kodiak and began working for Afognak Native Corporation, where she worked for twenty years as the Shareholder Relations Manager. Loretta has served as a Native Village of Afognak Board member for the past 10 years, where she also sits as Vice-Chairperson. She especially enjoys representing the Afognak tribe on the KANA Board. “The Board is an excellent team of people. Although we come from different tribes, when we sit down at the KANA Board table, we are one group working together for the KANA Beneficiaries.”

Loretta is proud of the many accomplishments that she and her fellow Board members have overseen at KANA through the years. Their goal has always been to continually strive to develop and provide a broad range of quality services to KANA Beneficiaries. Through their leadership, there have been significant increases in services offered and improvements in the organization with the additions of the Mill Bay Health Center, Child Advocacy Center, Wellness Center and Carolyn Street Behavioral Health Services, among others.

Loretta looks forward to continuing working with the Beneficiaries and the community through her dedicated service. “It’s the people that tie me to KANA. Serving the people and making sure that they are getting the best services possible is something I’m very passionate about.”

Speridon “Mitch” Simeonoff, Sr.
Native Village of Akhiok

Speridon “Mitch” Simeonoff, Sr. has served on the KANA Board of Directors, representing the Native Village of Akhiok for nearly 20 years.

Mitch is Sugpiaq Alutiiq from Akhiok, Alaska; he comes from a fishing family and has been a fisherman all his life. He graduated from Kodiak High School in 1972, after which he worked on the Alaska Pipeline.

Having raised three children in Akhiok, he currently enjoys spending time with his growing family of nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Not only is Mitch well-known locally, but his contributions and leadership skills are well known throughout the state.

In addition to being a KANA Board member, Mitch continues to serve his community with several other organizations. He currently serves as President of the Native Village of Akhiok Tribal Council. He also previously served as an Alaska Native Harbor Seal Commission member for over 20 years, including as its Board Chairman 2003-2017, he has also served as a Chairman on the Kodiak/Aleutians Subsistence Regional Advisory Council.

Inspired by taking his own kids camping each summer, Mitch helped initiate the Akhiok Kids Camp. Three decades later, Mitch continues to help host the camp, inviting campers from all around Kodiak Island to participate. This year’s Kids Camp, like so many other events and activities, has gone virtual due to the impact of COVID-19.

Mitch is passionate about advocating for children’s services, and feels strongly that children should be taught their Native language so they may identify themselves with their culture.

Through his tenure he finds a great sense of pride towards the development of the Child Advocacy program within KANA, especially the addition of KANA’s Child Advocacy Center. This is a program that takes a proactive approach to the prevention of child abuse and neglect.

“It’s important to me to become involved with any organization that helps people in the community. My focus remains with Kodiak Area Native Association because of the services that it provides to our Beneficiaries and the community.”
Every Alaskan Counts. The 2020 Census

The 2020 Census will determine funding for local services and economic opportunities for the next 10 years. Counting every Alaskan is critical to ensure full federal funding for healthcare and hospitals, schools and public safety, along with road and airport construction and maintenance.

The 2020 Census is now underway, and represents an important opportunity for Tribal members to help their communities and Tribal programs nationwide by being counted. Alaska Native respondents help determine funding not only for Tribes and native organizations, but also for other state and local programs in your area including Head Start, SNAP, TANF, and WIC.

There are two especially important things to keep in mind when filling out your census form or responding to a census taker: first, if you are Alaska Native and live in a mixed race household, please list yourself for question #9 as ‘Person 1,’ to ensure that your entire household is counted as an Alaska Native household. Even if you are not the homeowner or don’t pay more than half the household expenses, doing this ensures that the many state and federal programs benefiting Native household receive accurate information for how many Native families there are in your service area. When a non-Native person is filled in as “Person 1” (also known as the head of household), that home may not be counted for those programs no matter how many other Native persons live with them.

Second, when filling out the “race” question #9, please check the “American Indian or Alaska Native” option and list the name of your federally recognized tribe, as opposed to your regional or village corporation. If you can’t remember the name for your tribe, you can write in the name of your village. You can even write in more than one tribe (or village) if you associate with more than one. In addition to responding by mail or speaking with a local census taker, you can complete the Census for your household at 2020census.gov, or over the phone by calling 1-844-330-2020.

Patient Satisfaction Survey

In May of 2020, KANA launched a new platform to collect patient satisfaction by actively reaching out to patients via text and email to complete surveys. Patients now receive a text message link within 24 hours of their most recent appointment at KANA.

The survey asks a series of questions about the quality of our services and the overall patient experience. The new platform enables KANA to directly monitor and respond to patient feedback in a timely manner.

