Leading to Healthy Futures

IMPROVING US FOR A BETTER YOU

Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Report
Our Mission
Providing quality health services and promoting wellness within our people and environment

Our 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 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 our 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

Our Values
Integrity • Compassion • Teamwork • Pride • Cultural Sensitivity and Respect for Traditional Values • Always Learning and Improving
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Dear Customer-Owners and Patients

In FY2018, NSHC continued to build and expand its patient-centered primary health care system and was recognized by the Department of Health and Human Services as a Health Center Quality Leader. NSHC plays a vital role as the only source of health care for the region; the NSHC Board of Directors continue to use feedback from our communities and quality data to better serve each and every customer-owner and patient with the quality care you expect.

None of NSHC’s progress would be possible without our dedicated staff that provides extraordinary and compassionate care. NSHC remains the largest employer in the region with over 680 full-time employees; the organization’s tribal hire rate was 62%. In 2018, Alaska’s Community Health Aide Program celebrated 50 years; the NSHC Board of Directors continued to recognize the health aide profession as the backbone of its tribal health system by introducing a village-based housing bonus, adding more health aide positions, building village-based housing to support local village staff, and designing a new training center with adequate space collocated at Nome’s east campus.

Outcome measurements prove that NSHC provided more medical and behavioral health visits than prior years. As a result, access to prenatal care increased, the level of childhood weight assessment and counseling increased, colon cancer screening, depression screening, and cervical cancer screening increased, the level of cholesterol and heart attack/stroke treatment increased, and more homeless patients received medical care through NSHC’s primary health care system.

To promote the patient-centered care concept for holistic care, steps were taken to expand behavioral health services in the primary and acute care settings. Full-time psychiatry services were implemented to compliment NSHC’s medical staff. This improvement increased NSHC’s capacity to better meet the behavioral health needs of our patients in the acute care setting and to provide more treatment locally; acute care admissions increased in FY2018. The NSHC Board reaffirmed their commitment to promote local behavioral health treatment and awarded the bid to install pilings for a new wellness center for the region.

NSHC continued to partner with Kawerak to strengthen local sanitation systems. Under the leadership of Megan Alvanna Stimpfle and continued advocacy for water and sewer, several activities were under way to better meet the needs of the region’s served communities and longstanding projects for the region’s unserved communities were resurrected with action plans for a path forward. Through synergistic efforts, several communities in the region improved their best practice scores and achieved funding for competitive water and sewer projects.

NSHC remained fiscally strong and continued to advance several capital projects. Construction for the MRI addition, Savoonga staff housing, and Shakttoolik Clinic were all underway. The Golovin staff housing was completed in 2018. NSHC made improvements to its ground transportation for patients; eight communities received 15-passenger vans to assist with covered transportation for medevac patients. In Nome, the patient driver hours were expanded and new vehicles were purchased. An Anchorage-based travel liaison was hired to support patients when traveling out of the region.

Although we accomplished a lot, the work is never done. The Board of Directors remains steadfast to its commitment to NSHC’s mission and vision and will continue to deliver tribal health from the heart.
Photo Highlights
FROM FISCAL YEAR 2018

NSHC invited community members to lead instructional workshops, like Crystal Toolie’s health coaching course, at an employee wellness day in August.

NSHC and Native Village of Shaktoolik members broke ground on the new Shaktoolik Clinic in 2018.

NSHC sponsored Nome-grown Iditarod musher Aaron Burmeister, and he in turn hosted a Pancakes and Story Time event at the hospital after finishing the race.

Employee volunteers accompanied QCC elders on a fishing expedition in July 2018 to the mouth of the Snake River.

Employees received an Inupiaq lesson from participants in a language immersion program called Ilisaqativut.

