



# OUR STRENGTH IS *Our People*



**NORTON SOUND  
HEALTH CORPORATION**

**Fiscal Year 2019 Annual Report**



## Mission

Providing quality health services and promoting wellness within our people and environment

## Vision

By 2020, we will excel in tribally governed health care delivery systems globally.

- We will ensure that all patients receive quality and respectful health care.
- We will educate our patients and communities to be proactive in caring for themselves and promoting wellness.
- We will listen to, honor, and respect our elders, preserve their right to speak, and ensure they receive the best care in gratitude for their leadership.
- We will increase wellness efforts to reduce addictive behaviors and to raise the quality of life among our people and communities.
- We will advocate that our environment (air, land and water) will be clean, and our water and waste disposal systems are safe and affordable, in order to ensure our subsistence way of life.
- We will assert and implement tribal self-governance to achieve our vision through effective leadership.
- We will hire and support our tribal members to deliver and manage our services.
- We will develop state of the art and efficient health care facilities throughout the region.
- We will be financially strong through aggressive, effective and efficient financial management.
- We will support and develop our youth to pursue higher education and health care careers to ensure there is future tribal leadership.

## Values

Integrity • Compassion • Teamwork • Pride • Cultural Sensitivity and Respect for Traditional Values • Always Learning and Improving

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## *Honoring 50 years of community-based health care...*

On November 27, 2020, NSHC will celebrate its 50-year anniversary since incorporation. Among NSHC's earliest goals determined at its first Board of Directors meetings were additional hospital resources, dental services, health education, health aide training, and improving communications. NSHC has grown significantly and goals have adapted to that growth while remaining connected to a mission to provide quality health services and promote wellness within our people and environment.

It remains true that NSHC's strength is its people; from its representatives on the Board of Directors and its employees to its customer-owners around the region.



# Dear Customer-Owners and Patients,



**Angie Gorn**  
NSHC President/CEO



**Preston Rookok**  
NSHC Board Chair

NSHC continues to excel by achieving nearly all elements of its vision. NSHC's Tribal hire rate is at 62 percent, and our strength is our people. We support Tribal members securing higher-level education to attain health care or vocational careers to gain meaningful employment at NSHC. Our people continue to advance up the ladder to run programs and services at NSHC. Our Board of Directors continues to utilize feedback from our people to strengthen our health care delivery. NSHC is listening.

We are working hard to ensure the basic needs of our people are met. Five of our communities remain without running water and flush toilets. In FY2019, NSHC reorganized its governance to include a Water and Sewer Committee. A Sanitation department was developed and implemented, and NSHC hired a dedicated sanitation engineer to continue collaboration with all the agency

partners and to provide oversight for the scope of water and sewer projects.

Significant steps have been taken by the organization to ensure that whole-person care is being delivered; behavioral health services have been prioritized, and resources have been increased. NSHC's Day Shelter, which opened the first of the 2019 calendar year, has demonstrated that recovery coaches do make a difference. The clients/guests are interested in changing their lifestyle, but a great deal of patience and time is required. The resource and recovery program has resulted in guests securing jobs, housing, reducing emergency department visits, and achieving GED status. These positive outcomes will only improve once the Wellness and Training Center is open and the in-region treatment program is expanded. Additionally, the acquisition of full-time psychiatry services has allowed NSHC to provide in-region treatment for behavioral health patients who would otherwise need to be transferred out.

The goal to improve access to care for all communities is being realized; village physician visits for FY19YTD doubled compared to FY18 volumes, and more mid-level providers were hired to provide relief to our health aides and after-hour, on-call relief. NSHC created a Population Health department and In-Home Support program to better reach patients around the region.

NSHC has remained financially strong by aggressively preserving reimbursement methods, analyzing projects from a cost/benefit perspective, minimizing unnecessary costs, and maximizing revenue opportunities. NSHC's annual operating budget has grown by \$60 million over the past five years.

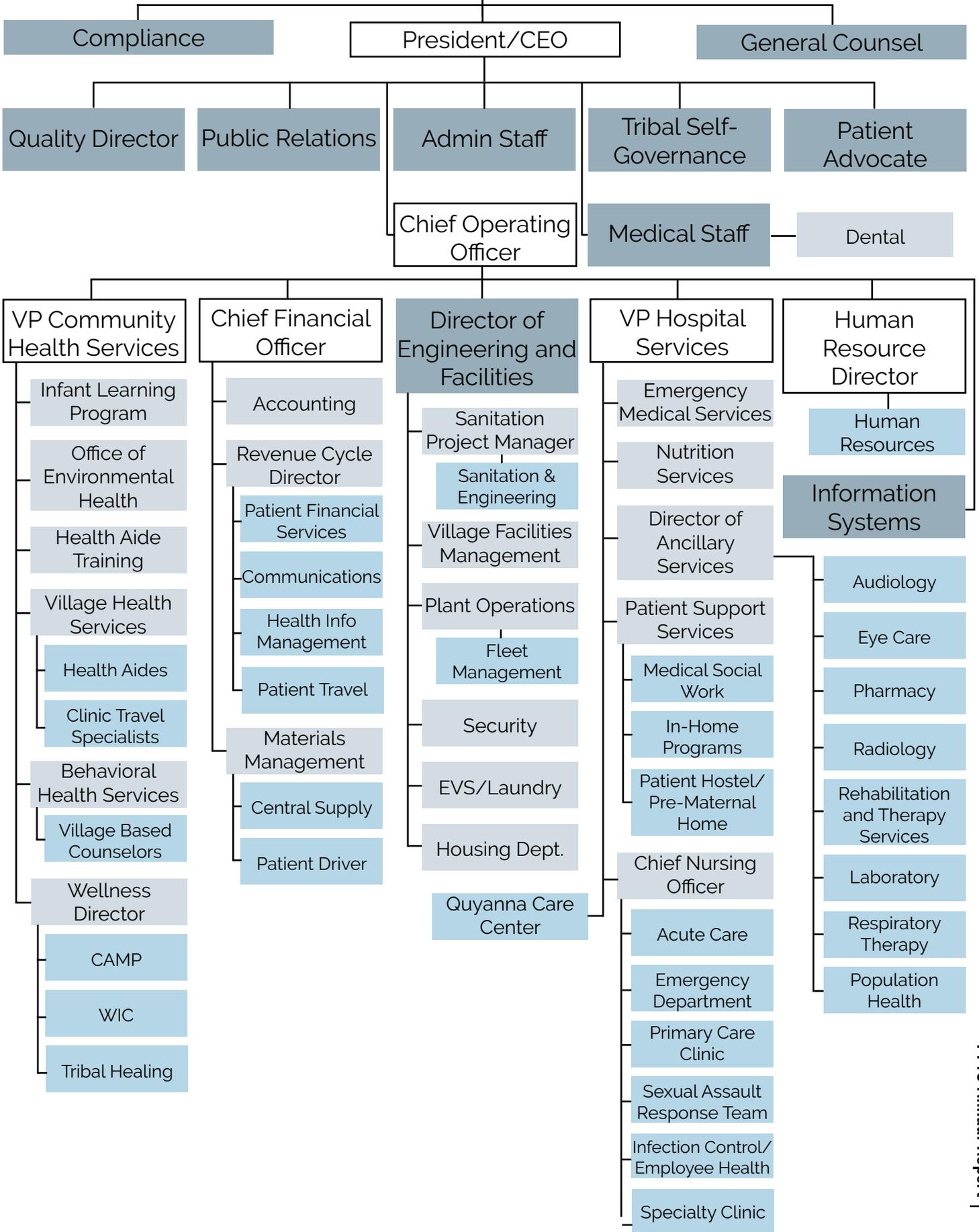
It is the organization's goal to promote state-of-the-art facilities. In FY2019 the long-awaited new Shaktoolik Clinic opened, construction for a new clinic in Diomed began, and decisions were made to build new clinics for Shishmaref, St. Michael, and Wales. The Norton Sound Regional Hospital opened a MRI suite with a state-of-art MRI machine, the only one of its kind in Alaska and in the nation serving rural health needs. In FY2019, two housing duplexes in Savoonga were completed. Although significant progress has been made, our work is not done. During FY2020, NSHC strives to continue the construction of the Wellness and Training Center and a Maintenance Operations Building, expand the NSHC parking lot, and complete all village-based morgues.

