

## University of Alaska Behavioral Health Research (October 2016)

### Behavioral Health Research Centers and Institutes

**Center for Alaska Native Health Research (UAF):** Focuses on the genetic, behavioral, and nutritional risk and protective factors for obesity and related metabolic disorders including diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Future research priorities will be to design and test interventions involving preventive and treatment approaches addressing obesity and related co-morbidities as well as research on suicide and substance abuse in Alaska Native communities.

CANHR Pilot Project 2015: Prenatal Preventive Health in Interior AK: Impacts of Maternal Stress and Health

*Leader: Kendra Campbell, Ph.D.*

See UAF Psychology Department section.

CANHR Project: Qungasvik (Toolbox): Prevention of Alcohol/Suicide Risk in Alaska Native Youth

*Principal Investigators: Stacy Rasmus, PhD (UAF), James Allen, PhD (University of Minnesota Medical School)*

*Funder: National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism 1R01AA023754-01*

The general objectives of the research are to: (a) validate results obtained from previous smaller intervention studies aimed at reducing the incidence of alcohol misuse and suicide in 12-18 year old Yup'ik Alaska Native youth; and (b) learn more about the relative importance of the individual, family, peer, and community variables that underscore the intervention. Our goal with the research is to replicate pilot findings from previously submitted protocols (Ellangneq (Awareness), Elluam Tungiinun and Qasgiq) in a prevention trial with adequate power, time, and resources. The Qungasvik intervention engages youth, families and the entire community in the process of developing and delivering protective experiences for youth that increase reasons for life and reasons for sobriety. The intervention is strengths-based. It focuses on building from historical and intergenerational resilience. The university researchers assist by providing technical assistance and documenting impacts from the intervention on the primary outcomes of protection, reasons for life and reasons for sobriety. This study is a final step in the process of moving the Qungasvik (Toolbox) intervention from a promising to an evidence-based practice.

CANHR Project: Witnessing Our Future

*Principal Investigator: Stacy Rasmus, PhD*

*Funder: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, State Tribal Youth Suicide SM061482*

This program will: (1) conduct a community-based, family-driven and youth-guided adaptation of the MASPP to fit within a Coast Salish cultural context; (2) utilize a promising practice in suicide prevention from Alaska to engage the community in an indigenous-theory driven intervention implementation process; (3) establish a suicide surveillance system with screening and referral services for youth at risk at the NWIC;

- (4) implement a community-wide, culturally-based preventive intervention for tribal youth;
- (5) evaluate outcomes of the services and prevention.

CANHR Project: Community Adaptations and Knowledge Sharing in Alaska and Siberia:  
Utilizing Indigenous Research Methodologies

*Principal Investigator: Stacy Ramus, PhD*

*National Science Foundation, Arctic Social Sciences Program #1424042*

The goal of the project is to discover Indigenous patterns of adaptive and resilient responses to critical situations through an exchange of knowledge between members of two arctic communities in Alaska and Siberia. The project aims to: 1) conduct two fieldwork exchanges in Alaska and Siberia with indigenous community collaborators; 2) develop a comparative model of social resilience and community sustainability that describes how diverse communities in the Arctic are coping, adapting, and transforming as a result of changing social and environmental conditions; and 3) establish an innovative methodology for engaging arctic indigenous community members in collaborative research. The study will be the first to engage indigenous community members from Alaska and Siberia in a collaborative exchange and discovery process as part of a research design utilizing innovative indigenous research methodologies. The study adds a critical new perspective to resilience theory that takes into account the transformative capacity of indigenous peoples and communities. The proposed study aims to impact the international indigenous and scientific communities by broadening the inclusion of underrepresented minorities in research, and more effectively engaging indigenous communities and peoples as part of research collaborations.

CANHR Project: Toksook Bay Native Connections Project

CANHR Project: Emmonak Native Connections Project

CANHR Project: Scammon Bay Native Connections Project

*Principal Investigator: Stacy Ramus, PhD*

*Funder: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Native Connections SM063557, SM063445, SM063556*

For nearly two decades, suicide and alcohol-related injuries have been the leading causes of death for Alaska Native youth between the ages of 15 and 24 years. Rates of suicide and substance abuse in the rural, Alaska Native communities represent an unacceptable burden for the people, often made worse by the inaccessibility of formal mental health care and services in our remote villages. A long-term partnership with researchers at the University of Alaska Fairbanks led to the development of the Qungasvik (Toolbox) prevention model with evidence demonstrating how Yup'ik culture *is* prevention and can protect young people against the spirit of suicide and substance abuse. The Qungasvik vision for wellness is based on reconnection and reintegration of youth into their culture and community in ways that create healthy relationships to the past for their present and future. The *Toksook Bay, Emmonak and Scammon Bay Native Connections Projects* all aim to partner with the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF) to deliver prevention services using a Yup'ik Alaska Native promising practice to serve the 180 youth between the ages of 10 and 24 years old currently residing in our community. Additionally the projects seek to build capacity at the local Tribal community level to conduct service and research to reduce disparities in substance abuse and suicide among youth.