NSHC invited community members to lead instructional workshops, like Crystal Toolie’s health coaching course, at an employee wellness day in August.
FY2018 Board of Directors

Executive Committee
Chair: Martin Aukongak  
2nd Vice Chair: Preston Rookok 
Treasurer: Stan Andersen 
Exec. Member #1: Matilda Hardy 
Exec. Member #3: Jenny Lee

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

Not Pictured: 
Karen Kazingnuk, Native Village of Diomede 
Sherilee Ivanoff, Native Village of Unalakleet
The Kawerak and NSHC boards came together in March 2018 for their biennial joint board meeting. Topics discussed included needed infrastructure, public safety, housing, education, youth, and much more. The sister corporations work together on many projects, and the boards have many priorities in common, so the joint board meeting is where resolutions are made, and both boards are informed on initiative updates.
“Over the last few years, I’ve learned a lot and have established good relationships with managers of Hospital Services departments. I look forward to supporting them and working together to make a difference in the Norton Sound region.” - Kelly Bogart, Vice President of Hospital Services

“When I first started, I was scared, but now I love it. It’s like a second home. It’s like second nature, being a CNA, for me.”
- Debbie Okbaok, locally trained Certified Nursing Assistant

“These classes provide hands-on experience, which builds up confidence. We are helping to build a local workforce in each village.”
- Chase Gray, Director of Village Facilities Maintenance

“I wanted to become a nurse because in our cultural Native values, it is said to always help people in need.” - Colette Topkok, RN, recent graduate of UAA Nursing Program

“If we don’t talk about the things that have harmed us, the underlying problems, we’re never going to get better. For those of us who are Native people, understanding our history is important. For those of you who are non-Native people, your presence here is important and necessary for our healing.” - Darlene Trigg, Cultural Lead and trainer of new employees

“At NSHC, there is no such thing as ‘good enough.’ Our staff continue to grow and learn to improve quality care.” - Angie Gorn, President/CEO
Fiscal Year 2018 in Review

Nome Primary Care Clinic Encounters
32,409
Village Clinic Encounters

Emergency Department Encounters
8,950
Acute Care Admissions
888
Nurse Call Line Calls

Deliveries
50

Top 5 Primary Care Diagnosis Categories
1. Musculoskeletal/connective tissue
2. Health services related to reproduction
3. Diseases of the genitourinary system
4. General injuries
5. Skin diseases

Dental Encounters
8,703
Eye Care Encounters
3,739
Audiology Encounters
2,812
PT Encounters
2,947

Lab Tests
141,284
Radiology Images
7,790
Respiratory Therapies
1,756
Prescriptions Filled
97,865

Flu Vaccines
4,588

Emergency Department Encounters
8,950

For the third consecutive year, the Norton Sound Regional Hospital ranked among the Top 20 Most Beautiful Hospitals in the U.S. NSRH took seventh place out of 68 hospitals in Soliant’s nationwide contest.

724 Total Employees
89 Percent Local Hire
61 Percent Native Hire

$218,000 in scholarship awards
$93,879 in Tribal scholarships
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.

In fiscal year 2018, Primary Care focused its efforts on developing care teams for patients across the region. NSHC developed three different care teams, including different physicians and mid-level providers, so patients can receive more consistent and efficient health care.

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.

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.
Forensic Nursing

Forensic Nursing 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, 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 they need. The forensic nurses also provide staff training and community outreach.

Emergency Department

Admissions

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<th></th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9,663</td>
<td>8,950</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Traumas</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59</td>
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The NSHC Emergency Room 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 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 fiscal year 2018, nurses answered 4,481 calls from around the region.

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-like 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.

As the result of health inspections, staffing levels, and quality measures, QCC ranked among the top eight nursing homes in Alaska, tied for third place on the Medicare Nursing Home Compare site in 2018.

Hospital Services
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.

**FY18 Highlights:**
- Pharmacy, with the assistance of Drs. Pohl and Flynn, started the Norton Sound Region Children’s Coalition in January 2018
- Implemented Asolva software for Antimicrobial Stewardship reporting and Accuvax system for vaccine storage in PCC
- Went live with Pyxis ES system in NSRH and purchased new equipment for the Sub-Regional Pharmacy in Unalakleet.
- Began participating in Project Hope statewide initiative to distribute Narcan medication in the case of opioid overdoses
- Participated in the longterm care EHR implementation planning

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 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 Iluaqtaat 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.

The Lab’s new director, Violet Shimek, along with the lab’s medical director, Dr. Bucholtz, saw the Lab through a successful biannual survey by the Joint Commission.
Audiology

Audiology Patient Encounters
FY17: 2,694
FY18: 2,812

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 increases 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. Preliminary results are in and suggest promising tools to better identify and manage children’s hearing loss and ear problems.

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

Eye Care Patient Encounters
FY17: 3,750
FY18: 3,739

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.