As NSHC Board Chair Preston Rookok says, "As long as we work together, we will continue to carry out NSHC's mission and vision to better meet the needs of our people."



**At the UAF commencement ceremony in 2019, Mary Ruud, RN, received her associate's degree in Nursing, and Maasingah Nakak, CHP, received a certificate of Community Health.**

# Board of Directors





Michael Olanna  
Native Village of Brevig Mission



Berda Willson  
Native Village of Council



Frederick Murray  
Native Village of Elim



June Walunga  
Native Village of Gambell



Martin Aukongak  
Chinik Eskimo Community



Benjamin Payenna  
Kawerak, Inc.



Heather Payenna  
King Island Community



Leo Charles  
Native Village of Koyuk



Carol Ablowaluk  
Mary's Igloo



Alfred Sahlin  
Nome Eskimo Community



Stan Andersen  
City of Nome



Alice Fitka  
Native Village of St. Michael



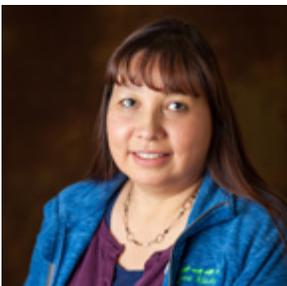
Preston Rookok  
Native Village of Savoonga



Matilda Hardy  
Native Village of Shaktoolik



Mollie Ningeulook  
Native Village of Shishmaref



Elizabeth Johnson  
Village of Solomon



Jean Ferris  
Stebbins Community Association



Jenny Lee  
Teller Traditional Council



Tony Haugen  
Native Village of Unalakleet



Joanne Keyes  
Native Village of Wales

# FY2019 Board of Directors

## Executive Committee

- Chair: Preston Rookok
- 2nd Vice Chair: Martin Aukongak
- Treasurer: Stan Andersen
- Exec. Member #1: Matilda Hardy
- Exec. Member #3: Alfred Sahlin

- Vice Chair: Heather Payenna
- Secretary: Berda Willson
- Asst. Sec./Treas.: Mary D. Charles
- Exec. Member #2: Elizabeth Johnson

Not Pictured: VACANT, Native Village of Diomede



Mary Charles  
Native Village of White Mountain

NSHC serves the entire Norton Sound/Bering Strait region. Based in Nome with the Norton Sound Regional Hospital, NSHC has local clinics in each of the 15 outlying villages. NSHC's Board of Directors is comprised of a Tribal representative from each of the region's 20 Tribes along with a representative from NSHC's sister organization Kawerak, Inc. and the City of Nome.



## Remembering Al Sahlin

Alfred Sahlin served as a member of the NSHC Board of Directors for 29 years as the Nome Eskimo Community representative. He died at the age of 86 in September 2019.

As a board member, he was known for being an outspoken advocate for patients and employees alike. He made it a point to encourage higher wages for lesser-paid employees and was a supporter of community health aides. Al injected humor and light heartedness into Board gatherings. He is dearly missed by those who knew and worked with him.

**Upper Left:** Al Sahlin is pictured signing a metal beam that became part of the Norton Sound Regional Hospital building in 2010.

**Bottom Left:** Al joins other elder board members, Berda Willson, Jean Ferris and Alice Fitka, to cut the ribbon to NSHC's new MRI suite in February 2019.

# Medical Staff

Dr. Mark Peterson  
Medical Director



Board of Directors Shaktoolik Representative Matilda Hardy became one of her community's new clinic's first patients, when she allowed Dr. Gary Kulka to practice some acupuncture therapy to help ease her neck pain.

Acupuncture and neurology were two services added to NSHC's primary care offerings in FY19.

NSHC Medical Staff consists of physicians and mid-level providers. Medical Staff provides high quality medical services for the region in a compassionate and sensitive manner.

Fiscal year 2019 brought stability to the Medical Staff department. Dr. Mark Peterson, medical director, was able to increase staffing levels, including village-based mid-level providers positions and fully staffing the Primary Care Clinic, Acute Care, Quyanna Care Center and OB services.

NSHC's psychiatry services was able to help fill a role left empty by the Alaska Psychiatry Institute. The level of psychiatry services provided and accessible to regional residents was unmatched in rural Alaska.

# Dental

Dental Patient Encounters

FY18: 8,703

FY19: 9,003

Dental services at NSHC range from preventive and emergency care to crowns, bridges, root canals, oral surgery, orthodontics, and dental implants. Dental care services are provided in Nome and villages and are supplemented by full-time Dental Health Aide Therapists in Unalakleet and Savoonga.

Dentists travel to all villages on an annual basis, with roughly half of patient encounters occurring in the villages and 54 percent in Nome.

## FY19 Highlights:

- NSHC Dental bid farewell to dentists Dr. Jillian Perry and Dr. Dale Burke, longtime itinerant dentist in Unalakleet.
- Dr. James Arneson stepped into the role of providing upper level dental services for Unalakleet.
- Dental welcomed Dr. Joseph Sem to its staff in July. Dr. Sem is the first dentist to join NSHC

staff with a completed residency program under his belt.

- In July, Alaska Medicaid discontinued coverage for adult enhanced dental services. NSHC agreed to cover the cost of dentures and associated travel for non-covered patients. Medicaid has since reinstated some enhanced dental services.

The Dental team does an annual cleanup on the west side of the hospital. Dr. Kelso spearheads the effort for his department, and sometimes other volunteers join in.



# Hospital Services

Kelly Bogart  
Vice President of Hospital Services



## Primary Care

NSHC Primary Care provides individualized health care to residents of the Bering Strait region on an outpatient basis. Primary Care makes it a goal to provide patient-centered multidisciplinary care, offering more services to the patient in one location. Services include, but are not limited to: behavioral health, medication counseling by a pharmacist, health educators, care coordination, and specialty services.

In FY19, NSHC made the big step of transitioning to team-based care as part of its Patient-Centered Medical Home model. The care teams offer patients consistent relationships with their health care providers. Health care managed within a team allows for greater continuity of care and helps improve communication.

Each team is made up of medical staff, community health aides, nurses, case managers, schedulers/

**PCC Appointments**

**FY18: 12,214**

**FY19: 13,739**

**Specialty Clinic Appointments**

**FY18: 2,060**

**FY19: 1,893**

clinic travel specialists, behavioral health providers, nutritionists, pharmacists, laboratory staff, social services providers, and many other supporting staff members.

If you are not aware of which care team you are a part of, you may find out by calling the Nome Primary Care Clinic at 443-3333.

**Nurse superheroes Anita Helsius, Annie Gollan, Marla Mayberry and Paula Woods celebrate Nurses Week 2019.**



## Acute Care

**Admissions** FY18: 793

FY19: 941

**Deliveries** FY18: 50

FY19: 61

**Forensic Nursing** FY18: 164

**Encounters** FY19: 181

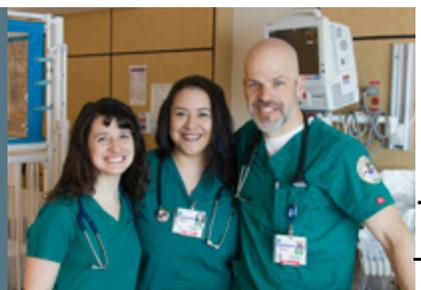
Norton Sound Regional Hospital's inpatient unit can accommodate up to 18 patients who require ongoing or monitored treatment. Acute Care staff uses a multidisciplinary approach to health care, and staff is committed to creating a healing atmosphere while meeting patient needs in a respectful manner. Skilled nurses provide top-level care for everyone from newborns to elders. Family involvement in the healing process is encouraged, and guests are welcome during visiting hours.

## Labor and Delivery

NSHC offers a team approach to expectant mothers, including Primary Care and WIC departments. When a baby is ready to be born, the patient and family are welcomed to the Labor and Delivery unit. Physicians and experienced nurses are on hand to promote a safe and comfortable delivery experience.

