

Success of the *Alaska Native Science Research Partnerships for Health (ANSRPH)*

University of Alaska Anchorage, Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies, Anchorage, AK: Carl M Hild, MS; Shannon Deike-Sims, BS; Melodie Fair, BA; Kathy Graves, PhD; Valerie Johnson, MPA; Brian Saylor, PhD, MPH; Janell Smith, MS
Alaska Native Epidemiology Center, Alaska Native Health Board and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Anchorage, AK: Carol Ballew, PhD

... Enhancing Alaska Native health research capabilities

Background: In order to conduct research on the health disparities of Alaska Natives, there is a need for: 1) more Alaska Native health researchers and 2) more non-Native researchers trained to work with the Alaska Native community. Building such culturally appropriate health research capacity takes time.

Purpose: To build a one-on-one mentoring program for both students and current health professionals to gain the research skills needed to improve their ability to address Alaska Native health disparities.

Methods: Under the University of Alaska's Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR), the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies at the University of Alaska Anchorage, in partnership with the Copper River Native Association and the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center (at the time, ANEC was within the Alaska Native Health Board), was awarded a National Institutes of Health R24 grant (MD000499-01) from the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities through its EXPORT program (EXcellence in Partnerships, Outreach, Research and Training). A system of apprentice interest applications and capacity was developed, along with a series of memorandum of agreements with a number of collaborating entities, so individuals wanting specific health research skills could be paired with mentors who could provide the opportunity for real world training and application.

Results: At the time of this abstract, over three dozen apprentices were assisted in developing health research skills, and produced a number of products, including: 1) a peer reviewed article in *Alaska Medicine* (prepared by six of the apprentices); 2) a presentation by a group of students of their research at the 2005 National Microbiological Society meeting; 3) contributions of apprentices to the collection of interviews, qualitative analysis, and report preparations for the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian Elders (NRC); 4) contributions of apprentices to the collection of materials, the development of annotations, and the preparation of reports for an ethnobotanical report for the Aleut International Association, published by the eight-nation Arctic Council's Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna working group; and 5) with the help of ANSRPH mentors, apprentices submitted proposals to NIH so they could conduct their own health research. One apprentice's work was so well received by the Bureau of Indian Affairs that the BIA subsequently contracted him and other similarly trained ANSRPH apprentices to continue the work that was initiated. In addition, the Alaska Native Epidemiology Center provided their Traveling Classroom program to several communities throughout Alaska with the support of ANSRPH, and (in conjunction with ICHS staff) developed a program on the basic use of a common statistical software program. In 2005, ANSRPH received the Chancellor's Award for Excellence.

Conclusion: ANSPRH has been far more successful than originally proposed. The response from Alaska Native students--particularly those in three graduate programs (Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work)--has been dramatic. In light of the additional requests for training and partnership, ANSRPH is requesting additional supplemental funds to expand the services. ANSRPH has prepared a P20 proposal application in partnership with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and Maniilaq Association that builds from this success.

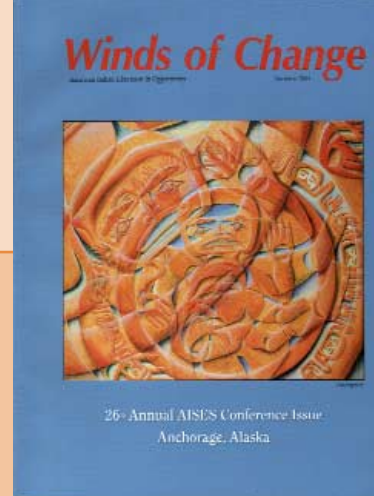
Chancellor's Award for Excellence Exemplary Achievements in Support of Diversity



The ANSRPH team receives the Chancellor's Award for Excellence

Helping Communities

The Alaska Native Research Partnership for Health Project



A key to involving more Alaska Natives in health research is using research results to improve Native community health and welfare. This is the primary goal of the ANSRPH project at UAA's Institute for Circumpolar health studies.