FY18 Highlights:
- Held 24 clinics throughout the region’s villages and served 1,238 patient encounters in the villages alone
- The annual Diabetes Clinic was held in March, where nine diabetic patients were seen
- ANMC Ophthalmology specialty clinics were held in October and April
- Seven fourth-year optometry students spent between eight and 12 weeks each working as interns

Physical Therapy

Physical Therapy Patient Encounters
FY17: 2,671
FY18: 2,946

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.
Radiology

**X-Ray/DEXA scans**
- FY17: 4,533
- FY18: 4,449

**Mammograms**
- FY17: 538
- FY18: 568

**Ultrasounds**
- FY17: 1,782
- FY18: 1,607

**CT Scans**
- FY17: 1,093
- FY18: 1,166

Radiology was part of the NSHC Board of Directors’ “dream come true” with the construction of the new Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) suite. Pilings were placed in October 2017, inside construction began in February 2018, and the actual magnet was delivered in October 2018. The suite opened in 2019.

Gambell and Savoonga received new GE portable X-ray machines, which upgraded their systems with higher quality images that allow providers to make decisions for emergency patients.

Alaska Run for Women awarded Radiology a grant that allowed the creation of the Bering Sea Sister Circle. Through that program, Radiology visits each village to share the importance of screening mammograms, while engaging participants with jewelry crafting.

Radiology underwent a space renovation to include an X-ray room and the DEXA Bone Density equipment, which was previously located in the Primary Care Clinic.

Savoonga’s portable X-ray machine is installed.

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Emergency Medical Services

**Medevacs**
- FY17: 342
- FY18: 329

**Ground Ambulance Runs**
- FY17: 264
- FY18: 230

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.

Amy McNulty was hired in August 2018 as the EMS Educator. She teaches emergency trauma technician (ETT) and emergency medical technician (EMT) courses, in addition to BLS, PALS, and ACLS classes.

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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, which is open Monday-Friday from 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.
**Hospital Services**

**Patient Support Services**

The Patient Support Services (formerly known as Social Services) department operates multiple programs that provide social support to NSHC patients, including the Medical Social Work program, In-Home programs, the Patient Advocate, and the Patient Hostel/Pre-Maternal Home.

The department changed its name to Patient Support Services from Social Services, in order to more accurately reflect the programs offered.

The Developmental Disabilities programs (Care Coordination and Support) changed their names to the In-Home programs (Care Coordination and Support) to reflect the change in services that NSHC will be offering.

**Social Services**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Number of Patients</th>
<th>FY17: 710</th>
<th>FY18: 1,092</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Patient Encounters</td>
<td>FY17: 2,365</td>
<td>FY18: 3,254</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patients Served for Interpersonal Violence</td>
<td>FY17: 146</td>
<td>FY18: 150</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burial/bereavement assistance</td>
<td>FY17: 103</td>
<td>FY18: 109</td>
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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 during a child’s first three years of developments.

Services include evaluation/assessment of a child’s development, working with the 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 (e.g. physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy) as well as the community.

NSHC’s Make a Patient Smile fund helped 36 families in need in FY18. $16,900 went toward helping patients pay for expenses related to their medical needs. NSHC would like to extend its gratitude to NSEDC, which made a $20,000 contribution to the fund in FY18.

Contact the Patient Advocate at 443-4567 if you would like to request financial assistance from the MAPS fund.

**Infant Learning Program**

| Service Provider Contacts | FY17: 1,311 | FY18: 1,322 |

Shamrock Twaddle and her twins Ellie and Owen Twaddle meet with ILP.
NSHC Medical Staff consists of physicians and mid-level providers (including physician assistants and nurse practitioners). Medical Staff provides high quality medical services for the region in a compassionate and sensitive manner.

In FY18, Medical Staff made a major focus on recruitment in order to fully staff the primary care and emergency departments, which was met with great success.

NSHC expanded its psychiatry services with the aim to offer 24/7 coverage through a combination of on-site services each month and telepsychiatry. Psychiatry staff was hired under the leadership of Dr. Mark Peterson and his brother Dr. Tom Peterson, a psychiatrist.

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 half of patient encounters occurring in the villages and 46 percent in Nome.

**FY2018 Highlights:**

- After decades of tireless service to the children of the region, the indomitable Dr. Jake Boyer made his final pediatric village field trip in October 2017.
- Drs. Kathryn McTigue and Landon Momberg joined the Dental department in July 2018.