The Labor and Delivery unit offers private rooms with adequate space for family to be present. NSHC hopes to promote family interaction and baby bonding in its Labor and Delivery Unit.

**Nursing students Vanessa Thalhofer, Kallie King and Daniel Hobbs worked in Acute Care under the guidance of Registered Nurses.**



# Emergency Department

The NSHC Emergency Department is open 24 hours a day, all year long. It is a Level-IV Trauma Center, staffed by physicians and specially trained nurses. ED staff works closely with the medevac team and other facilities, such as Alaska Native Medical Center, to transport patients from villages and Nome to ensure patients receive the appropriate level of care.

Triage nurses in the emergency department field phone calls from NSHC's Nurse Call Line. The Nurse Call Line is a health care advice service that patients can call directly and also routes after-hours

<b>Encounters</b>	<b>FY18: 8,943</b>
	<b>FY19: 8,495</b>
<b>Traumas</b>	<b>FY18: 59</b>
	<b>FY19: 58</b>

phone calls to village clinics to the ED. Through a program called Clear Triage, nurses ask callers a set list of questions to help determine the best possible plan of care. In FY29, nurses answered 4,601 calls from around the region.

# Employee Health/ Infection Prevention

<b>Total Employee Flu Vaccines</b>	<b>FY18: 729</b>
	<b>FY19: 672</b>

The Employee Health and Infection Prevention program is responsible for infection surveillance in Quyanna Care Center and Acute Care, employee immunizations and tuberculosis surveillance, as well as being a core member of the Antimicrobial Stewardship Program and the Safety Committee. Infection prevention practices, such as hand hygiene and proper use of personal protection equipment, are monitored for compliance.

# Quyanna Care Center

An 18-bed, long-term care center, QCC has been home to many of the region's respected elders. NSHC believes as patients age, staying connected to their culture is as important as receiving first-class health care and living assistance. With that in mind, the staff of QCC strives to maintain residents' quality of life in a safe, home-line environment and incorporates traditional ways of living into different aspects of the residents' care.

QCC's staff consists of physicians, nurses and certified nursing assistants. Through a regional partnership program, the CNAs are able to be trained and recruited locally to maximize the cultural familiarity for residents.

QCC staff members continue to try to provide the most comfortable and familiar environment for residents and often solicit donations of traditional food, including game meat, fish, berries, eggs, and more.



QCC residents and staff enjoy outings, which are sometimes as simple as a visit to the Fireweed Cafe, where they might be serenaded by staff members like Willis Pate.

Heather Lefebvre  
Director of Ancillary Services



# Ancillary Services

## Pharmacy

Prescriptions Filled **FY18: 87,865**  
**FY19: 86,329**

Pharmacists play an important role on the healthcare team through their knowledge of medication and the information they can provide. They are responsible for dispensing medication, monitoring the patient's health, and optimizing the response of drug therapies.

As a member of the care team, a pharmacist is available to provide full-time services for drug-related questions, to make recommendations, and to provide patient counseling at the time of a primary care appointment.

### FY19 Highlights:

- Patients can now interact directly with a pharmacist, instead of a technician, at the Pharmacy window. This has increased medication counseling and improved Pharmacy workflow.
- A Pharmacy driver was hired



Pharmacist Kayla Gibson gives CEO Angie Gorn her annual flu shot.

The NSHC Laboratory is accredited by the Joint Commission. The laboratory holds dear NSHC's value of always learning and improving - it has a well established career ladder to employ entry-level employees who can achieve certifications at four levels, post-high school graduation. It also accepts students from the University of Alaska system for clinical rotations and internships within the laboratory. Management strives for excellence with a progressive laboratory to remain competitive with the best possible test menu and makes updated equipment available for the region. The NSHC laboratory continues to support local businesses and corporations by providing drug screening services.



Ellie Mannix and Bennett West followed the vaccine schedule for babies and became poster children for getting vaccinated early.

to start the Pharmacy prescription delivery program.

- Enhanced collaboration with Primary Care, including conducting annual wellness visits, and leading the Controlled Substance Stewardship Team and Psychiatric Case Review Team.
- Hired three new pharmacists who previously participated in the pharmacy student program. The Pharmacy is now fully staffed.

## Laboratory

Laboratory Tests **FY18: 141,284**  
**FY19: 158,829**

The laboratory continues to support the hospital's needs and the region's communities with an advanced Point of Care testing program accredited by COLA. The Annikan Inuit Iluqaqtaat Sub-Regional Clinic in Unalakleet is also COLA-accredited laboratory. The Point of Care testing program both Village Health Services and the sub-regional clinic had successful biannual surveys, passing with 100% compliance!

# Rehabilitation and Therapy Services

**Patient Encounters**      **FY18: 2,946**  
**FY19: 3,398**

approved a name change for the Physical Therapy department to be more inclusive of the additional therapies it was adding to its menu. The Rehabilitation and Therapy Services department offers physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy services.

The department team works together to evaluate and treat a broad range of conditions for patients of all ages. They work with individuals who may be experiencing difficulty walking, balance impairments, weakness and pain. In 2019, the team added a full-time

At the end of FY19, the Board of Directors

occupational therapist who helps individuals who may have experienced an injury or pain with adapting and functioning in daily life. The department also provided speech language pathology therapy via video teleconference. The speech therapist helps individuals experiencing communication difficulties, swallowing disorders, or cognitive impairments. The therapy team uses a variety of treatment options including exercise, modalities, adaptive equipment such as splinting, and manual treatments. One of the most important aspects of therapy is patient education in self-care, including a regular home exercise program. Physical therapists provide semi-annual village trips, and both physical and occupational therapists provide video conferencing.



OT Samantha Pollee treats Joann Kealiher for an injured wrist.

## Eye Care

**Eye Care Patient Encounters**      **FY18: 3,739**  
**FY19: 3,393**

NSHC's Eye Care department provides comprehensive services to all patients, beginning at age 6 months, in Nome and at least once annually to each village in the region.

### FY19 Highlights:

- Held 19 clinics throughout the region's villages and served 975 patients in the villages alone
- The annual Diabetes Clinic was held in September, where seven diabetic patients were seen for full dilated eye examinations
- ANMC Ophthalmology specialty clinics were held in October and April, where ophthalmologists saw a total of 25 patients
- Eye Care screened over 600 students at Nome Public Schools in October
- Former student Dr. Marcy O'Neil returned in a locum status in October and then as a full-time provider in April. Dr. O'Neil was an optometry student in 2010 and worked with NSHC for six months in 2011 and returned to locum status in 2014-2018

## Audiology

**Audiology Patient Encounters**      **FY18: 2,812**  
**FY19: 3,157**

NSHC audiologists provide comprehensive audiological services to patients in Nome and surrounding communities both in-person and through the use of telemedicine.

Audiology's first cochlear implant candidate was successfully implanted and activated in fiscal year 2019. All services were performed through NSHC Audiology. The patient is reportedly doing well and enjoying the world with more sound.

The Hearing Norton Sound research project continued to build upon the collaborative relationships within NSHC and between the organization and the Bering Strait School District. Its focus has been to investigate the effectiveness of telemedicine solutions on school hearing screening follow-ups. The project has now shifted gears from data collection to data analysis, and preliminary findings look promising.

The Audiology department now houses a full-time audiologist in the Unalakleet sub-regional clinic. As of September 2018, Kristin Follett, Au.D. has been providing services to the community and surrounding villages, including Shaktoolik, Koyuk, Stebbins and St. Michael.

# Radiology



Adrienne Dickson-Bahnke prepares for a magnetic resonance imaging scan as one of NSHC's first true patients on its new state-of-the-art machine in March 2019.

X-Ray/	FY18: 4,449
DEXA Scans	FY19: 4,717
Mammograms	FY18: 568
	FY19: 579
Ultrasounds	FY18: 1,607
	FY19: 1,409
CT Scans	FY18: 1,166
	FY19: 1,646
MRI	FY19: 270

NSHC offers a variety of radiology services across the region, including X-ray, CT scans, ultrasound, DEXA (bone mineral density exams) scans, mammography, and - new as of 2019 - magnetic resonance imaging (MRI).

