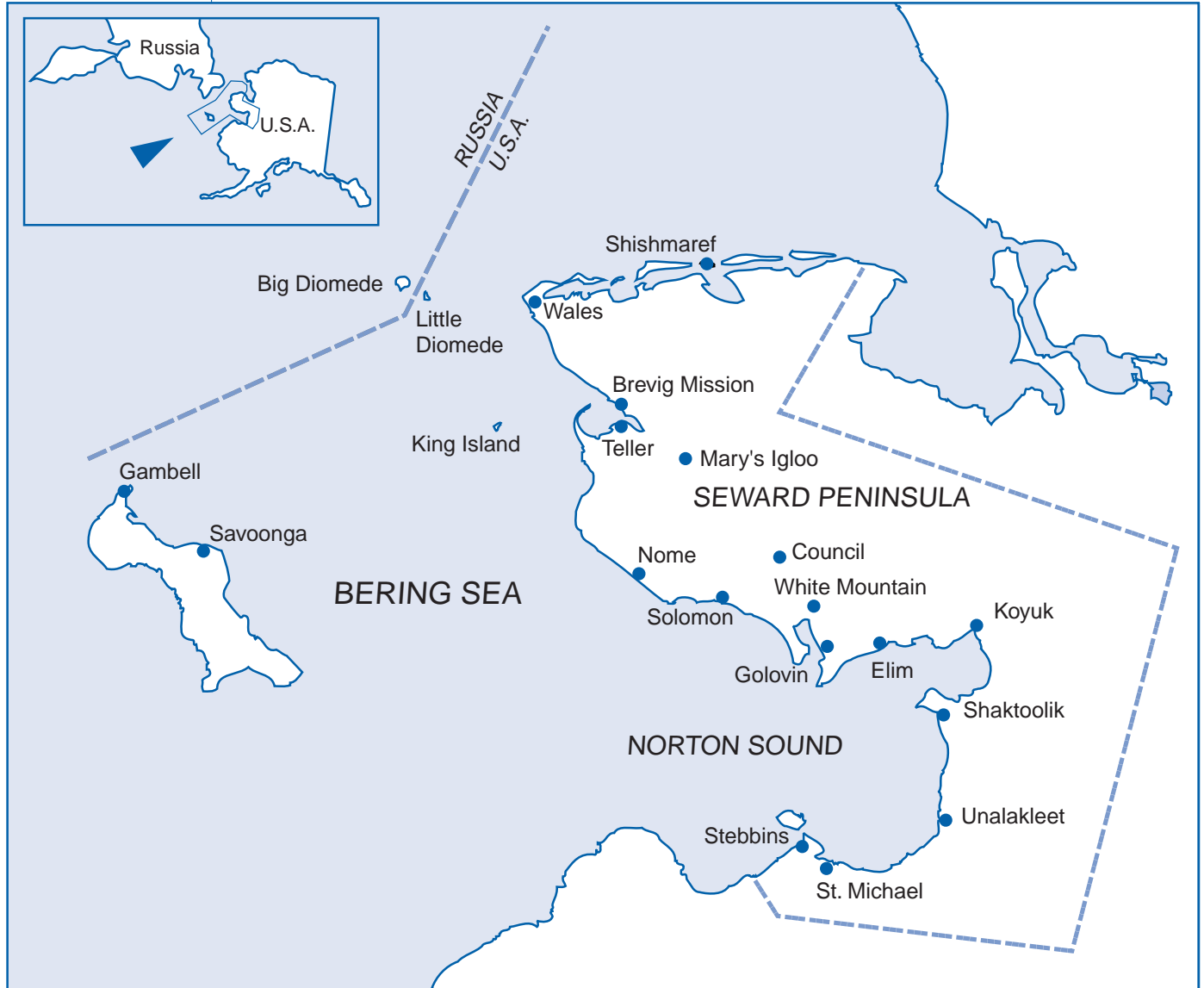


The Bering Strait Region



The service area of Norton Sound Health Corporation is the Bering Strait region, a 44,000-square-mile section of northwestern Alaska. The coastal areas are flat arctic tundra and permafrost with some foothills. Norton Sound Regional Hospital is located in Nome, which is the regional center with about 3,500 residents. Nome is situated 500 miles northwest of Anchorage.

Clinics affiliated with NSHC operate in 15 villages located on the coast and islands of Norton Sound and the Bering Sea adjacent to mainland Russia. NSHC also serves residents and former residents of four other Alaska Native communities in the region; some of these villages are not currently inhabited.

Approximately 81 percent of the region's 9,200 inhabitants are Alaska Natives. Most of the Alaska Natives are from three distinct language and cultural groups of Eskimos: Inupiat, Siberian Yupik, and Central Yup'ik.

There are few jobs available in the villages. Many people lead a traditional subsistence lifestyle, supplementing hunting, fishing and gathering with seasonal or part-time employment.