If you would like to complete KANA’s Satisfaction Survey, it can be found at http://kodiakhealthcare.org/survey/. The Survey link is also available on KANA’s Website. Feedback from our patients is crucial in ensuring we continue to Elevate the Quality of Life of the People We Serve.

How would you rate your overall experience at KANA?

How likely are you to recommend KANA to friends and family?

How would you rate your overall quality of care received from your Provider and Care Team?

How would you rate your effort in answering phone calls promptly and returning missed calls in a timely manner?

How would you rate the access to your Care Team when advice or help is needed?

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What are the responsibilities of your current position? I conduct SUD assessments then create a treatment plan for clients to receive appropriate levels of care. I also conduct weekly one on ones with clients.

What do you like most about your position? What I like most is being able to share my strength and hope and relating to the clients who struggle as I am also in recovery.

What educational goals do you have? Two of my goals include completing my Chemical Dependency Counselor (CDC) 2 certification and earning my degree in Social Work. At this point, I'm applying for my CDC 1. I'm also currently in school and working towards my associates in Human Services—but getting my Bachelors would open up so many avenues for me.

How has KANA helped you grow? KANA has put me through training and has given me access to so many resources and people. My co-workers are a wealth of knowledge—I can’t explain how working in this department has been so eye opening. I’ve been given the opportunity to help people better their lives, and if I can’t, I do my best to help them find services or agencies that will.

What is your most memorable work moment? When the Chemical Dependency Counselor position was vacant—I lacked the confidence to apply. I would have talked myself out of applying altogether if it wasn’t for the gentle prodding and the confidence my coworkers had in me. I’m glad they pushed me out of my comfort zone.

What do you love most about the Kodiak Community? I love that Kodiak unites for people in need, we are no longer “they” or “them” we put the unity in community when one of our “own” needs us.

What does “To Elevate the Quality of Life of the People We Serve” mean to you? Our mission means to be given the opportunity to help people better their lives, and if I can’t, I do my best to help them find services or agencies that will.

Join our team!
kodiakhealthcare.org/careers

KANA offers a wide range of career opportunities for candidates wanting to develop their skills while contributing to our dedicated team. We’re looking for talented individuals with the enthusiasm and dedication to join us in our mission.
September is National Suicide Prevention Month – and KANA is joining national efforts to bring awareness to suicide prevention. This month we want to promote available mental health-related resources and provide tools to help you recognize suicidal ideation and how to react appropriately. By equipping our community members with effective tools, we can reduce the stigma surrounding mental health and suicide and lay a foundation for the healthy future of our community.

Warning Signs of Suicide
We all can learn the warning signs of suicide. Any significant change in behavior is a warning sign for suicide, and this includes things like:
- Change in mood, from happy to sad or even from sad to happy, and anything in-between
- Increase in drinking alcohol or taking drugs
- Change in outlook on life, for example, if someone talks about feeling hopeless and being a burden, this is a warning sign
- Talk about killing oneself and having a plan of how to do it is a major warning sign

*Warning* against suicide prevention. Studies indicated that when lethal means are made less available or less deadly, suicide rates by that method decline, and frequent suicide rates overall decline. Research also shows that “method substitution” or choosing an alternate method when the original method is restricted, frequently does not happen. The myth “If someone really wants to kill themselves, they’ll find a way to do it” is often held true, but does not hold true if appropriate safety measures are put into place.

ASK
We can all take action to prevent suicide; by starting a conversation, you could save a life. Studies show that asking at-risk individuals if they are suicidal does not increase suicides or suicidal thoughts.

### #BeThe1To
Suicide Prevention Lifeline’s #BeThe1To is the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, 800-273-TALK. Individuals who spoke with Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training-trained counselors, such as those who work with the National Suicide Hotline, were significantly more likely to feel less depressed, less suicidal, less overwhelmed, and more hopeful by the end of calls.

FOLLOW UP
Follow up care saves lives and resources. The risk of a repeat suicide attempt is especially high in the first 6 months after the initial attempt. Part of the success of follow up care/contact, is that circles back into the connectedness aspect of suicide prevention. After your initial contact with a person experiencing thoughts of suicide, and after you’ve connected them with the immediate support systems they need, make sure to follow up with them to see how they’re doing. Leave a message, send a text, or give them a call. The follow up is a great time to check in with them to see if there is more you are capable of helping with or if there are things you’ve said you would do and haven’t yet had the chance to get done for the person.

Suicide has a ripple effect across entire communities and it’s important that we end the stigma associated with Mental Health and Suicide, and recognize the ways in which we are able to help one another. If you or someone you know is struggling with thoughts of suicide, contact the national suicide hotline at 1-800-273-TALK.

