

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

The Social Services Department provides medical social work services to those seen at Norton Sound Regional Hospital, village clinics, Quyanna Care Center, and staff at Norton Sound Health Corporation.

During FY01, we:

- Handled 135 child abuse or neglect cases.
- Handled 22 cases of elder abuse, neglect, or exploitation.
- Helped families arrange 32 burials.
- Helped domestic violence victims 24 times.
- Arranged lodging and food for 87 elders, and helped 57 other patients with lodging concerns.
- Helped arrange long-term care for 42 elders.
- Enrolled 372 patients in Denali KidCare or Medicaid, and helped 163 others access various financial resources.
- Continued to help develop the local Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), which examines, counsels and collects forensic evidence from sexual assault victims in the region.
- Participated in a community-wide multidisciplinary child protection team to pursue funding for a regional child advocacy center. The center would provide examination facilities and services for child sexual abuse victims.
- Continued to run the Benefits Coordination Program to help patients apply and maintain eligibility for health insurance programs.
- Hosted a chaplain intern, through Our Savior's Lutheran Church, who volunteered 20 hours per week at the hospital. The program is expected to be a long-term effort by the church.

DIABETES PREVENTION PROGRAM

Diabetes is a condition in which the blood contains too much sugar. This condition can lead to heart disease, blindness, kidney failure, amputation of the feet, and other serious complications.

Changes in diet and activity levels have led to rising diabetes rates in our region, as they have for Native Americans in the Lower 48. In response to this epidemic, Norton Sound Health Corporation created the Diabetes Prevention Program in 1999.

The program tracks diabetic patients and ensures they get needed treatment and check ups. Our diet and exercise programs, aimed at reducing the num-

ber of people who develop diabetes, include:

- Step-by-Step, in which participants are given a small pedometer to track the number of steps taken in a day. Each participant works toward an individualized goal to increase daily activity levels.

- Summertime, an award-winning children's nutrition and exercise program, which included both Nome and Unalakleet in summer 2001.

- Water aerobics at the Nome-Beltz pool.
- Sending fresh vegetables to diabetics in villages.



Nutrition Services staff pose in the Fireweed Café. From left: Pat Owens, dietitian and department director; food service workers Andrew Kunayak and Bertha Herzner; cooks Joe Osborn, Valerie Horn and Don Truett; Helen Curran, food service worker; and Dave Coler, inventory technician.

NUTRITION SERVICES

The Nutrition Services Department provides nutritious meals for staff and patients. We cater a growing number of NSHC meetings and special functions as well as community events. We also educate patients and the public about nutrition.

During FY01, we:

- Prepared and delivered meals three times per day to Quyanna Care Center residents and hospital patients. Snacks are also provided for both units.
- Operated vending machines around the hospital.
- Saw the Fireweed Café become an increasingly booming business. Since 1989 the cafeteria's customer service count has more than quadrupled, rising from 11,555 in 1989 to 51,880 in FY01. Over the past year, our numbers rose by 18,257.
- Served 83,015 patient meals, in comparison to 59,528 meals in FY97.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

Emergency Medical Services is a multiple-duty department. We transport about 300 patients each year, including transports from villages to Nome, from Nome to Anchorage, and directly from villages to Anchorage. We also help transport patients from both the Kotzebue and Bethel regions.

When not flying, the paramedics are busy teaching in the villages as well as in Nome for the hospital, the city and for Nome Public Schools.