## CANHR: Alaska Native Collaborative Cancer Survivor Project

*Researchers: Ellen Lopez, Freda Williams*

*Grants from Native People for Cancer Control, the Institute of Translational Health Sciences, and the State of Alaska's CDC- Cancer Comprehensive Cancer Program*

After two years of grassroots work, CANHR's Ellen Lopez, along with Freda Williams of Fairbanks Native Association, established an Interior Region Alaska Native Cancer Survivor research and services program for cancer survivors and their loved ones.

The program started as being introductory and exploratory to truly hear what survivors and their loved ones identified as their priority needs. In addition to in-depth interviews with survivors, Lopez is also conducted a photovoice project, where Alaska Native cancer survivors were given cameras to photograph and discuss with other survivors specific aspects of their experiences. These photos are providing fresh information to the CANHR-FNA collaboration.

As a result, and now for over 5 years, Lopez and her FNA partners have been hosting the Hopeful Connections support program, which involves topic-specific informational sessions, cancer education trainings, and an Alaska-wide beading program wherein Alaska Native survivors create beaded pins to gift to other survivors and caregivers. The goal of this research and community-driven programming is to identify and address that factors that impact quality of life for Alaska Native cancer survivors and caregivers.

Lopez and her FNA partners believe that survivor stories will further inform cancer prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment and quality of life. They see opportunities for expanding cancer survivor groups and resources to rural Alaska communities.

## CANHR Project: Strengthening Communities for Well-Being

*Principal Investigator: Jacques Philip, MD*

*Co-Investigator/Mentor: Deborah Goebert, DrPH (Univ. of Hawai'i at Manoa)*

*Funding: Mini-grant from the Mountain West Clinical and Translational Research Infrastructure Network (CTR-IN), NIH/NGMS: 5U54 GM104944*

The Tanana Chiefs Conference health corporation (TCC) has been implementing the Sources of Strength suicide prevention intervention (SoS), an evidence and strength based program, in Athabascan communities of interior Alaska since 2012.

The objectives of the project were to formalize a strong CBPR partnership between TCC, two Athabascan communities, SoS, and CANHR, and to determine the impact and limitations of the SoS implementation, by (1) Analyzing quantitative outcome data collected by TCC since 2012, and (2) Obtaining community members' perceptions of the intervention through key informant interviews.

The long term goal of the project is to improve the implementation of evidence based suicide prevention programs such as SoS in Interior Alaska, by integrating them with community driven activities rooted in Athabascan culture.

**Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services (UAA):** In November 2015, CBHRS merged with UAA's Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER), Alaska's oldest public policy research institute. This mutually beneficial affiliation with ISER increases CBHRS' capacity to answer new research questions related to the economic and social implications of evidence-based interventions and augments ISER's capacity to study social and behavioral contributors to the health and well-being of Alaskans.

CBHRS Project: Alaska Child and Family Post Discharge Interviews

*Principal Investigator: Staci Corey*

The Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services conducts interviews with parents/guardians of youth who have been discharged from services at Alaska Child and Family. These interviews are conducted at 6, 12 and 18 months post discharge. The interviews consist of questions regarding the youth's functioning and satisfaction with services. Alaska Child and Family analyzes the data for performance improvement purposes. Information on Alaska Child and Family's Outcomes Project can be found [here](#).