Aurora Johnson, DHAT, pictured in middle between longtime Unalakleet Dental staff Deborah Ivanoff (left) and Jerilyn Alakayak (right), was named the 2018 Distinguished Provider by the Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation.
Village Health Services

VHS Patient Encounters

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<th>FY18</th>
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<tr>
<td>VHS</td>
<td>33,128</td>
<td>32,409</td>
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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 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.

The majority of the health care that occurs in NSHC happens in the 15 surrounding villages. Being a Community Health Aide/Practitioner is unlike any other position in the health field. Community Health Aides provide care to patients that they may know personally, and in many cases may be directly related to. It is a demanding position, with the health care of the community being their responsibility 24 hours a day. Community and family support is vital to ensure Community Health Aides/Practitioners are able to work to their full ability.

Patient Visits by Clinic

Carol Charles stepped into the VHS Director position in the summer of 2018. Previously, she was the office manager of the Anikkan Inuit Iluaqtaat Sub-Regional Clinic in Unalakleet.
Health Aide Training

Basic Training Attendees
FY17: 49
FY18: 37

Preceptorships Completed
FY17: 12
FY18: 2

Continuing Ed Workshop Attendees
FY17: 10
FY18: 16

Re-Entry Evaluations
FY17: 2
FY18: 3

Other HAT Training Events at Village Clinics
FY18: 5

Health Aide Trainers Teri LeMay, NP (far left), and Kim Matthews, NP (far right), pose with graduates of the University of Alaska certificate program for community health Nicole Topkok of Teller and Sonja Simpson of Elim. The graduates earned the title of Community Health Practitioner, the highest training level of community health aides.

The Health Aide Training team introduces themselves to the public at a NSHC Open House event in September 2018. Pictured left-to-right is Nora Nagaruk, MD, Dan Thomas, PA, Steve Daniel, MD, Kim Matthews, NP, Teri LeMay, NP, and Mark Hayward, PA.

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.

Mark Hayward, PA, joined the Health Aide Training team in June 2018. He noted he was excited to not only provide health aides the skills and tools to care for patients, but to also build systems and relationships to support them in their work.

Remembering Kristen Amaktoolik

NSHC mourns the death of Kristen Amaktoolik, former Electronic Health Record Specialist in Village Health Services. Before moving to Nome, Kristen worked as a health aide in Savoonga and Elim. Kristen worked for NSHC since 2005 and was highly regarded for her health care services, her ability in training others, and as a good friend. She is dearly missed by those who knew her.
Behavioral Health Services

BHS Patient Encounters

FY17: 8,267
FY18: 6,182

Behavioral Health Services 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 FY18 and ongoing included:

**Psychiatric Care:** BHS provides staff members in Primary Care five days per week during all hours of operation to support the patient-centered medical home model. In FY18, NSHC and BHS extended the level of care available by offering full-time, on-site psychiatry seven days per week. This transformative service has allowed people throughout the region to access care locally and in their own communities.

**Anvil Mountain Correctional Center (AMCC):** BHS partners with AMCC to provide mental health, substance misuse, and reentry services for inmates of the facility. These services help those being released identify and access resources to help them stay healthy and well in their communities. Through strong assessment work and treatment planning, a full-time clinician has been able to enroll people in services prior to release so they may seamlessly continue their treatment at BHS.

**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. Piling were placed in the ground in FY18, with the first steel arriving in 2019. BHS appreciates the NSHC Board of Directors’ and administrative staff members’ support for this long-needed facility to serve the people of the region.

Kim Knudsen (middle) tells visitors at NSHC’s open house in September 2018 about the plans for the new Day Shelter, which provides resources to people who are struggling with substance misuse and need a place to recover. The Day Shelter opened in December.

BHS received a three-year accreditation after its survey by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities.

A rendering shows what the Wellness and Training Center look like. The front entrance will face the NSHC Patient Hostel/Pre-Maternal Home, and the rear side will face the Norton Sound Regional Hospital.
# Community Health Services
## Wellness Department

### CAMP

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<tr>
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<th>FY17</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Nutrition Appts</td>
<td>1,145</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diabetes Appointments</td>
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<td>374</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pediatric Nutrition</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Screenings</td>
<td>374</td>
<td>309</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tobacco Cessation Appts</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health Fair Attendees</td>
<td>556</td>
<td>299</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth Registered for Summercise</td>
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<td>197</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lactation Support</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>97</td>
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**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, (5) to provide early childhood nutrition education and lactation support to prevent diabetes, (6) to work with organizations to implement and enforce tobacco-free campuses and/or events, and (7) to promote public awareness regarding the health benefits of tobacco cessation and resources for tobacco cessation.