-From the Autumn 2004 issue of "Winds of Change"



"People have been wanting something like this for a long time... Communities have wanted trained Native researchers of their own."

-Carl Hild, ANSRPH Project PI



"I think this is a big stride towards improving Alaska Native involvement in health research."

-Kathy Graves, ANSRPH mentor

"Ideally, the research will be developed in consultation with the community and what they want investigated. The point is not the research topic per se, but the training of people in how to do the research."

-Carol Ballew, former ANSRPH director



CRNA management team



Wrangell-St. Elias Mountains

UAA's ANSRPH Transforming Health Science Research in Alaska

Since receiving a \$1.1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health and Health Disparities last year, the Alaska Native Science Research Partnership (ANSRPH) has made tremendous strides toward its goal of transforming health science research in Alaska Native communities.

-From ua@work, February 2005, No. 4

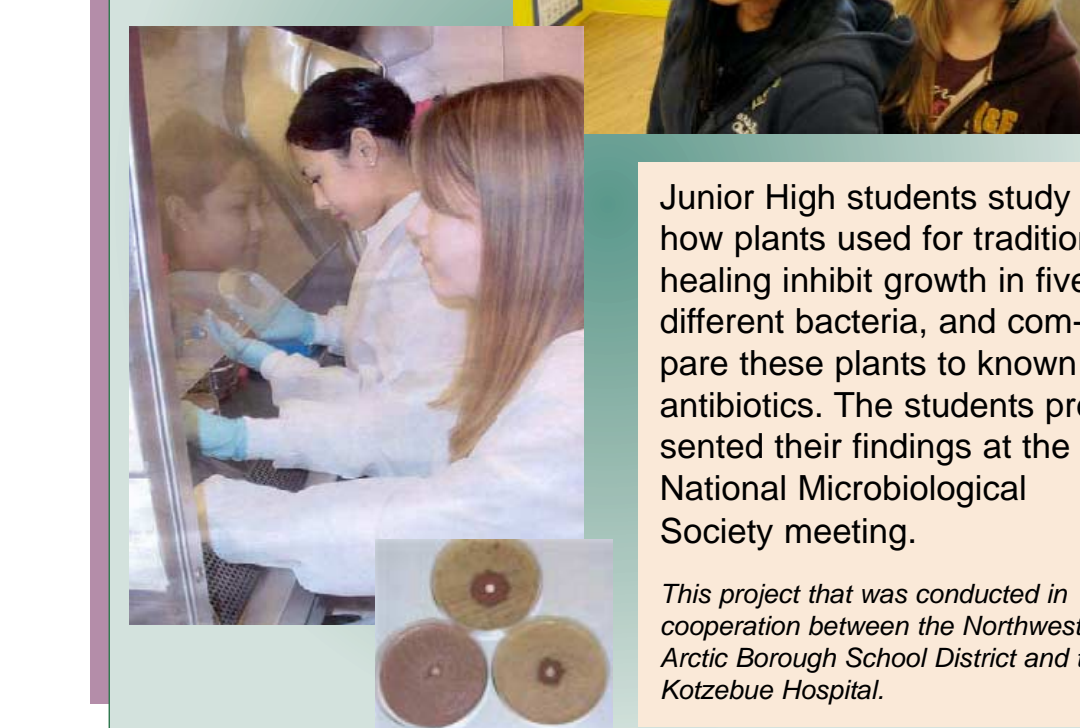


"We are far beyond what we anticipated and we are constantly scouting new opportunities and projects for training and mentoring interested students."

-Melodie Fair, ANSRPH Research Associate

"By showing that we can be a good trainer and mentor, we hope that our new partners will collaborate with us in the submittal of new awards."

