



**From the Office of
Angie Gorn, NSHC President/CEO**

End Chronic Underfunding Of Village Built Clinics (VBCs)

The VBCs are essential for maintaining the IHS Community Health Aide Program (CHAP) in Alaska, which provides the only local source of health care for many Alaska Native people in rural areas. The CHAP program is mandated by Congress as the instrument for providing basic health services in remote Alaska Native villages. The CHAP program cannot operate without the use of clinic facilities.

The IHS has for many years consistently under-funded the leases of VBCs. Lease rental amounts for the VBCs have failed to keep pace with costs –the majority of the leases for VBCs have not increased since 1989. The IHS has instead shifted its statutory responsibilities onto the Villages and NSHC. Over the past two years, NSHC has developed a Village Clinic Improvement Program. We've hired a Director, additional staff, and assumed the VBC Leases for all but one Village. In partnership with our Tribal Leaders, NSHC has agreed to take responsibility for utilities, staffing, and all maintenance of the VBC's. The leases in total

(\$400,000 for thirteen clinics) are not enough to support this program and NSHC contributes an additional \$500,000 on an annual basis to support it.



Wales Clinic- Renovated in FY2014 to restore running water and to repair electrical functions. Annual Lease funds from I.H.S equate to \$15,002 to maintain a 1500 square foot clinic. This is less than 12% of the required funding needed to keep the clinic open and compliant.

An Alaska Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) VBC Workgroup has been established and it was estimated that another \$12.5 M was needed in addition to the \$4.5 M I.H.S already provides (for a total of \$17 M) in order to adequately fund the operation and maintenance of the 170 VBCs in Alaska . Alaska based Tribal Health Organizations are excited to see that a \$2M increase, a first of its kind in decades, has been included in the FY2016 Consolidated Appropriations Act.

NSHC Request: For FY 2017, we urge that an additional \$12.5 million be appropriated to more fully fund VBC leases.

T. 907.443.3311 | F. 907.443.2113 | P.O. BOX 966, NOME, ALASKA 99762-0966 | www.nortonsoundhealth.org