Fiscal Year 2017 Annual Report

Enhancing our future, our health, and our lives for a better tomorrow

NORTON SOUND HEALTH CORPORATION
Mission: Providing quality health services and promoting wellness within our people and environment.

Vision:
- 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
- Cultural Sensitivity and Respect for Traditional Values
- Always Learning and Improving
- Compassion
- Teamwork
- Pride

Cover photo by Jenelle Johnson
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Letter to Customer-Owners</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Report Dedication</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Directors</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norton Sound Map</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY 2017 At A Glance</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospital Services</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patient Stories that Inspire</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRI Approved Feature</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurse Call Line Feature</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Health Services</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human Resources/Information Services</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Orientation Feature</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capitol Projects</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Improvement &amp; Risk Management</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017 Employee Awards</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Dear Customer-Owners and Patients,

It was a positive and eventful year at NSHC with several significant changes. NSHC is clearly not standing still. In FY2017, NSHC focused on promoting culture change within the organization to embed the patient and family perspective into all that we do to deliver trauma-informed care. After a series of face-to-face listening sessions with our customer-owners, NSHC collected meaningful feedback that was thoughtful, direct, and indicative of the issues our people face. Patient care services and processes were developed and strengthened, which facilitated NSHC’s recognition as a Level III Patient-Centered Medical Home. Cultural sensitivity and humility training was enhanced to offer more exposure to historical trauma impacting our people; 349 new and existing employees were trained in FY2017 as a result.

In FY2017, NSHC turned its focus to a number of critical issues impacting the quality of health care, including the way opioids and other controlled substances, are prescribed throughout our organization. Through the development of a multidisciplinary care team and aggressive management of the issue at hand, controlled substance prescriptions were reduced by 45%. NSHC expanded its case management program, and improvement in other quality measures was observed as well for the 10,124 unique patients receiving care in NSHC’s primary care system; 74% of our patients were screened for cervical cancer, 92% of youth received nutrition and physical activity education, 99% of our patients were screened for tobacco use and/or received cessation intervention, and 69% of our patients with high blood pressure were controlled.

NSHC remains fiscally sound; $64 million in cash was collected in FY2017, an increase over FY2016 of $11.4 M. Through Medicaid expansion, the Patient Financial Services department enrolled an additional 1,170 individuals to Medicaid; over 5,000 in total now benefit from the program which allows the limited funding NSHC receives from Indian Health Services to support more health care improvements. NSHC’s vision to deliver health care in state-of-the-art facilities is being realized for our village patients. Savoonga and Gambell celebrated the opening of new 5,200-square-foot clinics for St. Lawrence Island residents with ribbon cutting ceremonies. Clinic designs for Little Diomede and Shaktoolik are underway. Seven villages received a patient transport van and construction began for village garages/morgues. Both the MRI and Wellness and Training Center final designs were completed and approved to move forward with piling installation. An award in the amount of $1.8 million was received from Indian Health Services to build housing in Savoonga for health professionals.

Our workforce remains our most valuable asset; over 700 employees directly work for NSHC. Bylaws were revised to ensure Health Aide Appreciation Day is celebrated in each community to recognize the outstanding work performed by our dedicated health aide staff. Additionally, NSHC’s employee health insurance program was changed and the Board of Directors approved paying premiums for all employees and their dependents. An employee wellness program, “Savignatugut,” was developed and piloted with the goal to increase employee knowledge and awareness about health, knowledge of and participation in cultural activities, and practice self-care for the mind, body, and spirit. NSHC aims to be the healthiest employer in the nation with more plans underway for FY2018.

-A message from the Board of Directors and President/CEO

Angie Gorn
NSHC President/CEO

The Wellness Program Committee shows their strength. The committee helped pilot an employee wellness program in 2017.
Norton Sound Health Corporation felt a great loss in the death of Edna Oliver. Edna was a bright figure of warmth in the Finance Department for many years. She worked for NSHC for more than 16 years, overseeing the Accounts Payable staff and filling various accounting positions throughout her career.

She was known as the glue that held the Finance Department together. She took on the role as lead organizer. She made sure her coworkers took breathers from work and had fun; planning potlucks, where she always made her famous bean dip. She kept things neat and tidy and played “mother” to her department peers. She always asked about people’s families and told stories and shared pictures of hers, especially of her two boys and her young grandson, of whom she was so proud.

Edna’s absence was felt as she bravely battled cancer in her last few months.
2017 Board of Directors

Norton Sound Health Corporation

2017 Board Member of the Year: Stan Andersen

Not pictured: Cassandra Ahkvaluk, Native Village of Diomede
Jacob Ivanoff, Native Village of Unalakleet

Photos by Esther Pederson
The NSHC Board of Directors and members of Administration attended the 2017 Annual Tribal Self-Governance Consultation Conference in Spokane, Wash.

Norton Sound Health Corporation (NSHC) is a nonprofit consortium owned by twenty Tribes in the 44,000 square-mile Bering Strait Region of Northwest Alaska, which is home to approximately 9,500 residents; 74.8 percent are Alaska Native.