NSHC's MRI machine began taking its first patients in March 2019 at the Norton Sound Regional Hospital. A local MRI machines was a long-held dream for the NSHC Board of Directors. The Nome-based machine means less travel and hassle for regional patients. NSHC radiology technologists contact patients ahead of time with a detailed questionnaire about their medical history to determine whether they are eligible for the exam. The MRI images are then sent off to Imaging Associates in Anchorage, where they are read, and results are returned to NSHC within one day.

## Respiratory Therapy

Respiratory Therapy specializes in the promotion of cardiopulmonary function, health and wellness. The respiratory therapist identifies, treats and prevents acute or chronic dysfunction of the cardiopulmonary system. In FY19, Respiratory Therapy upgraded its holters services to provide smaller and more devices..

Respiratory	FY18: 1,756
Treatments	FY19: 1,537

## Emergency Medical Services

The EMS department provides safe and rapid transport of critical patients to a higher level of care. Additionally, the EMS department provides emergency disaster preparedness training throughout the region. An EMS trainer provides training for 10-11 months a year. The EMS department is instrumental in providing Basic Life Support, Advanced Cardiac Life Support and Pediatric Advanced Life Support training for the entire region.

Medevacs	FY18: 329
	FY19: 507
Ground Ambulance	FY18: 230
Runs	FY19: 380



EMS team members gathered for a candlelight vigil in honor of fallen comrades across the state in February 2019. Less than a year later, they mourned the loss of a former fellow NSHC Flight Nurse Robert Cartner, who died in a medevac plane crash.

# Patient Support Services

<b><u>Social Services</u></b>	<b>FY18: 1,092</b>
<b>Total Patients</b>	<b>FY19: 1,202</b>
<b>Patient Encounters</b>	<b>FY18: 3,254</b>
	<b>FY19: 3,789</b>
<b>Patients Served for Interpersonal Violence</b>	<b>FY18: 150</b>
	<b>FY19: 173</b>
<b>Burial/Bereavement Assistance</b>	<b>FY18: 109</b>
	<b>FY19: 158</b>

The Patient Support Services department operates multiple programs that provide social support to NSHC patients, including the Medical Social Work program, the In-Home programs, the Patient Hostel and Pre-Maternal Home, language translators, and volunteer chaplains. These programs assist patients and their families in understanding and coping with their health conditions, and in connecting to resources and support in the community that can assist with their emotional, financial and social needs.



**Christine Schultz**  
Patient Support Services Director

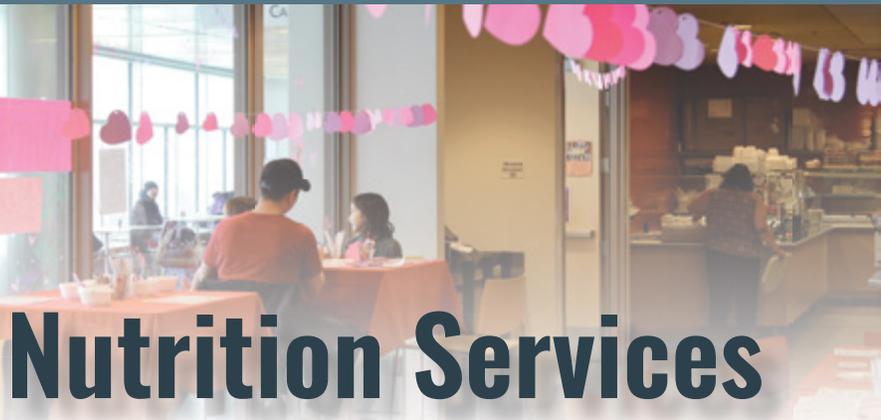
## In-Home Programs

In-Home Programs help individuals enroll in a Medicaid waiver program. The program offers people who experience intellectual and developmental disabilities, children with complex medical conditions, and elders the opportunity to receive support services (i.e. respite care giving, habilitative skill building, or direct support) in their home and around the community for as long as they desire. In-Home Programs was able to offer additional developmental disability grant services through a state-funded program, which came to a close at the end of 2018.

## Patient Hostel/Pre-Maternal Home

<b>Bed Nights at PH/PMH</b>	<b>FY18: 7,924</b>
	<b>FY19: 9,578</b>
<b>Bed Nights at Nome Hotels</b>	<b>FY18: 246</b>
	<b>FY19: 826</b>

The Patient Hostel/Pre-Maternal Home provides lodging in Nome to patients from the villages during their medical service visits and while expectant mothers await delivery.



## Nutrition Services

The Nutrition Services department provides daily meals for Acute Care patients and Quyanna Care Center residents and on-site catering services. All staff members are certified food handlers or food protection managers. The public is welcome to enjoy meals at the Norton Sound Regional Hospital Fireweed Cafe, which is open Monday-Friday 8-11 a.m., 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m. and 5-7 p.m.

The cafe's menu is updated weekly at [www.nortonsoundhealth.org/services/hospital-services/nutrition-services](http://www.nortonsoundhealth.org/services/hospital-services/nutrition-services).

# Community Health Services

Kirsten Timbers  
Vice President of Community Health Services



## Village Health Services

VHS Patient Encounters  
FY18: 32,939  
FY19: 35,504

Village Health Services operates NSHC's 15 village clinics and its administrative office in Nome. The majority of employees within VHS are Community Health Aides, who are local residents who have been trained at NSHC's Health Aide Training Center. VHS is also comprised of Clinic Travel Specialists, who are in charge of scheduling appointments for CHAs and traveling providers, arranging travel for patients and other office duties. VHS serves as a critical link between Medical Staff in Nome and patients in the villages, therefore minimizing the need for patient travel.

### FY19 Highlights

Terri Douglas, FNP, joined the VHS leadership team in May 2019 as assistant director. Prior to NSHC, Terri worked on the Aleutian Islands for the Eastern Aleutian Tribes in Akutan and Adak. While there, she worked with community health aides and learned about the CHA Program, which eventually led to her teaching CHAs skills. Her experience is a huge asset to the VHS department.



Terri Douglas, FNP, joined VHS as assistant director in May 2019.

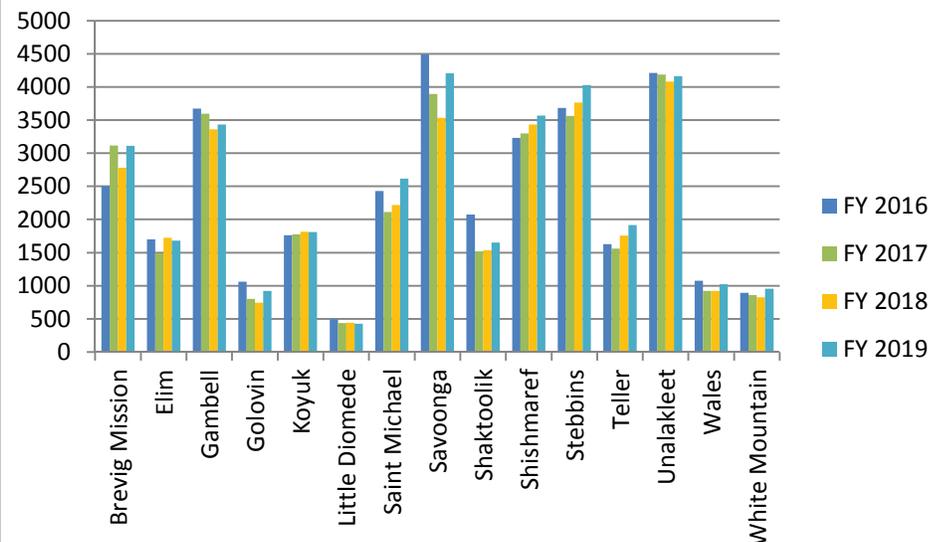
Teller Clinic staff members pose in kuspuks on Indigenous Peoples Day in 2018.



VHS Director Carol Charles (front center in black) joined the Board Executive Committee and Administration on a trip to Stebbins in 2018.