CBHRS Project: Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project Evaluation

*Principal Investigator: Jesse S. Metzger, Ph.D.*

*Funded through the State of Alaska Division of Behavioral Health and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (Grant #TI17409).*

Alaska has been consistently ranked as having the highest suicide rate in the country. This rate is almost double the national average, with approximately 130 suicides occurring in Alaska each year (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2007). Of particular concern are Alaskan youth who have significantly higher rates than the national average. According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reports, in 2004 national suicide rates among 15 to 19 year olds were 8.2 per 100,000. In the recent Alaska Suicide Follow Back Study, from 2004 – 2006 the average annual rate for this group was 31.6 per 100,000, over three times the U.S. rate. There is also a large ethnic disparity in rates of suicide as Alaska Natives account for 39% of suicides but comprise only 16% of the population. Based on this need, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration provided the State of Alaska with a Garrett Lee Smith, Youth Suicide Prevention Grant. The purpose of this grant is to enhance and expand suicide prevention programs and services to specific regions and youth populations where suicide rates are particularly high. Requirements of the grant include compliance with federal cross-site evaluation efforts that will allow SAMHSA to consistently evaluate all sites funded through this funding mechanism. The cross-site evaluation requirements and local evaluation is conducted by Center for Behavioral Health Research and Services (CHBRS).

CBHRS in cooperation with Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) and the Regional Suicide Prevention Teams (RSPT) will lead the evaluation plan for the Alaska Youth Suicide Prevention Project. The evaluation includes:

annual evaluation of statewide and Regional Suicide Prevention Team efforts

evaluation of stakeholder (including families and advocacy organizations) feedback related to youth suicide prevention efforts

full participation in the cross-site evaluation

compliance with data and performance measurement requirements from the Government Performance and Results Act

completion of the Campus Suicide Prevention Pilot to assess the degree to which campus suicide is being dealt with in Alaska's university system and to develop a suicide prevention pilot project.

CBHRS Project: Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders Practice and Implementation Centers (PIC)

*Principal Investigator: Diane King, Ph.D.*

*Supported by the US Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities, grant award #1U01DD001143-01, FAIN #U01DD00143.*

The ultimate objective of the project is to reduce health consequences of AEPs and improve the health of Northwest Arctic residents, and through collaboration, the U.S. population. NAPIC will accomplish its goals through six objectives:

Adapt and implement CEDC curricula for nurses and psychologists.

Translate training and practice materials to electronic learning environments to promote dissemination.

Facilitate practice-based implementation using an evidence-based implementation planning and evaluation framework, RE-AIM, to accelerate systems-level change within diverse healthcare delivery contexts.

Institutionalize FASD-related content within curricula for health students and medical residents and university settings.

Collaborate and coordinate with other PICs, national health professional organization grantees and regional partner groups to address AEPs, FASDs and alcohol misuse across the country and all disciplines.

Conduct regional process and outcome evaluation to iteratively evaluate progress against key milestones.

**Center for Human Development (UAA):** CHD is a University Center for Excellence in Developmental Disabilities (UCEDD) in Education, Research, and Service. There are 67 UCEDDs that form an Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). Since CHD is the only UCEDD in Alaska, it serves the entire state.

## CHD Project: A Multi-Level Community-Based Fitness Intervention for Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

*Researchers: Karen Heath, LynnAnn Tew, Alex Olah*

*Funding Source: NIH Clinical and Translational Research (CTR-IN)*

Evaluation of customized wellness program for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and a fitness partner. The 12-week intervention program includes program coaching/goal setting, nutrition classes and independent and group physical activity.

## CHD Project: SAMHSA AWARE Evaluation

*Researchers: Karen Heath, Curtis Smith*

*Funding Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) through the Project AWARE-State Educational Agencies (SEAs) program grant (AWARE = Advancing Wellness and Resilience Education).*

Evaluation of Alaska Project AWARE which 1) supports counselors who provide mental health services within each of nine alternative high schools in three Alaskan districts (Anchorage, Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su) and 2) provides Youth Mental Health First training to a minimum of 2,500 first aiders over the 5-year grant.

## CHD Project: Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions Needs Assessment

*Researchers: Karen Heath, Curtis Smith, Danielle Reed, Rebekah Moras, Roxy Lamar (CHD), Travis Hedwig (Public Health), Marny Rivera (Justice Center), Gabe Garcia (Public Health), and Bridget Hanson (CBHRS).*

*Funding Source: Anchorage Injury Prevention Coalition through a SOA DBH SAMHSA grant*

Community needs assessment for the Anchorage Collaborative Coalitions (ACC) to meet the requirements of data driven intervention planning for a Department of Behavioral Health SAMHSA grant. Secondary and primary data was collected and analyzed to better understand the behavioral health issues (e.g., substance use, mental health, suicide) and resiliency among Anchorage youth ages 12-24.