**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

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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 grants.

Sisters Christine Piscoya and Kim Gray wave from the beginning of the Turkey Trot community walk, organized by CAMP.
Obesity Rate (children 2-5 years)  
- FY17: 37%  
- FY18: 32%

Breastfeeding Initiation Rate  
- FY17: 82%  
- FY18: 84%

Breastfeeding Duration Rate at 6 months  
- FY17: 52%  
- FY18: 48.2%

Breastfeeding Duration Rate at 12 months  
- FY17: 45%  
- FY18: 42.3%

Women, Infants and Children

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

The Tribal Healer Program is in the Primary Care Clinic and provides traditional and culturally based alternative therapies at the patient’s request. The program is located near the doctors and medical staff for easy access for referrals from medical staff. The Tribal Healers travel to the villages to provide their services at the village clinics.

The Tribal Healer participated in a variety of community-based conversations, talking circles, and healing sessions including: Statewide suicide prevention workshop, Being Wellness Conference, presentations at the Anvil Correctional Facility, presentations at 10 Days of Wellness camp, and a variety of more venues. The Tribal Healers provide education to people on the local plants.

Breastfeeding Duration Rate at 12 months

Tribal Healer Total Treatments

- FY17: 946
- FY18: 1,050

Program Enhancements and Service Improvements: NSHC WIC serves families including infants, children and women to provide nutrition education and supplemental food benefits. The WIC staff continue to work diligently to process incoming applications and provide our clients with WIC food benefits, nutrition education and breastfeeding support. Activities that NSHC WIC Program did to reduce children’s overweight include promoting Alaska fruits and vegetable, encouraging families to drink more water and decrease sugary beverages, and recommend play-time and physical activity daily. Staff members provide breastfeeding support, early childhood nutrition education, nutrition education for pregnancy and postpartum.

Women, Infants and Children

Accomplishments:
- Hired a Health Educator Trainee
- Engaged and planned World Breastfeeding Activities for the community
- Participated in the Big Latch on Event
- Collaborated with NSHC Wellness Programs on the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative

Tribal Healer Eva Menadelook and Maria Dexter were special guests at a NSHC employee wellness day panel on salve making and traditional medicines.

Total Treatments
Quality Improvement and Risk Management

NSHC strives to provide the best quality of care to all patients. FY 2018 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 received recognition as a Level 3 Patient Centered Medical Home from NCQA. Acute Care and ED passed their Joint Commission tri-annual inspections.

The 2018 Quality Focus Goals targeted depression screening, healthy lifestyle counseling, breast cancer screening, immunizations, prenatal care, 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 first time NSHC received a national HRSA recognition.

NSHC has three quality improvement committees, which were all busy at work in FY 2018. 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 QPIC or Quyanna Care Center Performance Improvement Committee meets regularly to ensure that residents receive the highest quality of care. Finally, the HSPIC or 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 HRSA for Opioid awareness/training, from the State of Alaska for patient satisfaction surveys and another funding award from HRSA for Clinic Quality Improvement, which went toward supporting training and education programs to promote high quality patient care.

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.

**FY 2018 Accomplishments**

- Implemented ShoreTel voiceover internet protocol telephone systems in all of NSHC’s villages
- Created a comprehensive disaster and recovery plan that includes several new data storage devices and servers
- Updated the telemedicine carts to the latest approved update
- Upgraded Exchange servers to 2016
- Added ProofPoint and a spam filter

Electronic Health Record

NSHC’s Electronic Health Record team manages the digital storage of patient records and health care data. EHR trains providers NSHC-wide on how to use the electronic system to accurately reflect patients’ issues and histories. EHR also manages the online patient portal known as “MyHealth,” which patients can access for limited access to their medical records through a quick registration process. NSHC’s Cerner EHR system is shared by other tribal health organizations in the state, which means patient information from the different organizations is recorded in one spot. This allows patients’ medical travel experiences to be more efficient and their treatment more consistent. EHR is committed to continuously improving patient care processes through training, collecting data, and reporting.
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.