-Carl Hild, ANSRPH Principal Investigator

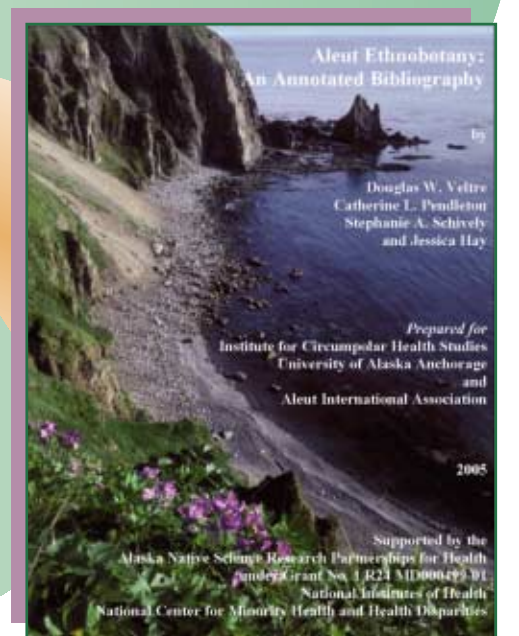
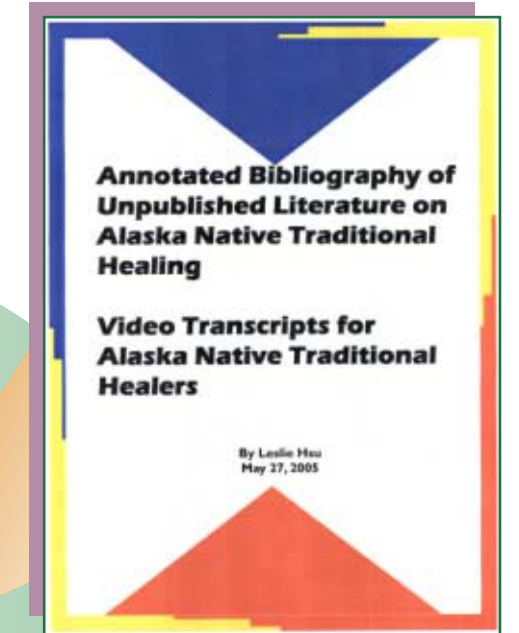
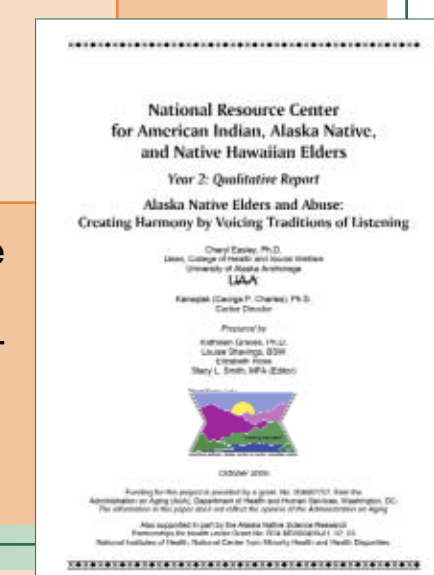


Junior High students study how plants used for traditional healing inhibit growth in five different bacteria, and compare these plants to known antibiotics. The students presented their findings at the National Microbiological Society meeting.

This project was conducted in cooperation between the Northwest Arctic Borough School District and the Kotzebue Hospital.

"Alaska Native Elders and Abuse: Creating Harmony by Voicing Traditions of Listening"

ANSRPH provided funding to the National Resource Center for American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian Elders for the research, data analysis, and final report. This project involved ANSRPH personnel and Alaska Natives into Psychology (ANPsych) students.



Funded by National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities 5R24MD000499-03.



Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies
 University of Alaska Anchorage
 3211 Providence Drive, DPL 404
 Anchorage, AK 99508-4614

- Phone: (907) 786-6575 / Fax: (907) 786-6576
- Email: ics@uaa.alaska.edu
- Web site: http://health.uaa.alaska.edu/