## CHD Project: Alaska Safety Planning and Empowerment Network (ASPEN)

*Researchers: Karen Heath, Rebekah Moras, Roxy Lamar*

*Funding Source: AMHTA*

The Alaska Safety Planning and Empowerment Network (ASPEN) is a collaborative composed of five organizations drawn from the domestic violence/sexual assault advocacy movement, the disability services sector, and the behavioral health field. ASPEN shared objectives and mission include building capacity of the service delivery systems (e.g., disability, victim advocacy, and others) by creating systems change designed to enhance the provision of collaborative, effective person-centered services for survivors of domestic violence/sexual assault with disabilities. In order to achieve this system's change, ASPEN conducts needs assessments in one Alaskan community each year and then assists the local collaborative through a strategic plan.

CHD Project: Traumatic and Acquired Brain Injury (TABI) Project Evaluation

*Researchers: Danielle Reed, Karen Heath, Alex Olah*

*Funding Source: SOA Health and Social Services through a HRSA (now ACL) grant*

Evaluation of TABI project which supports: 1) brain injury resource navigators 2) training for a variety of providers who may be working with individuals who experience TABI (e.g., physicians, PTs, OTs, DJJ, Assisted Living, and direct service providers).

CHD Project: Friendships and Dating

*Researchers: Karen Ward; Julie Atkinson*

*Funding Source: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority*

Outcome evaluation of 2 versions of Friendships and Dating Program; one for youth with severe emotional disturbances and one for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The program is designed to increase social skills to development meaningful relationships, including romantic, and decrease interpersonal violence.

CHD Project: Customized Employment for Individuals with Serious Psychiatric Disabilities

*Researchers: Karen Ward, Karen Heath, Danielle Reed, Kathy Trawver (Social Work), Alex Olah*

*Funding Source: National Institute on Disabilities, Independent Living and Rehabilitation Research*

Determine the feasibility and outcome of customized employment as a strategy for increasing job acquisition and sustained integrated employment for individuals diagnosed as having a serious psychiatric disability

CHD Project: Legal Issues of individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury in Alaska

*Researchers: Danielle Reed, Curtis Smith, Julie Holden*

*Funding Source: Disability Law Center of Alaska*

Conduct a legal needs study of individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury in Alaska

**Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies and Center for Alcohol and Addiction**

**Studies (UAA):** The Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies was created by the Alaska State Legislature in 1988 (AS 14.40.088) to develop new solutions to health problems in Alaska and the north. The Institute provides support and coordination for health research, information, and training. Working closely with faculty throughout the University of Alaska system, ICHS provides technical assistance and support to increase the capacity within the state to address the health needs of all Alaskans.

ICHS Project: NICHD Alaska Native Violence Prevention/Academic-Community Partnership (ACP) Conference Grant

*Researcher: David Driscoll, PhD, MPH, MA*

Alaska Native (AN) people experience disproportionately high rates of violence and related adverse health outcomes. Research into why these health disparities persist is best pursued by academic-community partnerships focused on the priorities of the affected communities. This project will allow us to conduct a series of meetings with AN community members and tribal health organizations to assess AN community interest in violence-related health disparities, identify community priorities, and build an academic-community partnership to conduct community-based participatory research in the future.

ICHS Project: Telebehavioral Health

*Researcher: David Driscoll*

ICHS is working with tribal partners to augment behavioral health care strategies in rural Alaska through emerging telehealth technology. ICHS anticipates the utilization of emerging telehealth technology will mitigate severe access to care challenges in rural Alaska and will further increase workforce development opportunities for behavioral health professionals serving those regions

ICHS Project: Housing First

*Researcher: David Driscoll*

ICHS is working with the Mental Health Trust Authority to incorporate new health care cost data in an evaluation of the Housing First models in Anchorage and Fairbanks. ICHS anticipates that the inclusion of these additional data, including behavioral health costs, will provide insights into the long-term cost implications of such models.

**The Justice Center (UAA):** The Justice Center was established by the Alaska Legislature in 1975. It is a teaching and research unit offering academic programs in Justice and Legal Studies. Its faculty conduct research in a number of areas including violence and violent crime, violence against women, law and the courts, corrections, recidivism, substance abuse, rural justice issues, homelessness, policing, and juvenile justice. The Alaska Justice Statistical Analysis Center (AJSAC) and the Alaska Justice Information Center (AJiC) are housed in the Justice Center. Its research publications include the *Alaska Justice Forum* and the *AJSAC Fact Sheet*.

JUST Project: Alaska Victimization Survey

*Researcher: Andre B. Rosay*

*Funding Agency: Alaska Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault*

Uses a public health approach to estimate annual and lifetime prevalence of violence against women. Results have shown high levels of violent victimization throughout Alaska, and are used to impact policy and practice.