NSHC operates the Norton Sound Regional Hospital in Nome, as well as clinics in the region’s fifteen Native villages, which range in size from 150 to 900 residents. Each Village Clinic is staffed by local residents trained as Community Health Aides. In addition, NSHC stations a Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner in larger villages and Dental Health Aides are located in Savoonga and Unalakleet. Although NSHC operates its own medevac service and telemedicine is available, the vast geographic distances within the service area can present challenges during inclement weather.
In Fiscal Year 2017,

Nome Primary Care Clinic encounters totaled 12,492.

Village clinics encounters totaled 33,127.

The Emergency Department had 9,421 visits and 61 were classified as traumas.

Nome’s Acute Care Clinic admitted 743 patients.

Top 5 primary care diagnosis categories:
1. Musculoskeletal/connective tissue
2. Health services related to reproduction
3. Endocrine, Nutritional and Metabolic diseases (excluding diabetes)
4. Immunizations
5. Hypertensive diseases

NSHC Dental saw 9,346 patients

Behavioral Health Services saw 8,267 patients

Eye Care saw 3,750 patients

Audiology saw 2,694 patients

Emergency Medical Services medevaced 342 patients

203 babies were born (52 in Nome and 151 elsewhere)

Operating Revenue ($M): 163.5
Expenses ($M): 145.1
Net Profit ($M): 18.4
Average Monthly Collections: $4,844,221.97
### Ancillary Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Count</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>139,791 Lab Tests</td>
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<tr>
<td>95,111 Prescriptions Filled</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2,671 Physical Therapies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1,615 Respiratory Therapies</td>
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<td>7,489 Radiology Images</td>
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### Preventive Tests/Visits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test/Visit</th>
<th>Count</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>302 Colonoscopies</td>
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<tr>
<td>538 Mammographies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>523 Pap Tests</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>8,599 Vaccines Administered</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2,911 Influenza Vaccines Administered</td>
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<tr>
<td>96 Tobacco Cessation Counsels</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>299 Health Fair Participants</td>
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### Additional Information

- Total Employees: 707
- Total Employee Training Hours: 20,019.5
- Total Employee Flu Shots: 576
- Total Scholarship Awards: $242,500
- Total Beneficiary Scholarship Awards: $165,500
- Community Health Aides: 65
- Members of the NSHC Board of Directors: 22
- Officers of the NSHC Board: 9
- Employees with Region as Primary Residence: 86%
- Native Hire Rate: 61%
- Voluntary Turnover Rate: 23%
Primary Care
NSHC Primary Care Clinic provides individualized health care to residents of the Bering Strait Region on an outpatient basis. PCC’s goal is to provide patient-centered multidisciplinary care, offering more services to the patient in one location. These services include, but are limited to, behavioral health, medication counseling by a pharmacist, health educators, care coordination, and specialty services.

PCC now has a fully staffed case management team offering support to all patients in the region. The focus of the team is to provide patient and provider support, with the goal of improving continuity of care, access to care, chronic care management, and prevention to reduce risks and complications associated with chronic and other illnesses. Each case manager and support staff is assigned to at least one village and three or more providers including each village mid-level provider.

Services include:
• Evaluation and treatment by appointment
• Case management services: Maternal Child Health, Specialty, Pediatric, Chronic Care, and General
• Specialty care services by specialists who visit NSHC upwards of 50 times per year to meet specialty needs

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 multidisciplinary 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.
Hospital Services

Emergency Department
The NSHC Emergency Room is open 24 hours a day, all year long. It is a Level-IV Trauma Center, staffed by physicians, mid-level providers, and specially trained nurses. In June 2016, with support from an Emergency Nurse Association grant, eight Emergency Department Registered Nurses attended a Trauma Nurse Core Course (TNCC), and all eight passed the course. Two of the RNs were recommended to become TNCC Instructors. ED staff works closely with the medevac team and other facilities, such as ANMC, to transport patients from villages and Nome to ensure patients receive the appropriate level of care.

Forensic Nursing Program
Formerly known as SART (Sexual Assault Response Team), the Forensic Nursing Program’s staff provides services to patients who have experienced sexual assault, domestic violence, strangulation, child sexual/physical abuse or neglect, and elder abuse. The Forensic Nurse Examiners work as part of a team with the Emergency Department staff, Behavioral Health Services, and Community Agencies (especially the Kawerak Child Advocacy Center) to ensure that victims of violence and abuse receive the comprehensive, compassionate, and age-appropriate help that they need. The Forensic Nurses also provide staff training and community outreach.

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.

Nurse Call Line
NSHC implemented the Nurse Call Line, an over-the-phone healthcare advice service, in January 2017. In Fiscal Year 2017, the Nurse Call Line fielded over 3,000 phone calls. Triage nurses in the Norton Sound Regional Hospital Emergency Department answer the calls of patients and family members from around the region. Read more about the Nurse Call Line on page 15.

ER Admissions
FY16: 10,416
FY17: 9,663

Traumas
FY16: 61
FY17: 61

SART Patients Assisted
FY16: 150
FY17: 164

Medevacs
FY16: 338
FY17: 342

Ground Ambulance Runs
FY16: 240
FY17: 264

Respiratory Treatments
FY16: 1,865
FY17: 1,615

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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.
Medical Staff

The Medical Staff continued to provide high quality medical services for the region in a compassionate and sensitive manner. Providers contributed to the implementation of the Patient-Centered Medical Home and supported critical care initiatives, such as chronic care case management through patient care teams and the transition of the “Fast Track” from the Emergency Department to Nome Primary Care to improve walk-in access. Access to care was also improved by expanding hours Monday-Friday in the Primary Care Clinic. A physician-driven pain management committee was developed; NSHC reduced the level of controlled substances prescribed by 45%.