Help Them Connect
It’s important to help someone with thoughts of suicide connect with ongoing supports (like the Lifeline, 800-273-8255), this will help them establish a safety net for those moments they find themselves in a crisis. You can also explore additional safety net components and possible support options with them, including seeing a mental health professional. Another way to start helping them find ways to connect is to work with them to develop a safety plan. This can include ways for them identify if they start to experience significant, severe thoughts of suicide along with what to do in those crisis moments. A safety plan can also include a list of individuals to contact when a crisis occurs–including calling the 1-800-273-TALK.
Keeping Subsistence Harvesting Safe

KANA’s Environmental team has been working to monitor harmful algal blooms and Paralytic Shellfish Toxins (PSTs) by completing bi-weekly testing, while alerting the Kodiak community when PSTs go above the acceptable levels for consumption.

The program for testing is part of a larger statewide effort, including partnering with Sitka Tribe of Alaska, who initially started researching subsistence shellfish in 2015. There currently isn’t any statewide monitoring in Alaska for subsistence harvest of shellfish with Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning and harmful algal blooms, which is a real problem for our state.

“This effort is working to identify what harmful species are present along the Alaska coast, particularly in the Kodiak region,” said KANA Environmental Coordinator Andie Wall. “We are working to test shellfish on Kodiak Island and figure out the levels of PST in the shellfish because it has been known that Alaska, particularly Kodiak, has hot or toxic shellfish, but there has not been a lot of long-term monitoring. So that’s what we’re working to do.”

Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning is caused by eating shellfish contaminated with saxitoxin, a toxin produced by dinoflagellates of the genus Alexandrium. Saxitoxins, also known as PSP toxins, cause symptoms related to the nervous system. PSP toxins can be found in shellfish, such as mussels, cockles, clams, scallops, oysters, crabs, and lobsters, that usually live in the colder coastal waters near the Pacific states and New England.

“All commercially harvested shellfish must be below 80 micrograms of toxin per 100 grams of shellfish,” explained Wall. “That’s the kind of red line that we use. If we find anything above that 80 micrograms of toxin, we will put out an announcement and let you know that those shellfish from that location are above the regulatory limit and we do not recommend any consumption from that particular location. Symptoms of Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning can vary from person to person, depending on what you ate that day, how much water you consumed that day or even how many shellfish you consumed.”

Symptoms from consuming shellfish above the acceptable levels of toxins can begin within two hours of eating contaminated shellfish, but can start anywhere from 15 minutes to 10 hours after the meal. Symptoms are generally mild, but can also reach dangerous levels and even death by making it impossible to breathe.

“It varies a lot on symptoms,” continued Wall. “They can include tingling and numbness of the fingers or your lips. That can progress to paralysis of your lungs and even possibly death. That’s why this is really important - because people have died from Paralytic Shellfish Poisoning. We know that this continues to be a problem and has been a problem for a very long time. So we advocate for people to get your shellfish tested - or don’t consume if you don’t know the numbers of your sample.”

In cases of severe poisoning, the Centers for Disease Control states that muscle paralysis and respiratory failure can lead to death in 2–25 hours. The risk of death from PSP is reduced if healthcare professionals have access to ventilators that help people breathe if the ill person becomes paralyzed.

When the Kodiak Region test results do reach above the acceptable level of 80 micrograms of toxin, a Public Announcement Alert (PSA) is posted on KANA’s social media platforms, including our Facebook and Twitter pages, as well as posted on KANA’s website.

Currently, the Environmental team is conducting bi-weekly testing in four areas - Mission Beach NE, Mission Beach SW, North Trident Basin and South Trident Basin. They are also in the process of placing permanent posts at those locations that will have the latest test results posted on them so people can see the most updated information on PST levels. In order to begin testing at the Kodiak villages, training has been provided to volunteers and tribal environmental personnel from several villages on Kodiak Island, including Port Lions, Larsen Bay, Ouzinkie, Old Harbor and Akiak. The Environmental team is working with volunteers from those villages digging up shellfish samples for testing by next summer.

If anyone is interested in volunteering to assist in the program or would like additional information, please contact Environmental Coordinator Andie Wall at (907) 486-1313, or visit our website at www.kodiakhealthcare.org/environment.
Healthy Kodiak 2020

Working Together for a Healthy Kodiak

Each fall Kodiak Area Native Association holds the annual Healthy Kodiak, a community-centered health outreach and education initiative that aims to raise awareness about local health challenges and provide residents and visitors with opportunities throughout the year to engage in health-promoting behaviors.

Healthy Kodiak recognizes that education, economic circumstances, food security, mental health, physical activity, and quality of relationships affects the health of our community. We believe that by working together we can positively influence these social determinants of health and improve health outcomes for everyone.