JUST Project: Violence Against American Indian and Alaska Native Women

*Researcher: Andre B. Rosay*

*Funding Agency: National Institute of Justice*



Provides national estimates of violence against American Indian and Alaska Native women and men. Also examines the health impacts of violent victimization.

JUST Project: Space, Place, and Home: Mapping the Social Environment of Anchorage Homeless Populations

*Researchers: Donna Aguiniga, UAA School of Social Work and Troy C. Payne, UAA Justice Center*

*Funding Agency: UAA College of Health interdisciplinary grant*

This small-scale pilot study explored the relationship between routine activities of homeless young adults and the built environment. Semi-structured interviews and an innovative mapping exercise were used to reconstruct respondents' past 24 hours of activity. Data analysis is ongoing, and the PIs expect to apply for external funding to continue the project.

JUST Project: University of Alaska Campus Climate Survey

*Researchers: Brad A. Myr Stol & Lindsey Blumenstein*

*Funding Agency: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics*

Survey of 1,982 University of Alaska students designed to establish baseline prevalence measures of sexual misconduct and sexual assault committed against UA students. In addition, the survey measured student academic outcomes and overall campus climate.

JUST Project: Alaska Sex Offender Recidivism and Case Processing Project

*Researchers: Brad A. Myr Stol, Marny Rivera, and Khristy Parker*

*Funding Agency: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics*

This grant was awarded to fund two separate projects, both of which made use of data retained in Alaska's criminal history repository. The first project utilized criminal history repository information to develop group-based trajectory models of convicted sex offender recidivism. The second project made use of criminal history repository data to examine the criminal case processing of registrable sex offense arrests.

JUST Project: An Innovative Solution to an Intractable Problem: Using Village Public Safety Officers to Enhance the Criminal Justice Response to Violence Committed Against Alaska Native Women in Alaska's Tribal Communities

*Researcher: Brad A. Myr Stol*

*Funding Agency: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice*

Using a multi-phase, multi-method research design, this study examines the impact Alaska's VPSO program has on the criminal justice response to domestic violence and sexual assault committed against Alaska Native women in the state's tribal communities. More specifically, the study explores how VPSO presence in Alaska Native communities and how VPSO involvement in the investigation of domestic violence and sexual assault incidents impacts: the decision of police to refer domestic violence and/or sexual assault cases for prosecution, the decisions of district attorneys to prosecute domestic violence

and/or sexual assault cases (given referral by police), and the dispositions of domestic violence and/or sexual assault cases (given referral by police, and prosecution by district attorneys).

#### JUST Project: Evaluation of Recover Alaska

*Researcher: Marny Rivera (UAA) and off campus partners (David Tarcy of Alaska Research and Evaluation Services and Dale Cope)*  
*Funding Agency: Recover Alaska*

Recover Alaska is an initiative that seeks to reduce excessive alcohol use and harm through individual, social, and systemic change. The purpose of the first year of the evaluation is to assess progress during the Initiative's first implementation phase. One task of the evaluation in year one is to establish baseline data including population level indicators of alcohol use and related harms in Alaska from which to measure the initiative's progress.

#### JUST Project: Evaluation of permanent supportive housing programs; chronic inebriate anti-recidivism project

*Researcher: Marny Rivera*  
*Funding Agency: State of Alaska, Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health*

Program seeks to provide housing first to chronically homeless individuals with substance abuse and/or serious mental illness. The evaluation has been designed seeks to measure individual outcomes, impact on public service utilization that includes a cost analysis, and community impact

#### JUST Project: Policy analysis to reduce heroin and prescription drug abuse

*Researcher: Marny Rivera and research team (TBD)*  
*Funding Agency: State of Alaska, Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology with funds from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*

Conduct a nationwide policy and regulation review to produce recommendations for statutory and/or regulatory change in Alaska designed to prevent prescription drug overuse, misuse, abuse, and/or overdose.

#### JUST Project: Evaluation of Pay for Success demonstration project to reduce chronic Homelessness

*Researcher: Marny Rivera and research team (TBD)*  
*Funding Agency: United Way of Anchorage with funds from U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and U.S. Department of Justice*

The program will involve targeted outreach and engagement of a specific population of chronically homeless individuals. The housing first model will be used and wraparound services provided to promote housing stability, reduce substance use and recidivism, enhance physical and mental health, and support employment or other productive

activity. The evaluation will measure achievement of outcomes and potential cost savings from the Pay for Success (PFS) model.