Electronic Health Record

NSHC’s Electronic Health Records (EHR) department was busy in 2017. Department staff initiated many projects involving the digital EHR system, Cerner, including: Cerner Endoscopy, Cerner Long Term Care, Cerner Batch Scanning, the Cerner VacTrAK Bi-Directional Immunization Interface, Immunization Inventory Management, and the beginning phases of the Health Registries, which will help case managers track patients with specific conditions.

The Patient Portal, also known as MyHealth and available at www.nortonsound.org/patient-resources/patient-portal/, continues to expand in functionality. Patients can speak with registration staff to get signed up for access to their portal, which displays medical records and enables users to request appointments.

In addition to these initiatives, efforts to create a Cerner Health Aide manual have been spearheaded by EHR Analyst Josh White. The result of these efforts is a comprehensive manual for Health Aides, with references to accomplish common tasks in Cerner.

In addition, EHR employees continued to convert existing paper processes to electronic to improve efficiency and worked with departments throughout the hospital on report creation and use. EHR aims to continue supporting clinicians and staff to best serve the people of the region.

Patient Stories that Inspire

Thomas and Katherine Punguk

“Thank you NSHC! In June 2017, our Physician Assistant recommended my wife and I sign up for a group medical visit for current smokers and past smokers in Nome. We were educated by health professionals at NSHC along with other patients from across the region and got to share our stories. We each had a low-dose CT scan to look for lung cancer and an oral health screening by Dental. This screening found a small spot on my wife’s lung and a concerning spot in my throat, as well. Early screening made a difference for us!”

-Thomas Punguk
Elder from Golovin
Pharmacy

Fiscal Year 2017 was a successful and exciting one for the NSHC Pharmacy Department. In addition to completing the implementation of brand new Pickpoint machines in most NSHC communities, the Pharmacy team was in constant collaboration, started many new projects and earned several awards for their efforts.

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.

The Pharmacy has been integrated into Primary Care as part of the Patient Centered Medical Home model. A pharmacist is able to provide full-time services for drug-related questions, to make recommendations and to provide patient counseling at the time of appointment. The Primary Care pharmacist integration allowed for more accessibility in the clinic to address medication needs, participate in coordination of care, assist in triage of medication related issues and provide medication education and self-management.

The Pharmacy partnered with the Alaska Native Medical Center to provide 24/7 pharmacist services for patients admitted to Acute Care or being seen in the Emergency Department overnight. The quality of pharmacy services increased through this partnership. Providers and nurses were able to call a pharmacist in Anchorage with any drug information questions or recommendations. On average, 650 acute orders are being verified each month by a pharmacist at ANMC.

Thanks to pharmacist collaboration with administration, a provider champion and a nurse champion, NSHC implemented its first Antimicrobial Stewardship Program. This program is a regulatory requirement but also an important quality project that looks at optimizing the use of antibiotics. The key objectives of an AMS program include: reducing inappropriate antimicrobial use, improving patient outcomes, reducing adverse effects, decreasing antimicrobial resistance, and lowering unnecessary costs for the healthcare system.

Laboratory

The Joint Commission accredits the Norton Sound Regional Hospital Laboratory. It has established a career ladder to employ entry-level employees who can achieve certifications at four levels, post high school graduation, including Phlebotomy, Medical Laboratory Assistant, Medical Laboratory Technician, and Medical Laboratory Scientist. NSHC also is committed to learning and improving, and the laboratory is no exception. It accepts people 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 this region. The laboratory continues to support the hospital needs as well as the villages with the advanced Point-of-Care lab department and COLA accredited village labs. The Anikkan Inuit Iluaqutaat Sub-Regional Clinic in Unalakleet is also a COLA accredited laboratory. The NSHC laboratory continues to support local businesses and corporations by providing drug screening services.

Prescriptions Filled
FY16: 121,375
FY17: 95,111

Laboratory Tests
FY16: 147,927
FY17: 139,791

Lab staff sports red colors in February 2017 as they helped recognize National Wear Red for Women Day.
**Dental**

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 stationed in Unalakleet and Savoonga. Dentists travel to all villages on an annual basis, with roughly 54 percent of patient encounters occurring in the villages, and 46 percent in Nome.

**Audiology**

NSHC Audiologists provide comprehensive audiological services to patients in Nome and surrounding communities both in-person and through the use of telemedicine. Access to audiological services has increased through the use of virtual audiology, performed in collaboration with Community Health Aides. Virtual audiology appointments include basic ear and hearing examinations as well as remote programming of digital hearing technology. The expansion of these telemedicine solutions helps to reduce patient wait times in receiving audiology and otolaryngology services, reduced patient travel, as well as increased access to services within the community. NSHC Audiology is also leading the Hearing Norton Sound project looking at improving the school hearing screening and referral process to address childhood hearing loss in the region.