### Patient Visits by Clinic



# Health Aide Training

Basic Training Attendees	FY18: 37 FY19: 42
Preceptorships Completed	FY18: 2 FY19: 8
Continuing Education Workshop Attendees	FY18: 16 FY19: 12
Re-entry Evaluations	FY18: 3 FY19: 6



CHAs Beverly Nakarak, Helena Otton, Chantal Miklahook, and Marina Koonooka and Trainer Teri LeMay hold Trainer Elaine Phillips on a backboard during an EMS refresher portion of CHA session four training.

Health Aide Training consists of a training center, located in Nome, and offers classroom and hands-on training to village Community Health Aides, giving priority to NSHC students. The center is one of four in the state of Alaska. Trainers help ensure quality patient care through Basic Training sessions, clinical preceptorships, evaluation of re-entering health aides, continuing education workshops and recommendations for standing orders.



HAT invited elder health aide retirees to come speak with the region's newest health aides in February 2019. The elders, including Arlene Soxie, Willa Ashenfelter, Phyllis Farrell and Rita Buck talked about their experiences and answered questions on some of the "hard subjects" connected with working as a health aide, including historical trauma, suicide, and ways health aides can stay healthy and take care of one another after training ends.

## Become a Health Aide Training volunteer!

HAT is often looking for people to volunteer being patient models for health aides who are in training.

Find out how you can help by calling 443-3404!

## New Health Aide Skills Per Session

### CHA I

ETT Grad, BLS, IV fluids, suturing, basic wound care, blood draw, injections, telemedicine, and hemoglobin, blood glucose and rapid strep labs

### CHA II

Prenatal exam, mental illness exams, plaster splinting, crutch fitting, postural drainage/clapping, PPD skin tests, urine labs, stool tests, HIV pretest counseling

### CHA III

Routine prenatal care, immediate postpartum, newborn care, breast exams, well child exams, pap smears, immunizations

### CHA IV

Chronic care, including diabetes and tuberculosis

# Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral Health Services, a Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) accredited program, provides integrated services for people with mental health and/or substance use concerns. Dedicated to offering person-centered care where the client directs their treatment, BHS providers facilitate interventions and counseling with individuals, couples, and families in a confidential and healing environment. Through this collaborative approach, people involved in services develop healthier behaviors, relationships, and expression of emotions.

Additionally, in FY19 BHS implemented and collaborated on several initiatives:

- 1. NSHC Day Shelter:** On December 29, 2018, NSHC opened a Day Shelter in Nome to serve those who are homeless and/or have substance misuse concerns. Understanding not everyone who has a need will come through the front door of Behavioral Health Services, NSHC decided it was imperative to go where the people are and offer an alternative place to engage safely. We anticipate developing trust and rapport now will motivate more people into treatment during the run-up to Wellness Center operations. In FY19, over 280 unique individuals were served by the Day Shelter and its Recovery Coaches with several getting jobs, housing, GEDs, and treatment.
- 2. Anvil Mountain Correctional Center:** BHS partners with AMCC to provide reentry services for inmates who have an imminent release date. These services help those being released identify and access resources to help them stay healthy and well in their communities. A full-time BHS clinician works out of the jail to provide substance use and mental health services. Through strong assessment work and treatment planning, the clinician has been able to enroll people in services prior to release so they may seamlessly continue their treatment at BHS.
- 3. Psychiatry:** To complement BHS services and meet the needs of the region, Psychiatric services were enhanced to include seven days per week, on-site care in Nome and daily telehealth services to the villages. During the fiscal year, routine Psychiatric services steadily increased from 30 per week to 200 with total encounters over 1,100.
- 4. Wellness and Training Center:** NSHC has worked for eight years to design, construct, and operate a regional Wellness and Treatment Center (WTC) in recognition of the need for people to remain in or near their communities while engaging in treatment and learning to function productively with community, cultural and family supports. NSHC proposes to expand its services to offer more intensive Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment services so community members can receive the level of care the individual requires locally with operations starting in June 2021.

**BHS Patient Encounters**

**FY18: 6,182**

**FY19: 6,248**



NSHC held a symbolic blessing for its new Day Shelter, which is located in what is locally known as the "BIA Building," with a long history of housing agencies that weren't always friendly to Alaska Natives. The Day Shelter opened at the end of December 2018, and the blessing was held one month later in recognition of the healing work being done there.

# Wellness Department

## CAMP

The Chronic Care, Active, Management and Prevention (CAMP) program empowers

people and communities to promote healthy lifestyles and improve quality of life for people with chronic illnesses. The CAMP program is funded by the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) community-directed and the State of Alaska Tobacco Prevention and Control Grant.

### CAMP's goals are:

1. Provide quality diabetes care and treatment through an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach,
2. Reduce the risk of complications related to diabetes through medical nutrition therapy,
3. Increase the number of screenings for individuals within the Norton Sound region who are screened for diabetes and receive education about diabetes risk factors and how to prevent diabetes,
4. Implement youth and community events in efforts to prevent diabetes,
5. Provide early childhood nutrition education and lactation support to prevent diabetes,
6. Work with organizations to implement and enforce tobacco-free campuses and/or events,
7. Promote public awareness regarding the health benefits of tobacco cessation and resources for tobacco cessation
8. Support injury prevention efforts within the Norton Sound Region

### Services include:

- Health Promotion and Weight Management
- Medical Nutrition Therapy
- Diabetes Prevention and Management Education
- Step-by-Step, Health Screenings and Counseling
- Community Health Fairs and Presentations
- Summercise Youth Diabetes Prevention Activities
- Tobacco Cessation Counseling and Education
- Lactation Counseling, Breastfeeding Support and Childbirth Education
- Early Childhood Nutrition Education
- Walk/Run Events
- Injury Prevention Education and Supplies

Total Nutrition Appts	FY18: 1,241
	FY19: 1,178
Diabetes Appts	FY18: 374
	FY19: 398
Health Screenings	FY18: 309
	FY19: 267
Tobacco Cessation Appts	FY18: 90
	FY19: 149
Health Fair Attendees	FY18: 299
	FY19: 217
Youth Registered for Summercise	FY18: 197
	FY19: 163
Lactation Support	FY18: 97
	FY19: 201

### Successes include:

- Establishing and maintaining a comprehensive diabetes interdisciplinary team
- Maintaining health promotion in the region through an award-winning Summercise program, monthly wellness challenges, physical fitness activities, health screenings and more
- Informing the public about the risks of tobacco and sponsoring tobacco-free events throughout the region
- Developing and promoting injury prevention efforts; which includes offering low-priced safety supplies to everyone in the region and also traveling and offering community education at schools and events

Wanda Iya and Katie Hannon traveled to Savoonga in FY19 for an outreach trip focused on tobacco and injury prevention.



# Women, Infants and Children

NSHC WIC serves families including women, infants, and children by providing nutrition education and supplemental food benefits. The program strives to promote maternal and child health in the region by educating about the benefits of subsistence foods, encouraging families to drink more water and decrease sugary beverages, recommending play-time and physical activity daily, and promoting breastfeeding as the gold standard nutrition for infants. Staff members receive ongoing training to provide early childhood nutrition education, nutrition education for pregnancy and postpartum, and breastfeeding support and counseling. The WIC staff continue to work diligently to process incoming applications and provide our clients with WIC food benefits, nutrition education, and breastfeeding support.

WIC transitioned from paper checks to an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) system, known as eWIC. The new EBT system simplifies the shopping experience for clients and makes it easier than ever to purchase WIC foods.

<b>Obesity Rate (Children 2-5 Years Old)</b>	<b>FY18: 36%</b>
	<b>FY19: 38%</b>
<b>Breastfeeding Initiation Rate</b>	<b>FY18: 82%</b>
	<b>FY19: 85.3%</b>
<b>Breastfeeding Duration Rate at 6 Months</b>	<b>FY18: 54%</b>
	<b>FY19: 57.3%</b>
<b>Breastfeeding Duration Rate at 12 Months</b>	<b>FY18: 43%</b>
	<b>FY19: 45.5%</b>

## FY19 Accomplishments:

- Hired a WIC Manager
- Engaged in and planned World Breastfeeding Activities for the community
- Participated in the Big Latch On event
- Collaborated with the NSHC Wellness Programs on the Baby Friendly Hospital initiatives
- Transitioned from paper checks to an EBT "eWIC" system
- Utilized WIChealth.org to provide online nutrition lessons for families

# Tribal Healing

NSHC established the Tribal healing program in 1997 at the request of the people of the Norton Sound region and approved by the Board of Directors. Tribal Healing has been a traditional practice used by the Native people before western medicine was available. Tribal Healers massage sore muscles and joints and manipulate some internal organs to provide traditional hands-on treatment remedies.