In 2018, Healthy Kodiak created a single-day event, sponsored by KANA’s Community Health Department, where the community was invited to come together to discuss, learn, and address community health and wellness challenges. In 2019, another annual event was held with interactive learning sessions added for variety to the educational topics being discussed and as a way to explore the benefits of self-care and social engagement as part of a healthy lifestyle.

This year, the pandemic has raised a new set of economic, social, and physical challenges for Healthy Kodiak to overcome. In order to support local health and promote social distancing,

Healthy Kodiak is transitioning from an annual event to a year-round community-focused initiative that will be more agile in addressing and solving current community health challenges.

We are excited to announce our new digital format and easy to navigate website www.healthykodiak.org. There you can find the current schedule of health challenges, workshops, and educational presentations and register to participate. We are excited to be able to feature persons and organizations in the community who are working to make Kodiak a healthier place to live.

Since moving to a digital format, our first partnership was with the Kodiak Chamber of Commerce to sponsor the Crab Festival Virtual Run & Walk to raise money for local business development through intentional physical activity. Healthy Kodiak’s first community challenge was the “Know Your Subsistence for a Better Existence” Cooking Challenge. This challenge was based on recipes found in the Foods We Alaskans Eat cookbook and a way to encourage everyone to get outdoors and gather, hunt, fish, and purchase local food products in their meals. The Kodiak Harvest Food Cooperative joined us and promoted the cooking challenge with an economic challenge of their own, encouraging people to spend $10 a week on local foods. As we close our Crab Festival weekend, we hope that other local businesses, organizations and individuals like you find value in our community health initiative and join with us to coordinate, collaborate and expand the impact of our individual contributions to community health.

It is easy to get involved with #HealthyKodiak. Share your expertise and provide us with content for our health education or hands-on workshops, or volunteer time to help us launch a new activity and promote the event on social media. Collaborate with us to promote your current health activities through our initiative to increase community awareness and participation, brainstorm with us to create new projects, and join us in conversations to solve local health challenges together. Share with your friends and family the workshops, community challenges, and learning series that you are participating in to support your own healthy lifestyle.

Simply visit www.healthykodiak.org to contact us and follow us on social media @HealthyKodiak to stay updated on upcoming events and get involved. As always, remember to share what you are doing to make Kodiak a healthier place to live using the hashtag #HealthyKodiak.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

#HealthyKodiak is a hashtag that participating businesses, individuals, and organizations use to show their support and collaboration toward our community’s shared healthy lifestyle goals.

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FOODS WE ALASKANS

The Healthy Kodiak Cooking Challenge “Know Your Subsistence for a Better Existence” was held during August to encourage subsistence activities and creativity in the kitchen.

Participants chose up to three recipes from the “Foods We Alaskans Enjoy” cookbook and were encouraged to gather, hunt, fish or purchase locally available foods to use in the challenge to create a healthy dish. Creativity and substitutions were encouraged, and persons of all ages were invited to participate and tell a story about their experience. We had 29 (25% were Beneficiaries) register and received 6 entries.

Foods We Alaskans Enjoy was compiled by Luz Smeenk, MS, RD, LD and designed and illustrated by Ayay’iq Moore, Erin Shepard, and Kevin Powell. Recipes were submitted by people all over Alaska with the goal of increasing the use of traditional subsistence foods. Recipes used in the Know Your Subsistence for a Better Existence cooking challenge can be found on Facebook #HealthyKodiak.
Kodiak Area Native Association is hiring health care professionals to work within our outpatient clinic settings, and to support the COVID-19 testing efforts in Kodiak.

- Certified Dental Assistant
- Certified Medical Assistant
- Certified Nursing Assistant
- Licensed Practical Nurse
- Medical Technologist (Medical Laboratory Scientist)
- Phlebotomist
- Registered Nurse

To learn more or to apply, visit our Careers page at: [http://kodiakhealthcare.org/careers/](http://kodiakhealthcare.org/careers/) or email careers@kodiakhealthcare.org.

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**KANA Annual Meeting**

Saturday, October 10 • 10 a.m.

*Virtual Meeting*

The Annual Meeting of the Kodiak Area Native Association will be held on Saturday, October 10, 2020 for the purposes of electing two (2) Directors to the Board and to conduct such other business as may properly come before the meeting.

**Call to Order of the Meeting:** 10 a.m.

The following Tribal chapters will each elect one (1) Director at this year’s meeting:

- Native Village of Afognak
- Native Village of Akhiok

Details of the meeting posted at [http://kodiakhealthcare.org/annual-meeting-2020/](http://kodiakhealthcare.org/annual-meeting-2020/)