Services include:
- Comprehensive hearing evaluations
- Electrophysiology testing
- Vestibular assessment
- Aural rehabilitation including digital hearing technology, cochlear implants, and bone-anchored hearing aids
- Industrial, occupational, and school hearing screenings
- Community outreach programs, including hearing loss prevention

**Eye Care**

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

FY17 Highlights:
- Held 20 travel clinics throughout the region’s villages
- The annual Diabetic Clinic was held for a week in March. During that time, Eye Care saw 23 diabetic patients at the Nome Eye Clinic for full dilated eye examinations
- Held two specialty clinics with ANMC Ophthalmology, where 22 patients were seen each time
- Ten fourth-year optometry students spent between eight and 12 weeks each working as interns both in the Nome Eye Clinic as well as in the village clinics
- School vision screenings were done at Nome Public Schools in September 2016. Overall, over 600 students were screened.

**Hospital Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dental Patient Encounters</th>
<th>FY16: 9,739</th>
<th>FY17: 9,346</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audiology Patient Encounters</td>
<td>FY16: 2,257</td>
<td>FY17: 2,694</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Care Patient Encounters</td>
<td>FY16: 3,512</td>
<td>FY17: 3,750</td>
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Physical Therapy
The Physical Therapy team works together to evaluate and treat a broad range of conditions for patients of all ages. The Physical Therapy team works with individuals who may be experiencing difficulty walking, balance impairments, weakness, and pain.

The team uses a variety of treatment options including exercise, modalities (iontophoresis, dry needling, and electrical stimulation), and manual treatments (mobilization and manipulation). One of the most important aspects of Physical Therapy is patient education in self-care, including a regular home exercise program. The PT department utilizes semi-annual village trips and teleconferencing to expand the ability to serve the village clinics.

MRI Approved
The NSHC Board of Directors approved a MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) Machine Project Proposal in FY17. The Board supported a $3.68 million budget for the project, which includes a construction addition behind the existing Emergency Department of the Norton Sound Regional Hospital.

A MRI machine has been a priority of the Board for several years. The Board, Administration and Medical Staff analyzed data that revealed over 350 patients were traveling out of the region on an annual basis for necessary MRI tests. Construction is underway and is expected to be completed in 2018.

NSHC shares the electronic medical records with Alaska Native Medical Center, which enables both medical staffs to view the records, X-rays, and images from both facilities. Through NSHC’s electronic X-ray storage system, all X-rays and images can be shared electronically with many of the other hospitals and facilities in Anchorage as well as Seattle. For those facilities not on the electronic system, new equipment made for copying X-rays and images for patients to hand carry or mail to other facilities was added to the department. Downloading of outside X-rays and images from other facilities can also be done. These services help decrease patient wait-times and the number of repeat X-rays.

X-ray/Radiology
NSHC offers a variety of Radiology services across the region. Nome services include General X-ray, CT Scan, Ultrasound, 3-D Mammography, and DEXA Scan (bone mineral density exams). Gambell, Savoonga, and Unalakleet have 24-hour quality X-ray coverage provided by trained Health Aides. Having X-ray services available in these villages saves time and travel for patients and leads to faster evaluation of patients who may require critical care.

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Mammographer Valerie Dull (far right) helped organize recognition for Indigenous Pink Day at NSHC in October 2016, which coincided with the Nome Health Fair.
Infant Learning Program
The Infant Learning Program provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with special needs between the ages of birth and 3 years old. Family focused services are important because the first three years are the most important for a child’s development. Families have the greatest impact on their child’s development.

Services include evaluation/assessment of a child’s development, working with the child’s family to develop a plan for services and providing family support for special instruction, activities and materials to enhance their child’s learning. Family goals for a child are achieved by using resources and supports from ILP as well as the community.

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’s Fireweed Cafe. The cafe’s menu is updated weekly at www.nortonsoundhealth.org.

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, and it runs the hospital switchboard. All full-time uniformed officers and supervisors are certified through the International Association for Healthcare Security and Safety.
The Patient Support Services (formerly known as Social Services) department operates multiple programs that provide social support to NSHC patients, including Medical Social Work program, Developmental Disabilities programs (including Care Coordination and Support), the Patient Advocate, and the Patient Hostel/Pre-Maternal Home.

The Developmental Disabilities programs (formerly known as Rainbow Services) split into two categories at the latter part of Fiscal Year 2016: Developmental Disabilities Care Coordination Program (managed by Raeshawndra Jett) and the Developmental Disabilities Support Program.

Patient Hostel/Pre-Maternal Home

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. Renovations and program changes in FY16 could allow the Hostel to house more patients/escorts in the future.
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, homelike environment and incorporates traditional ways of living into different aspects of the residents’ care.

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.

Nurse Call Line

NSHC’s triage-by-phone service, the Nurse Call Line, handles all sorts of calls -- from parents of fevering children, to friends of patients in serious injury accidents.

The health care advice service routes phone calls to village clinics after hours to Emergency Department nurses in Nome. Through a program called Clear Triage, the nurses ask callers a set list of questions and help determine the best possible plan of care. Often the nurses will arrange for patients to meet with the on-call Community Health Aide or arrange for a medevac if the situation is serious.