The Tribal Healer program provides traditional and culturally based alternative therapies at the patient's request. Appointments are located in the Primary Care Clinic, where it is easy for medical staff to refer patients. Tribal Healers also travel to the villages to provide services at local clinics.

<b>Total Treatments</b>	<b>FY18: 1,050</b>
	<b>FY19: 1,070</b>



Tribal Healers Eva Menadelook and Evelyn Karmun took part in the 2019 NSHC Plant Symposium. They helped share their knowledge of regional plants and their many uses.

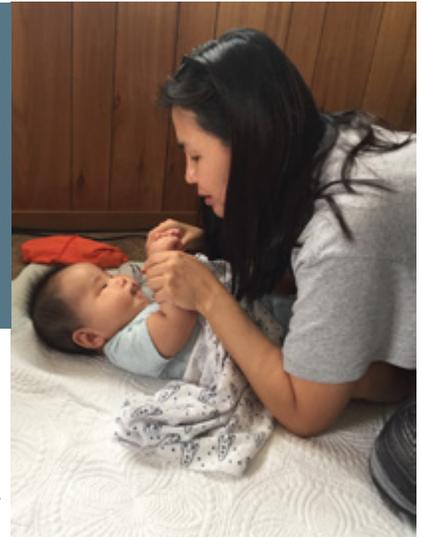
# Infant Learning Program

Service Provider  
Contacts

FY18: 1,322  
FY19: 1,298

The Infant Learning Program provides services for infants and toddlers with developmental delays and disabilities and their families. The early years of a child's life are very important. During the infant and toddler years, children grow quickly and have so much to learn. Some children and their families face special challenges and need extra help. Services are provided in the child's natural environment settings, e.g. home, child care setting, or other community settings. Some of the services include evaluations to check on developmental progress, including their physical, emotional and intellectual development. Other services include resources for families, developmental education, speech-language services, and occupational and physical therapy.

Elijah Soolook plays with his mom Betty during an ILP home visit.



# Office of Environmental Health

Environmental Health is a branch of public health that focuses on how the built and natural environments can impact human health, either positively or negatively. The Office of Environmental Health works with the people and organizations of the Bering Strait region to identify, control, and prevent environmental health issues.

OEH moved under the Community Health Services umbrella in October 2019. Drinking water and wastewater services are now housed under the new Sanitation and Engineering Department. The reorganization allows for a more proactive and focused effort given to both the sanitation and environmental health needs throughout the region.



Racheal Lee, Emma Pate, and Luke Smith were recognized by NSHC for the positive difference the OEH department made in 2019.

## FY19 Highlights:

- Regional water and wastewater operator training program: focused efforts were made to further develop and fund the program via regional and state partnerships. Four regional trainings were completed.
- Drinking water and wastewater utility support: routine technical assistance was provided to all communities, with emergency response services provided in seven communities. OEH assisted in developing state "IPF" grants to address urgent needs; eight individual projects were funded, totaling \$951,504.
- Environmental planning and technical assistance: technical assistance and training was provided to Tribal environmental programs, with three regional trainings completed.
- Bed bug management: assistance was provided to the public and NSHC staff regarding prevention and eradication. Contracted services with Houdini's Bed Bug Service has completed 163 home heat treatments in 10 communities, with 162 home prevention kits distributed from OEH.
- Rabies prevention: supported 35 volunteer lay vaccinators in the region to administer over 500 rabies vaccinations to dogs and cats. Coordinated Alaska Native Rural Veterinary's services in eight villages to provide 323 vaccinations and dewormers, 212 spay/neuters, and K-12 education sessions.

# Engineering and Facilities

Mike Kruse  
Director of Engineering and Facilities



Fiscal year 2019 brought about the completion of several major capital projects. NSHC's MRI suite opening in February, with patients first seen in March, was a huge undertaking. The suite's construction involved a renovation of the hospital's first floor Emergency Department area. Construction crews had to cut an entire wall out to move the magnet into place and timing was of the essence, with cooling agents keeping a sensitive magnet at bay until the machine could be plugged in. Crews began building the Wellness and Training Center and the NSHC Operations Building along the south side of Greg Kruschek Avenue in Nome, across from the hospital. On Little Diomed, construction on a new clinic began in place of the community's old National Guard armory. In Shaktoolik, construction on the new clinic was completed, and staff was able to move in and open the new Agnes Balla Takak Health Center in early August.



Shaktoolik's new clinic (below) is a 3,500-square foot facility, which replaced a 1,800-square-foot clinic that was built in 1999 (left). The community had outgrown the weathered building, and space and privacy were hard to come by. The new clinic is a modified Denali Commission template clinic. The outbuilding includes space for additional equipment and a morgue.



## Village Facilities Management

Village Facilities Management is comprised of maintenance technicians in each NSHC village and a Nome-based team that travels around the region to assist with preventive and responsive maintenance. The department was developed in 2015 when NSHC recognized the need to be more proactive in caring for the facilities where health care programs were operating.

### FY19 Accomplishments:

- Provided outdoor trash bins for each clinic
- Completed lab ventilation systems installation project
- Installed video conferencing TVs and cameras for village-based counseling
- Provided all-season fuel carts for each clinic's fuel supply
- Replaced generators in all communities and installed fencing enclosures around them
- Purchased snow blowers for every clinic.



# Plant Operations

Plant Operations works with all NSHC departments to provide quality maintenance and repair services, including managing utilities such as light, heat, air handling, oxygen, and power. The department works rigorously to care for facilities, striving to maintain a pleasant and comfortable physical environment for patients, visitors and staff.

NSHC sadly said farewell to longtime maintenance engineer Ronald Ongtawasruk in January 2020. Ron began working at NSHC in 2009 and was well known for his kind and gentle manner, as well as his great sense of humor. He is missed greatly by the Facilities team and by his friends and family, many of whom are part of the NSHC family.



James Barefoot, Teddy Payenna, Cyrus Kogassagoon, Frank Krier, Mikey Wongittilin and Qituvituaq Litchard represented two shifts of Security at the Norton Sound Regional Hospital during 2019's Healthcare Security and Safety Week.

# Security

NSHC maintains a 24-hour Security department at the Norton Sound Regional Hospital. Its mission is to assist, protect and serve patients, staff and guests. The department operates a desk on the first floor of the hospital in order to direct visitors. Many of the full-time uniformed officers and all supervisors are certified through the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety.

# Environmental Services/Laundry

Pounds of Laundry  
FY18: 217,227  
FY19: 248,396

The Environmental Services/Laundry department is on the front lines of infection control within NSHC, consisting of dedicated employees who undergo extensive training to provide services in housekeeping and laundry to patients. Over half the EVS staff have become Certified Healthcare Environmental Services Technicians (CHEST). EVS/Laundry is proud of the services it provides to NSHC to keep patients, visitors, and staff safe and comfortable.



The Environmental Services/Laundry team was recognized at NSHC's annual award ceremony with the "Standing Ovation Award" for being critical to NSHC's success and making a huge impact.

# Finance

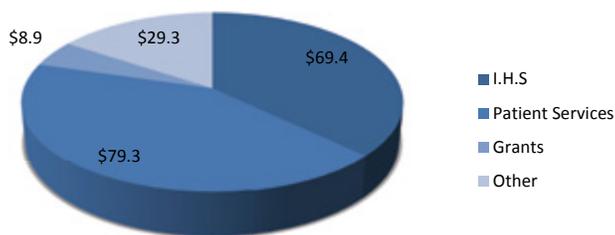
Debra Peacock  
Chief Financial Officer



## Accounting

Payroll, Accounts Payable, Grants Accounting, Budgeting and Financial Statements are all managed by the Accounting department.