**FY 2018 Accomplishments:**

- Implemented Jumpstart Program in partnership with UAF Northwest Campus, NSEDC, Nome Public Schools, Kaverak and other volunteers. 17 students from around the region completed the college bridge program.
- Started offering competitive scholarships in the amount of $5,000/semester to five students each term and doctorate scholarships in the amount of $10,000/semester. Hannah Alowa won the first competitive scholarship, and Rachel Pomeranz and Alexander Morgan received the first doctorate scholarships.
- NSHC partnered with Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center to offer NSHC employees the opportunity to receive their driver’s licenses.
- Continued Cultural Orientation initiative for new employees and expanded to existing employees.
- Offered housing stipends to village-based employees on a monthly basis. Full-time employees receive $1,500/month, and part-time employees receive $750/month.

**Total Employees**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>724</td>
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**Native Hire Rate**

<table>
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<th>FY</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY17</td>
<td>61%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>61%</td>
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**Voluntary Turnover Rate**

<table>
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<th>FY</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FY17</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>25%</td>
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**Total Scholarships Awarded**

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<th>FY</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>$242,500</td>
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<td>FY18</td>
<td>$218,000</td>
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**Total Beneficiary Scholarships Awarded**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FY</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>$165,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FY18</td>
<td>$93,879</td>
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</table>
The Administration team continued to work collaboratively with the Board of Directors to carry out the vision of the organization. Administration supported several new projects and programs in an effort to meet the corporation’s top priorities, which include the following:

- Creating regular communication opportunities with patients, managers and employees
- Improving the scheduling of patient care for cost-effective housing, travel, etc.
- Greater integration of our unique cultural values, traditional medicine and knowledge into compliance and quality standards
- Village clinic facilities maintenance program
- Wellness Center development
- Increasing access to specialty services, prevention exams, and primary care appointments for all patients
- Five-year facilities master plan
- Enhancing our high school programs for growing our own into health careers
- Recruit past and current scholarship graduates into NSHC positions
- Update policies, procedures and reporting for better understanding, work processes and improved staff direction/guidance

Kelly Bogart stepped into the Vice President of Hospital Services role after serving in the Assistant VP of Hospital Services for three years under Phil Hofstetter. Kelly is working toward earning her master’s degree in organizational leadership and currently has a bachelor’s degree in child development and family studies.

NSHC Senior Leadership held a strategic planning session at Nuuk, about 20 miles outside of Nome, in the summer of 2018.

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.

**FY2018 accomplishments:**

- Helped organize Nome’s first Blood Bank Drive
- Planned Night of Honor to recognize emergency responders
- Carried out Diomede community-wide NSHC anniversary celebration
- Organized multiple public events at hospital
- Produced semi-annual Kaniqsirugut Newsletter
- Helped coordinate all staff events, including awards, meetings, picnics and wellness days
Cameron Piscoya joined NSHC as the Compliance Officer in May 2018. Cameron is from Nome and has a background as a director of human resources.

The NSHC Compliance department was established to provide a systematic process aimed at ensuring NSHC complies with applicable laws, regulations and standards.

The top priorities for the Compliance department set by the Board of Directors in FY2018 included enhancing the compliance, quality and customer service to employees during new hire orientation, creating regular communication opportunities with patients, residents, guests, and employees. The Compliance department attended various Tribal meetings to provide an avenue for performance improvement and suggestions.

During FY218, the Compliance Officer, along with the Privacy Officer, provided training and education to employees regarding patient and resident privacy. Privacy concerns can be reported to the Compliance department or NSHC anonymous hotline, EthicsPoint, at 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 (RERB) implemented is related to biological specimen obtained for the purpose of a study. The RERB recognized the need to better protect the people of the region, and beginning in September 2018, all biological specimens obtained must be destroyed at the completion of the study.