As the Nurse Call Line was gradually rolled out across the region beginning in January 2017, it gained support. In an ongoing survey of its users, 94 percent of callers contacted said they were satisfied with the care and advice they received. Ninety percent said the Nurse Call Line has been a positive change for them and their family.

Call Today:

1-844-58-NURSE or 443-6411

Hospital Services
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 Diabetes Prevention Initiative grants.

Successes include:

1. Establishing and maintaining a comprehensive diabetes interdisciplinary team
2. Maintaining health promotion in the region through the award-winning Summercise program, monthly wellness challenges, physical fitness activities, health screenings and more
3. Increasing percent of all Norton Sound Alaska Native/American Indian diabetes patients with recommended blood pressure control from 65% in FY15 to 74% in FY16 to 83% in FY17.

Goals for this year include:

CAMP’s goals are (1) to provide quality diabetes care and treatment through an integrated and multi-disciplinary approach, (2) to reduce the risk of complications related to diabetes through medical nutrition therapy, (3) to 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) to implement youth and community events in efforts to prevent diabetes, and (5) to provide early childhood nutrition education and lactation support to prevent diabetes.

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

Hospital Services

Wellness Department

Total Nutrition Appointments
FY16: 804  FY17: 1,145

Diabetes Appointments
FY16: 293  FY17: 381

Pediatric Nutrition
FY16: 47  FY17: 172

Health Screenings
FY16: 284  FY17: 374

Tobacco Cessation Appointments
FY16: 64  FY17: 96

Health Fair Attendees
FY16: 284  FY17: 299

Youth Registered for Summercise
FY16: 294  FY17: 195

Lactation Support
FY16: 50  FY17: 88
Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

Program Enhancements and Service Improvements: NSHC WIC serves families including infants, children and women to provide supplemental food benefits and nutrition education. The WIC staff continue to work diligently to process incoming applications, providing WIC food benefits, nutrition education and breastfeeding support and promotion to its clients. A success this year was being able to visit all eight villages that were mapped out for the fiscal year, including Little Diomede. WIC enrolled 63 clients in the villages throughout the year, which is an increase from the 40 clients who were enrolled last fiscal year. The NSHC WIC program underwent a management evaluation with the State of Alaska to ensure quality services are provided to WIC clients.

Accomplishments:
• Promoted and fully trained a new Competent Professional Authority (CPA) to help support the WIC clients throughout the region
• Engaged in World Breastfeeding activities for the community
• Collaborated with NSHC Wellness programs on the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative

Tribal Healers

Norton Sound Health Corporation 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.

In Nome, the Tribal Healing office is located in the Primary Care Clinic for easy access to referrals from medical staff.

During fiscal year 2017, the Tribal Healers worked closely with the K wagerak Wellness Program and Beauty for Ashes at several workshops going over the topics of decolonization and historical trauma and learning to help themselves to help others.

Tribal Healers massage sore muscles and joints and manipulate some internal organs to provide traditional hands-on treatment remedies.

Hospital Services

Obesity Rate (children 2-5 years old)
FY16: 43%  FY17: 37%

Breastfeeding Initiative Rate
FY16: 76%  FY17: 82%

Breastfeeding Duration Rate at 6 Months
FY16: 52%  FY17: 52%

Breastfeeding Duration Rate at 12 Months
FY16: 45%  FY17: 45%

Maria Dexter, Eva Menadelook, and Evelyn Karmun make up the Tribal Healing team at NSHC. Maria and Eva recruited Evelyn from Kotzebue in 2017.

NSHC ILP's Patricia Olmstead and Rebecka Miller, WIC Health Educator, smile at the 2017 Toddler Extravaganza.
Community Health Services

Lucy Apatiki, Vice President of Community Health Services
Darlene Trigg, Assistant Vice President of Community Health Services

Darlene was hired at the beginning of 2017 as AVP of the division and stepped into the role of Interim Village Health Services Director for over a year.

Village Health Services

VHS 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 Clerks, who are in charge of scheduling appointments for CHAs and traveling providers 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.

The majority of the health care that occurs in NSHC happens in the 15 surrounding villages. Fiscal year 2017 saw the most number of patients seen in the village clinics with both Community Health Aides and other medical providers working collaboratively to accomplish this goal. Being a Community Health Aide/Practitioner is a demanding position, with the health care of the community being their responsibility 24 hours a day. Community support is vital to ensure Community Health Aide/Practitioners are able to work to their full ability. In 2017, Village Health Services leadership’s focus was on ensuring the program is designed on offering a good base of support and structure.

Patient Visits by Clinic

Village Health Services leadership's focus was on ensuring the program is designed on offering a good base of support and structure.

Patient Visits by Clinic

Patient Encounters

FY16: 30,778
FY17: 33,128

Rising Star Recognized

In 2017, Alaska’s Community Health Aide Program named NSHC’s Helen Eningowuk as its “Rising Star” award recipient.