FY 2019 Source of Operating Revenue  
(\$Millions)



## Patient Travel

NSHC Patient Travel books medical travel, including airfare and lodging, for IHS beneficiary patients. If patients are insured by Medicaid, the State Travel Office will book their airfare and lodging, but NSHC's travel office will help ensure they get their itinerary and all arrangements. NSHC has an Anchorage-based Patient Advocate who can help traveling patients and can be reached at (907) 434-2844.



NSHC's Wally Johnson assists Alice Charles of Elim with her travel arrangements.

## Health Information Management

Health Information Management maintains NSHC medical records and manages the corporation's daily needs for health care information. All records are maintained in accordance with strict policies and procedures, as well as applicable laws, including HIPAA. Staff provides medical record services and supports patients, providers and departments.

## Patient Financial Services

The Patient Financial Services department handles admissions, billing, and collections for NSHC medical services, as well as cashiering services for all divisions of the corporation. The department performs outreach to eligible patients to enroll them in benefit programs such as Medicaid.

## Materials Management

Materials Management purchases all material, supplies and equipment for NSHC and manages inventory and Central Supply. The department ensures purchases meet both quality and cost requirements. Materials Management oversees the Patient Driver, which operates 8 a.m.-7 p.m. on weekdays.

# Human Resources

The Human Resources department plays a critical role in the management of NSHC's workforce. HR enforces policies and procedures, manages the employee compensation and benefits programs, as well as the scholarship, internship, and other educational programs in support of Alaska Native and local hire development, recruitment, and retention strategies.

FY19 Accomplishments:

- HR began to formalize an Employee Supportive Services initiative with BHS. When managers identify external issues affecting employees' abilities to work, they are encouraged to connect their employees with supportive services rather than termination.
- NSHC awarded five students competitive scholarships in the amount of \$5,000: Hannah Alowa, Beverly Tran, Tamaira Tocktoo, Esau Sinnok and Kallie King.
- NSHC awarded a competitive doctorate scholarship in the amount of \$10,000 to Rachel Pomeranz, who went on to graduate with her doctorate degree in physical therapy.

**Total Employees**

FY18: 724

**Native Hire Rate**

FY19: 743

FY18: 61%

FY19: 64%

**Total Scholarships Awarded**

FY18: \$218,00

FY19: \$217,500

**Total Beneficiary Scholarships Awarded**

FY18: \$93,879

FY19: \$129,000

NSHC "Behind the Wheel" program graduates Laura Crisci, Becky Kunayak, John Washington, Sharon Ozenna and Damian Ashenfelter are proudly pictured after completing a driver's education course in partnership with NACTEC.



# Information Services

The Information Services department maintains the Electronic Health Record and Cerner connection, ensuring patient health records are kept accessible and secure. It also maintains computers and other equipment, keeps data secured, and makes sure phone lines remain open. The department, which consists of about nine employees at any given time, keeps track of needed repairs, problems and issues with its online Track-it tool.



NSHC scholarship students were invited to a celebratory dinner at an Anchorage restaurant in October 2018, coinciding with the Alaska Federation of Natives Convention, along with NSHC executive committee, administration and human resources staff representatives.

# Administration

Administration works collaboratively with the Board of Directors to ensure health care operations are carried out in a compliant manner to meet the needs of our people. First and foremost, Administration leads with heart to ensure customer-owners and patients receive quality and respectful health care. The team provides oversight, leadership, and management of NSHC's workforce, which has grown to 650 employees. Administration must stay abreast of all regulatory and compliance standards for NSHC's health care delivery system. Some of those agencies include Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS), Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA), the Joint Commission, the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). In addition, NSHC participates in an annual audit of its financial performance and internal controls and reports quality data to several agencies, which compares NSHC to other organizations in the Nation.



Administration team members gathered for a photo in 2019.  
Standing: Kirsten Timbers, Chase Gray, Maggie West, Dr. Mark Peterson, Reba Lean, Angie Gorn, Cameron Piscoya, Laurel Katchatag, Chris Bolton, and Sara Bowman.  
Sitting: Lucy Apatiki, Debra Peacock, Meredith Ahmasuk, and Kelly Bogart

Not only does Administration strive to keep NSHC in compliance, the team works to communicate the strategic plan to meet goals and to carry out the mission and vision of the organization through the contributions of its workforce.

## Some noteworthy accomplishments in FY2019 include:

- Increased access to physician and mid-level visits in the villages
- Expanded Behavioral Health Services by opening a Day Shelter program
- Increased access to local MRI exams, by opening a new MRI suite
- Completed construction of a new state-of-the-art primary health care clinic for the community of Shaktoolik
- Initiated a board-governed Water and Sewer Committee and hired a sanitation engineer to analyze the scope of regional water and sewer projects and to work with agency partners
- Hosted the Alaska Native Health Board Spring meeting and welcomed over 50 Tribal Health Organization partners to the region
- Facilitated regional village visits by dignitaries, including Senator Murkowski and Admiral Weahkee, Director of Indian Health Services, to observe regional water and sewer conditions firsthand
- Received a HRSA Quality Improvement Award, one of 26 health centers in Alaska, to receive funding in recognition for its quality improvements across different categories
- Launched a Population Health department, to increase the level of preventive exams, adult wellness exams, and vaccines for the region's patient population
- Attended 22 meetings with Tribes to communicate programs and services and to listen to concerns and suggestions.
- Launched an In-Home Support Program and received approval from the State of Alaska to administration Personal Care Attendant (PCA), Chore, and Respite Services for the region

# Public Relations

NSHC Public Relations works with different departments to implement new programs and services and share information regarding existing ones. The department's goal is to make sure the public is informed using a variety of outlets, including social media, radio, newspaper, newsletter, and email. Public Relations also helps organize special events and media campaigns.

## FY19 highlights:

- A second member of the team was hired to help NSHC keep up with needed outreach, education and marketing
- Helped plan several ceremonies and events to honor the openings of new services at NSHC
- Organized and advertised multiple public events at the hospital
- Produced semi-annual Kaniqsirugut Newsletter
- Helped coordinate all staff events, including awards, meetings, picnics and wellness days



Above: the Nome NSHC Color Run was held June 7, 2019. Below: Seals on Parade was a community beautification project featuring artwork from people around the region.



# Compliance

The NSHC Compliance department was

established to provide a systematic process aimed at ensuring that NSHC, its employees, contractors, vendors, and agents comply with applicable laws, regulations, and standards.

In FY19, the Compliance department started its strategic objectives set by the Board of Directors for FY2019-FY2021. Top priorities include focusing on enhancing the monitoring and planning of NSHC Systems for improvement in the quality of care with customers, staff, and service unit; sustaining and supporting a work environment of outstanding legal and corporate compliance that guarantees operational standards and regulator requirements; and improving services and relationships with patients, clients, residents, and villages for quality

enhancement and attentiveness to feedback.

Patient privacy is of the utmost importance to NSHC. The Compliance department, along with the Privacy Officer, provided training and education to employees regarding patient and residents privacy. Privacy concerns can be reported to the Compliance department or NSHC's anonymous hotline, EthicsPoint, at [www.nortonsoundhealth.ethicspoint.com](http://www.nortonsoundhealth.ethicspoint.com) or toll-free at 1-855-541-4193.

The Compliance department is the point of contact for all research related activities for the Norton Sound service area. One major stride the Research Ethics and Review Board implemented is related to biological specimen obtained for the purpose of a study. The RERB recongized the need to better protect the people of the region, and now all biological specimen obtained must be destroyed at the completion of the study.

# Patient Advocate

Advocate helps connect people in need with the Make a Patient Smile Fund. The fund provides monetary support to those who encounter unexpected medical expenses.

The Patient Advocate can be reached at (907) 443-4567 or at [padvocate@nshcorp.org](mailto:padvocate@nshcorp.org).

# Quality Improvement and Risk Management



NSHC strives to provide the best quality of care to all patients. FY19 saw significant quality improvement across different units of the facility. QCC improved in multiple quality indicators. Primary Care implemented patient-centered team-based care trainings. Acute Care and ED were trained in staff and patient safety using the Techniques for Effective Aggression Management system.