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 fiscal year 2018 were:

- The construction and staffing of the Wellness and Training Center
- Continued federal funding of replacement health clinics
- Lifting the FCC’s regulatory funding cap on the Universal Service Fund Rural Health Care program
- Eliminate the 25% set aside for regional hub communities contained within the Environmental Protection Agency’s Alaska Rural and Native Village Gram Program and redirect it to unserved communities
- Increase Small and Needy Tribe funding to $300,000 per eligible tribe, and increase Tribal Priority Allocation funding by 25% nationwide, and implement a mechanism to adjust for inflation
Engineering and Environmental Health

Capital Projects

Among the achievements during FY 2018 were the beginnings of two needed housing projects--one that entailed the renovation of the former Golovin clinic into a three-bedroom home, and the building of two two-bedroom duplexes in Savoonga. The Golovin project was completed at the end of the fiscal year, and the Savoonga housing project finished in FY19.

Shaktoolik held a groundbreaking ceremony for its new clinic, which was constructed by Paug-Vik.

The majority of the Norton Sound Regional Hospital’s MRI Suite was completed during FY18, including the demolition and remodel of the Emergency Department wing.

Pilings were driven for the Wellness and Training Center as NSHC continued to fundraise for capital costs throughout the fiscal year.

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.

Environmental Services/Laundry

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.

Pounds of Laundry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>FY17</th>
<th>FY18</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pounds</td>
<td>228,364</td>
<td>217,227</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Above: Construction crew workers set out on the beginnings of the new Shaktoolik Clinic.

Below: The old Golovin Health Clinic was turned into NSHC housing.
Village Facilities Maintenance 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.

FY18 Accomplishments:
- Held six trainings for staff, including plumbing/pipe fitting, boiler troubleshooting, and cabinet installation.
- Built and installed life jacket stands for villages.
- Completed sprinkler system repairs and fire extinguisher inspections in all clinics.
- Cleaned out connex van storages in Nome and prepared them to be delivered to village corporations.
- Delivered new clinic ATVs to Elim, Golovin, Koyuk, St. Michael, Shaktoolik, Shishmaref, Stebbins and White Mountain.
- Began lab/pharmacy ventilation installations for village clinics.

NSHC celebrated the graduation of five of its Village Maintenance Technicians from the University of Alaska’s Occupational Endorsement in Facilities Maintenance program at the 2018 UAF Northwest Campus commencement.

The Office of Environmental Health’s (OEH) focus areas in FY2018 were the region-wide Bed Bug Project, water plant operator training, utility management support, rabies prevention, and support of the Tribes’ environmental programs.

Bed Bug Project: OEH contracted with local professional pest management company Houdini’s Bed Bug Service LLC to provide home inspections and whole-house heat treatments when needed, at no cost to the Tribal homeowners. After home heat treatments are completed, OEH shipped out bed bug prevention kits to the homes to help make sure bed bugs do not re-infest the home.

Water Plant Operator Trainings: OEH hosted four trainings in Nome for the region’s water plant operators — two water treatment certification classes, an OSHA safety training, and a pump operations/troubleshooting class.

Environmental Program Classroom trainings: in addition to providing on-site technical assistance and training to 13 of the village-based Tribal environmental programs in 2018, OEH also hosted two classroom trainings.

OEH continues to work with the utility managers and operators in each of the region’s villages to provide technical support and training as needed and/or requested. OEH worked with the local State Rural Utility Business Advisor (RUBA) staff to provide one-day on-site training called “Sustainable Management of Small Utility Systems” to the utility managers and operators in Teller and Wales. Our team of Remote Maintenance Workers (RMW) provided countless hours of on-site and distance technical assistance directly to the water plant operators throughout the region.

In July 2018, OEH hosted a safety refresher class designed for rural utility operators by ANTHC.
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.

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 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 a part of Materials Management and is available for transporting patients to and from the hospital. In FY18, the Patient Driver expanded its hours to be more accessible to patients who arrive later in the day. The service is now available weekdays from 8 a.m.-7 p.m.

In FY 2018, NSHC added a Patient Travel Liaison position in Anchorage to help patients who experience medical travel difficulties. The liaison is able to help with Anchorage ground transportation, airline travel changes, lodging and meal concerns, and navigation through the Anchorage-based health care systems.
The Backbone of the Healthcare System
Honoring 50 years of the Community Health Aide Program

The statewide Community Health Aide Program turned 50 years old in 2018. When Norton Sound Health Corporation was established in 1970, many of its first community health aides were already working as healthcare providers in their communities.

Some started as midwives or as volunteers who would help visiting doctors or nurses. Many did not have formal training but were asked by their local leaders to rise to the challenge of providing care for their neighbors and families. In the 1960s, some of the future NSHC employees received training as health aides in Kotzebue, where a doctor would later receive radio reports of patient cases from the health aides once they were working in their home communities.