Nominated by her Supervisor/Instructor at the time, Rita Buck, Helen was recognized for her excellent service covering Little Diomede’s clinic and her mastery of the electronic health record system.
Health Aide Training

The Health Aide Training Center, located in Nome 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 of patient care through Basic Training sessions, clinical preceptorships, evaluation of re-entering Health Aides, continuing education workshops, and recommendations for standing orders.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Training Attendees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY16: 48     FY17: 49</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preceptorships Completed</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY16: 8    FY17: 12</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Continuing Education Workshop Attendees</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY16: 15    FY17: 10</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Re-Entry Evaluations</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY16: 4    FY17: 2</td>
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</table>

In 2016, the NSHC Board of Directors named the third Thursday of April Community Health Aide Recognition Day. Fiscal year 2017’s celebration was the second such recognition day, and each village clinic was provided time to honor the day. Many communities held potlucks and thanked their local health care providers for all they do.

Health aides are the backbone of NSHC. They are a unique group of people who work hard and are committed to ensuring the health of each of their communities. They work under extreme circumstances and are often faced with challenging situations, yet they continue to serve in their capacity with care and grace. They do not do it to gain recognition but derive great satisfaction when they are able to help out fellow community members.

Join NSHC in celebrating future Community Health Aide Recognition Days!
Behavioral Health Services

Behavioral Health Services (BHS) provides integrated services for persons with mental health and/or substance use concerns. Dedicated to offering person-centered care where the client directs his or her 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.

Other initiatives in FY17 and ongoing included:

1. **Integrated Care**: BHS provides staff members in Primary Care five days per week during all hours of operation to promote the availability and necessity of the patient-centered medical home model serving to transform the delivery of comprehensive primary care for children, adults, and elders. This integration has been key to offering more people services encompassing the mind, body, and spirit.

2. **Anvil Mountain Correctional Center (AMCC)**: 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. In August 2017, BHS placed a full-time clinician at 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. **Behavioral Health Aide State Plan Amendment**: The State of Alaska made a commitment to implement an encounter rate for certified Behavioral Health Aides (of which, NSHC employs eight VBCs who are currently certified with others working toward it) to provide services under the medical model for a $442 daily encounter rate. Importantly, this is a separate rate from services provided at the clinic or hospital for medical care. This model allows for quicker access to services and less of the overbearing documentation required under the Community Behavioral Health Services model.

4. **Wellness and Training Center**: BHS continues to develop the Wellness Center and its full continuum of care substance use treatment program, known as Liitfik, a place of healing. Ground was broken in September 2017 and will continue until operations begin in 2020. BHS appreciates the NSHC Board of Directors’ and Administrative staff members’ support for this long-needed facility to serve the people of the region.

5. **With the Wind and the Waves**: Dr. Ray Droby, BHS Psychologist based in Unalakleet, has completed a revision to his oft-cited book on providing rural psychology in a culturally-informed manner, *With the Wind and the Waves*. Originally produced in 2000, Dr. Droby’s book describes his experiences in working with the Alaska Native people of the region, from whom he learned that wellness is promoted and defined from within the communities, not by outside influences. Studied by many who come to Alaska, *With the Wind and the Waves* was approved by Norton Sound Health Corporation for distribution to those who would benefit from knowing the rich history of the region. NSHC appreciates Dr. Droby’s dedication for over 20 years in this region, his time living in the villages, and his humility allowing him to learn and offer so much to the people. This is only one reason he was nominated for and received the national “APA Excellence in Rural Psychology Award” from the American Psychological Association Committee on Rural Health in August 2017.
Information Services

The Information Services (IS) 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.

FY2017 accomplishments:

• Implemented Shoretel Voice over Internet Protocol telephone systems in Gambell and Savoonga.
• IS worked closely with a team of nurses and Village Health Services personnel to implement the Nurse Call Line. This project involved setting up phone lines that would direct after-hours clinic phone calls to the Emergency Department in Nome and allow triage nurses in Nome to have dedicated phone lines to answer incoming Nurse Call Line queries.
• IS became part of the bi-monthly new employee orientation process.
• Bobby Piscoya was promoted to Director of Information Services in May 2017.

At the beginning of 2017, NSHC expanded its new employee orientation from one day to two and a half days. In addition to incorporating more departments for introductory information to incoming employees, there is now a longer cultural component.

HR Director Kirsten Timbers and Community Health Services Asst. Vice President Darlene Trigg lead the cultural orientation, which takes place on the second full day of the schedule.

New employees learn about three distinct cultural groups of the region and about the region's complex history of colonization.

In the afternoon, the new employees head to the Katirvik Cultural Center to hear from the Kawerak staff on how to better understand the patients NSHC employees will encounter.

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.

FY2017 accomplishments:

• Began new employee orientation expansion, including additional cultural orientation segment. 349 new employees experienced the new format.
  • Started new summer internship program, allowing college-age students to work in the field of their choice while being paid.
  • NSHC’s Certified Nursing Assistant program, in partnership with UAF Northwest Campus, graduated 12 CNAs in 2017. Ten of the graduates were hired to work immediately for NSHC. NSHC has the highest rate of local CNAs employed to date with 14 employed in 2017.
  • In 2017, the Board of Directors approved an increase to scholarships -- $750 for part-time students and $1,500 for full-time students per semester, as well as a competitive scholarship for $5,000/semester for up to five recipients pursuing a career in health care.