The 2019 Quality Focus Goals targeted depression screening, healthy lifestyle counseling, breast cancer screening, immunizations, prenatal care, hearing accessibility and heart disease.

The outpatient units were recognized as HRSA Health Center Quality Leaders for overall performance in preventative and chronic care, this is the second time NSHC received a national HRSA recognition.

NSHC has three quality improvement committees, which were all busy at work in FY 2019. The Aquutaq Committee focuses on outpatient services within the HRSA 330 Grant Scope. This committee supports the annual goals across departments with an overall goal of high quality patient-centered care. The Quyanna

Care Center Performance Improvement Committee meets regularly to ensure that residents receive the highest quality of care. Finally, the Health Services Performance Improvement Committee reviews the policies and procedures of NSHC to make sure they are compliant with all regulations and further evaluates risk points like patient falls, restraints, etc. to make sure NSHC is providing the highest quality care to patients.

The Quality Improvement and Risk Management department received several grants last year, including funding from the State of Alaska for patient satisfaction surveys and a funding award from HRSA for Clinic Quality Improvement, which went toward supporting training and education programs to promote high quality patient care.

Quality Improvement Department hosted/led multiple events in FY 2019 including, Heart Month in February 2019 rewarding staff and patients for blood pressure monitoring, Hoppy Healthy Easter, Back to School Bash, NSHC Parade entries, Pumpkin Walk, and multiple fundraisers for the Make a Patient Smile Fund.



Megan Mackiernan, PA-C and director of Quality, was honored by the Alaska Primary Care Association in May 2019. She earned the APCA's Coho Award, which recognizes contributions to the realm of policy and advocacy. NSHC President/CEO Angie Gorn, Board Chair Preston Rookok, Board 2nd Vice Chair Martin Aukongak and Kirsten Timbers were on hand to congratulate Megan.

## Self-Governance

NSHC partners with Kawerak to advance the federal priorities of regional tribes. Megan Alvanna-Stimpfle acts as Self-Governance Liaison for NSHC. In her role, she meets with government officials to share regional needs and issues and meets with tribes and local government entities to share collaborative strategies on advancing important projects.

Among the top priorities shared with key policymakers in FY19 were:

- The construction and staffing of the Wellness and Training Center
- Village sanitation funding
- Reimbursement for rural health care telecommunications
- Continued funding for the Indian Self Determination and Education Act lease program which provides funding for village clinic maintenance and improvements

# Photo Highlights from FY19



The new Shaktoolik Clinic opening was celebrated on August 1, 2019 with a ribbon cutting ceremony and open house for the whole community. People arrived on foot and by four-wheeler to take part in the celebration of the long-awaited building.



Many NSHC employees, including Shaktoolik Clinic staff, took part in a statewide drill known as Ragin' Contagion in April 2019. The purpose of the drill was to simulate the state's response to a pneumonic plague outbreak.



The full Board of Directors was on hand for the grand opening of NSHC's MRI Suite in 2019. An open house was held in the suite on January 30, and the public was invited to tour the new space.



NSHC hosted the Alaska Native Health Board quarterly meeting in Nome in May 2019. Leaders from Alaska Native regional health organizations gathered to discuss statewide health care issues.



Twenty NSHC employees were recognized at the UAF Northwest Campus commencement ceremony in May 2019 for achieving degrees, certificates and occupational endorsements through the UA system.

Below: Norton Sound Regional Hospital hosted its second-annual Pumpkin Walk on Halloween in 2018. NSHC departments decorated pumpkins in a fundraiser for Make a Patient Smile that raised \$750.

Right: Billy Joe worked on a coloring page at NSHC's 2019 Hoppo Healthy Easter event.



Above: Nome NSHC employees and family members gathered for its 2019 employee picnic.



IHS Director Michael Weahkee and a contingency of IHS sanitation officials visited Shishmaref in 2019 to learn about the community's water and sewer infrastructure.



IHS dignitaries received a warm welcome from the King Island Dance Group at the Norton Sound Regional Hospital. The dance performance and hospital tour came after the IHS visit to hear about regional villages' water and sewer needs.



NSHC hosted color run events as a fun wellness activity in different regional communities: Shaktolik (far left), Wales (middle) and Nome (below).

# 2019 Employee Awards



**January Employee of the Month -**  
Hae "Angela" Kim, Nutrition Services



**February Employee of the Month -**  
Kristin Paniptchuk, CHA SKK



**March Employee of the Month -**  
Chantal Miklahook, CHA SVA



**April Employee of the Month -**  
Leslie Friedlob, RN PCC



**May Employee of the Month -** Jill  
Campbell, CHA GAM



**June Employee of the Month -**  
Charlotte Key, Medical Social Worker



**July Employee of the Month -** Bobbi  
Slwooko, KTS EVS



**August Employee of the Month -**  
Shaina Soonagrook, CHA SVA



**September Employee of the Month -**  
Melinda Anowlic, Materials Mgmt



**October Employee of the Month -**  
Marla Mayberry, MCH



**November Employee of the Month -**  
Frank Krier, Security



**December Employee of the Month -**  
Ivory Okleasik, Native Connections



**Employee of the Year (Nome) -** Alice  
Amaktolik, Acute Care



**Employee of the Year (Village) -**  
Nicole Topkok, CHA TLA



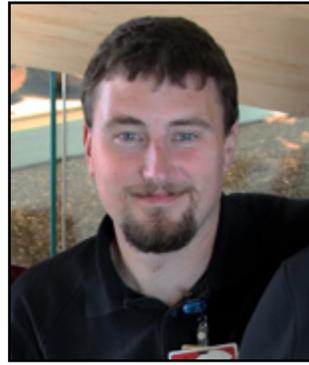
**Manager of the Year -** Lance Johnson,  
Behavioral Health Services



**PRIDE Value Award**  
George Okbaak, Human Resources



**PRIDE Value Award**  
Edward Jackson, Maintenance SKK



**INTEGRITY Value Award**  
Joshua White, Medical Staff



**TEAMWORK Value Award**  
Camille Katcheak, CHA WBB



**COMPASSION Value Award**  
Paula Woods, RN PCC



**CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND  
RESPECT FOR TRADITIONAL VALUES  
Value Award**  
Ursula Lyon, QCC

Not Pictured:  
**TEAMWORK Value Award**  
Cheyenne Yaw, Laboratory

**ALWAYS LEARNING AND  
IMPROVING Value Award**  
Cynthia Barrand, BHS

## *Outside Recognition in Fiscal Year 2019*

November 2018: Elvina Turner earned the ANTHC Behavioral Health Aide Forum Super Star award

January 2019: Pediatricians Dr. Kyle Pohl and Dr. Jay Flynn were recognized as 2019 Friend of Pharmacy Immunization Champions by the American Pharmacists Association

May 2019: Megan Mackiernan was honored with the Alaska Primary Care Association's Coho Award for her contributions to the realm of policy and advocacy.

July 2019: Norton Sound Regional Hospital was named one of the Top 20 Most Beautiful Hospitals in the U.S. from Soliant

August 2019: NSHC received a HRSA grant for \$167,000 in integrated behavioral health services funding for increasing its services to prevention or treatment of mental health conditions and/or substance abuse disorders.

August 2019: HRSA awarded NSHC \$79,454 for being among the highest performing health centers around the nation.

August 2019: The Norton Sound Region Children's Coalition won the American Pharmacists Association Foundation's 2019 Pinnacle Award in Category III for its work in immunizations.



**NORTON SOUND  
HEALTH CORPORATION**

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Nome, Alaska 99762

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## *Share Your Feedback*

**NSHC Ethicspoint Hotline:** Call 855-541-4193 or visit [www.nortonsoundhealth.org](http://www.nortonsoundhealth.org) and click on the "File a Concern" link

**Contact the Patient Advocate:** Call 907-443-4567 or email [padvocate@nshcorp.org](mailto:padvocate@nshcorp.org)

Call: (907) 443-3311

(888) 559-3311

Fax: (907) 443-2113

Visit: [www.NortonSoundHealth.org](http://www.NortonSoundHealth.org)