In 1968, the Community Health Aide Program received formal recognition and congressional funding. Not long after, the first tribal health organizations began forming, with the intent of expanding health care services in the rural parts of the state, including advancing the training of local service providers.

According to the 1998 book “The Alaska Health Aide Program - A Tradition of Helping Ourselves,” Norton Sound Health Corporation’s health aide training program was among the first three in the state. Not long after it began, the program’s trainers met with trainers from the other two programs - the Alaska Native Medical Center’s (which became the Community Health Aide Program A or CHAPA) and the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation’s - and found their evolving programs were very similar. Together with representatives from the Division of Public Health and the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, they formed the Planning and Advisory Committee for Health Aide Programs.

This committee laid the groundwork for a health aide manual and a statewide curriculum. Today, upon completion of the CHAP’s 24-credit program, health aides can receive an associate’s degree in applied science through the University of Alaska.

NSHC’s Health Aide Training Center is one of four in Alaska and gives priority to regional health aides.

New Health Aide Skills Per Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHA I</th>
<th>CHA II</th>
<th>CHA III</th>
<th>CHA IV</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ETT Grad, BLS, IV fluids, suturing, basic wound care, blood draw, injections, telemedicine, and hemoglobin, blood glucose and rapid strep labs</td>
<td>Prenatal exam, mental illness exams, plaster splinting, crutch fitting, postural drainage/clapping, PPD skin tests, urine labs, stool tests, HIV pretest counseling</td>
<td>Routine prenatal care, immediate postpartum, newborn care, breast exams, well child exams, pap smears, immunizations</td>
<td>Chronic care, including diabetes and tuberculosis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2018 Employee Awards

January Employee of the Month - Samantha Kleindienst Robler, AuD

February Employee of the Month - Ruth Peterson, Golovin CTC

March Employee of the Month - Kathryn Sawyer, Pharmacy

April Employee of the Month - Claude LeMay, Facilities Maintenance

May Employee of the Month - Joseph Attatayuk, UNK

June Employee of the Month - Ronda Burnett, QCC

July Employee of the Month - Tony Shelton, Pharmacy

August Employee of the Month - Wanda Iya, CAMP

September Employee of the Month - Darien Campbell, Pharmacy

October Employee of the Month - Elizabeth Coler, EHR

November Employee of the Month - Ida Lincoln, CHA WMO

November Employee of the Month - Kriscilla Buck, CHA WMO

December Employee of the Month - Sheila Baker, CHA S/I TLA

Employee of the Year (Nome) - Anna Moore, RN PCC

Employee of the Year (Village) - Crystal Fagerstrom CHA S/I GLV

Manager of the Year - Megan Mackiernan, Quality Improvement and Risk Management
Outside Recognition in Fiscal Year 2018

November 2017: NSHC Pharmacy received the Cardinal Health Generation Rx Champions Award
February 2018: Primary Care Center recognized as a National Committee for Quality Assurance Patient-Centered Medical Home
February 2018: Quyanna Care Center received a five-star rating through Medicare’s Nursing Home Compare site, and was ranked among the top eight nursing homes in Alaska -- tied for third place.
March 2018: The Alaska Pharmacist Association named the NSHC Pharmacy as the 2018 Excellence in Innovation Award
March 2018: Aurora Johnson honored as Healthy Alaska Natives Foundation’s 2018 pick for the Distinguished Provider Award
March 2018: Henrietta Ivanoff, CHA-P, received the 2018 CHAP Shining Star Award
July 2018: The NSHC Pharmacy was awarded the 2018 Laura Scott Immunization Excellence Award by the National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit
July 2018: Norton Sound Regional Hospital was named one of the Top 20 Most Beautiful Hospitals in the U.S. from Soliant
August 2018: NSHC earned $87,248 in HRSA Clinical Quality Improvement Awards -- the second highest grant amount statewide
August 2018: Dr. Seth Green, former Director of BHS’s Psychology Services, received the National Indian Health Board’s 2018 Hope and Healing Behavioral Health Award
September 2018: ASHNHA named QCC its 2018 Innovation in Transformation Award winner in the small nursing home division
September 2018: QCC received a Quality Achievement Award from Mountain-Pacific Quality Health
Share Your Feedback

**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