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Self-Governance

NSHC partners with Kawerak to advance the federal priorities of regional tribes. Megan Alvanna Stimpfle, Self-Governance Liaison for NSHC, has provided guidance, wisdom, and support to the tribes to empower and enhance the region’s voice on the many issues and challenges communities face. With the support of the NSHC Self Governance, NSHC leadership and Bering Strait region leadership have:

• established a Sewer and Water Committee of the NSHC Board of Directors to ensure services to the region’s unserved communities are met.
• created an infrastructure coordination partnership between BSRHA, NSHC, and Kawerak to support the development of housing, roads, sewer and water.
• initiated community infrastructure planning between cities, tribes, and village corporations.
• created a statewide Sewer and Water Committee at the Alaska Native Health Board to strengthen and advance collective state and federal sanitation priorities.
• Secured increased funding for Small Ambulatory Clinic Funding which facilitated six awards in the state of Alaska; NSHC awarded $2M to support construction of a new health clinic in Shishmaref
• Secured $1.8M from Indian Health Services for construction of housing in Savoonga to house health aides, mid-level providers, and traveling health professionals to provide health services.

Administration

The Administration team continued to work collaboratively with the Board of Directors to carry out the vision of the organization. Three tribal members were promoted/hired to corporate officers in FY2017: Debbie Peacock, CFO, Darlene Trigg Assistant Vice President of Community Health Services, and Kirsten Timbers, Chief Human Resources Officer. Together, the admin team identified the need to increase awareness to its workforce about the historical trauma impacting the region, strived to facilitate an employee wellness program, continued to support the maintenance and construction of village-based facilities, and retain staff.

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.

FY2017 accomplishments:

• Carried out Golovin, Shishmaref, Brevig Mission and Savoonga community-wide NSHC anniversary celebrations
• Planned St. Lawrence Island Clinics ribbon cutting ceremonies
• Completed website redesign
• Helped promote Nurse Call Line implementation
• Made regular KNOM informational visits

The Public Relations department teamed up with SunDog Media, based in Anchorage, to redesign the www.nortonsoundhealth.org website. Winners of a region-wide photo contest determined the beautiful photos displayed on the main page.
The Site Planning Committee provides oversight, guidance and direction for Capital Projects at NSHC. Although the need is great to renovate and upgrade facilities, only so much can happen at once. NSHC made significant progress in fiscal year 2017 with the return of Mike Kruse to the organization in the capacity of Capital Projects Manager.

Accomplishments
- Constructed and opened two new 5,200-square-foot clinics in Savoonga and Gambell
- Completed morgues for Savoonga and Gambell and began construction of morgue/garage buildings for Shishmaref, Koyuk, and Stebbins
- Finalized design for 3,500-square-foot clinic for Shaktoolik
- Installed pilings to support the new construction of a MRI addition behind the Norton Sound Regional Hospital Emergency Department
- Received $1.8 million from the Indian Health Services to build health professional housing for the village of Savoonga
- Finalized the Wellness and Training Center design and installed pilings for new construction of the 25,000-square-foot center
- Completed the renovation of the Patient Hostel to facilitate increased utilization

A special thank you to the St. Lawrence Island Clinic Donors
- Denali Commission: $120,479 (design)
- Indian Health Services: $600,000
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority: $100,000
- Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation: $600,000
- NSHC Board of Directors funded the remaining $11,162,726
Office of Environmental Health

After twenty years of service, Kevin Zweifel retired from his Commission Corp Position as the Director of Environmental Health. Although Zweifel’s retirement date was not set until July 2018, Administration and the Board of Directors recognized Zweifel’s contributions and commitment to the region by awarding him the Lifetime Achievement award during the January 2017 Employee Awards ceremony.

Bryant Koonooka joined the team in FY2016 and greatly assisted with the repair and maintenance of village-based water and sewer systems and the training of workers at the village level. Bryant passed away in the spring of 2018, but he will be remembered for his excellent service and dedication to our region.

Village Facilities Maintenance

The Village Clinic Improvement Program was developed in fiscal year 2015 when NSHC recognized the need to be more proactive and progressive with the preventive maintenance of the facilities where health care programs were operating. Through strong partnerships with its clinic owners, NSHC was leasing all facilities by fiscal year 2017.

Chase Gray, assistant project manager, continued to propel the Village Clinic Improvement Program forward as more staff was hired for the department at every level. Mandy Ellanna was hired as office manager, and several staff members were hired in Nome to maintain facilities around the region. Maintenance and EVS workers were hired for all villages.

Accomplishments

- Eight villages received 15-passenger transport vans
- A clinic assessment report was completed for all 15 village clinics by a multidisciplinary team of mechanical and maintenance experts
- Security cameras were installed in all 15 village clinics and continue to be monitored remotely by Nome security officers
- All boilers were serviced
- Double-walled fuel tanks were installed in Elim, Golovin, Koyuk, St. Michael, Shishmaref, Stebbins, Teller, Wales, and White Mountain.
- Four trainings were provided to staff, including interior repair, flooring and small engine repair
- Four maintenance workers continued college courses in pursuit of a facility maintenance endorsement

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.

FY 2017 Highlights:

- Purchased several new items, including two pusher blades, one V-blade, and a parking lot scraper to add to snow removal capabilities
- Plans to construct a sand storage shed moved forward. The shed would shelter a sand supply and protect it from the elements, so staff can more efficiently use it.
Accounting
Payroll, Accounts Payable, Grants Accounting, Budgeting, and Financial Statements are all managed by the Accounting Department.

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 provide medical record services and support patients, providers and departments.

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. The Patient Driver is also part of Materials Management and is available for transporting patients to and from the hospital.

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

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.

Debbie Peacock took on the role of Chief Financial Officer in the spring of 2017. Before stepping into her new position, Debbie was the Assistant Vice President of Finance.

Accounts Payable Specialists Wendy Deering and Marilyn Thomas take part in an All Staff Potluck with traditional foods in April 2017.
Quality Improvement and Risk Management

NSHC strives to provide the best quality of care to all patients. FY 2017 was a time of significant progress in quality improvement across different units of the facility. QCC saw increases in its CMS Star ranking. Primary Care developed and submitted application for Patient Centered Medical Home Recognition with NCQA. The 2017 Quality Focus Goals Targeted Immunizations, Prenatal Care, Breast Cancer Screening, Colon Cancer Screening, Diabetes, and Heart Disease.

NSHC has three quality improvement committees which we all busy at work in FY 2017. The Aquutaq Committee focuses on outpatient services within the HRSA 330 Grant Scope. This committee focuses support on the annual goals across departments with an overall goal of high quality patient centered care. The QPICC or Quyanna Care Center Performance Improvement Committee meets regularly to ensure that our residents receive the highest quality of care. Finally, the HSPIC of 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 RurAL CAP, which supported a summer “Smoke Fish Not Tobacco” campaign across the region for smoking cessation. NSHC also received another funding award from HRSA for Clinic Quality Improvement, which went toward supporting training and education programs to promote high quality patient care.

Employee Health/Infection Prevention

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. Monitoring the use of urinary catheters and any catheter-acquired infections is an on-going process. In FY16, the number of employee flu shots given increased by 2%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Employee Flu Vaccines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY16: 531</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY17: 576</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Flu Shots Administered</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY16: 1,413</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY17: 2,586</td>
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2017 Employee Awards

January Employee of the Month - Sharon Johnson, UNK

February Employee of the Month - Myra Murphy, BHS

March Employee of the Month - Sierra Johnson, Dental

April Employee of the Month - Kara Blevins, BHS

May Employee of the Month - Travis Kulowiyi, SVA CTC

June Employee of the Month - Karla Homelvig, RN

July Employee of the Month - Kayla Gabby, CMA

August Employee of the Month - Stephanie Fahey, Eye Care

September Employee of the Month - Lonny Booshu, Maintenance

October Employee of the Month - James Standish, Security

November Employee of the Month - Stephanie Stang, CAMP

December Employee of the Month - Nolan Vacek, Maintenance

Employee of the Year (Nome) - Stephanie Cummings, QCC

Employee of the Year (Village) - Marcia Pete, Stebbins

Manager of the Year - Josette Bendickson, Environmental Services

Phil Hofstetter Humanitarian Award - Daniel Hobbs, Lab
**PRIDE Value Award**
Celia Jennings, Pharmacy

**PRIDE Value Award**
Beverly Nakarak, Elim CHA

**TEAMWORK Value Award**
Gabriel Ercolino, EMS

**TEAMWORK Value Award**
John Prentice, Koyuk CTC

**COMPASSION Value Award**
Carrie Murray, PCC

**COMPASSION Value Award**
Rebecca Wurmstein, PA

**ALWAYS LEARNING AND IMPROVING Value Award**
Alex Bahnke, Laboratory

**ALWAYS LEARNING AND IMPROVING Value Award**
Joseph Akarak, VFM

**CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND RESPECT FOR TRADITIONAL VALUES Value Award**
Anne Marie Ozenna, Lab

**CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND RESPECT FOR TRADITIONAL VALUES Value Award**
Duane Lincoln, WMO VBC

**INTEGRITY Value Award**
Greg Walls, EMS

**INTEGRITY Value Award**
Rebecca Biasi, UNK Pharmacy

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**Consumer Appreciation Awards**
Pictured back row: Kristine Kienberger, Mikey Wongittilin, Rachel Olson, Travis McQueen. Middle row: Dan Thomas, Annie Blandford, Valerie Fuller, Anthony Tobuk, Reba Lean. Front row: Kathryn Sawyer, Roberta Castel, Florence Okpealuk.

Recipients not pictured: Anne Ivanoff, Anna Pehle, Sonya Cranston, Daphne Weyiouanna, Jill Perry, Kierra Bright, Riley Bennett, Seth Winn, Remi Elie, Morgan Miller, Eva Menadelook, Jackie Ivanoff, David Head, Jamie Lockwood, Renee Cooper, Stephanie Fahey, Lydia Evan, Nancy Analoak, Dolly Kiyutelluk, Andrew Milligrock, Morgan Lockwood.
Do you have a concern?
Let us know.

NSHC Ethicspoint Hotline: Call 855-541-4193 or visit www.nortonsoundhealth.org and click on the “File a Concern” link

Contact the Patient Advocate: Call 907-443-4567 or email padvocate@nshcorp.org

Call: (907) 443-3311
(888) 559-3311
Fax: (907) 443-2113