## **Behavioral Health Schools and Departments**

### **UAA Nursing:**

NURS Project: Translation of Qualitative Findings for Anticipatory Guidance: Regret Sex, a Poetic Transcription

*Sharyl Toscano*

*Regret sex* is a phenomenon beyond feeling pressured to engage in sexual activity. The concept of regret sex has been linked to high risk youth behaviors including drug and alcohol use as well as uncertainty and potential risk of harm in adolescent dating relationships. In the current literature, women report both non-alcohol related and alcohol related regret sex more often and more intensely than men. The use of translation allows health care providers to move past screening and identification toward a science of understanding and guidance for youth and young adults. The researcher interviewed 10 unmarried economically and racially diverse women between the ages of 19-25 for the purpose of exploring the role regret sex plays in the development and/or lack of development of healthy romantic relationships. Using Qualitative Descriptive Analysis and the poetic transcription method, the researcher will present a representation or 'third voice' that incorporates the interviewee/s and the researcher. Words, emotions, and the rhythm of speaking are interconnected in this process where the end result, poetic transcription, is a focus on the essential story. The resulting poem provides insight into the connections between consent, consequence, and regret as young women explore role and identity in sexual relationships.

NURS Project: Wound Care Clinic

*Michele Burdette-Taylor*

This project is designed to provide and evaluate a sustainable foot and wound care clinic for the homeless population of Anchorage - working with Central Lutheran Church, Brother Francis Shelter, Domiciliary, and Project Connect.

### **UAA Psychology:**

UAA PSY Project: Development of student officer orientation for a university leadership program

*Researchers: Veronica Howard & Claire Ferree.*

*Funded by an Undergraduate Research in the Community Grant through the UAA Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship*

This project aimed to develop a simple self-paced, web-delivered training package for new student club officers.

UAA PSY Project: Is the price right? Open text adoption and student performance in a

psychology lecture course

*Researchers: Veronica Howard & Tessamae Endes*

The researchers are currently collecting data on the efficacy of a free Open textbook for a large section of general psychology. Early data suggests that the free to access textbook is just as effective as a traditional publisher textbook while saving over \$8,000 for students enrolled in PSY A111 during the Spring 2016 semester.

UAA PSY Project: When helping hurts: A survey of vicarious trauma in domestic violence staff.

*Researchers: Denise Reed and Veronica Howard*

This project (currently in development) will survey staff working at a local domestic violence shelter to determine whether organizational support is provided to help ameliorate vicarious trauma associated with helping men and women who have experienced domestic violence.

UAA PSY Project: Faculty Perspectives of Open Educational Resources at the University of Alaska Anchorage.

*Researchers: Veronica Howard, Heather Nice, Darcy Hutchings, & Lara Madden*

Open Ed resources may be one way of reducing the cost of student college attendance without sacrificing the quality of education, but they're relatively unknown to most faculty. This project aims to determine the current perceptions of and attitudes toward open educational resources by UAA faculty.

UAA PSY Project: Evaluating the Feasibility and Acceptability of a Mobile Application for Self-management of Unhealthy Alcohol Use

*Researchers: Patrick Dulin, Ph.D. (UAA Professor of Psychology); Eric Hawkins, Ph.D. (Research Psychologist, Puget Sound VA Healthcare System); James Fitterling, Ph.D. (UAA Associate Professor of Psychology)*

*Funding: VA Health Services Research and Development*

This study aims to assess 1) recruitment feasibility, recruitment approaches, compliance with follow-up assessments and patterns of a stand-alone smartphone app for substance abuse treatment (Step Away), and 2) acceptability and usability dimensions of efficiency, effectiveness, satisfaction, learnability and attractiveness of Step Away among OEF/OIF Veterans in the community. An exploratory aim of the proposal is to evaluate change on alcohol use, psychological distress and health-related quality of life outcomes.

UAA PSY Project: Examining the Health Consequences of Moderate Alcohol Use Amongst Older Adults

*Researchers involved: Patrick Dulin, Ph.D. (UAA Professor of Psychology); Andy Towers, Ph.D. (Senior Lecturer, Massey University New Zealand)*

*Funding: New Zealand Health Research Council (original funder)*

This study aims to determine the health consequences of older adult drinking amongst the New Zealand population of older adults (65-90 years old). Our recent project suggested that moderate drinking was not associated with any health benefits when a robust measure of socioeconomic living standards was controlled for statistically. This study will soon be published in the Journals of Gerontology, Series B. We will examine whether or not this pattern of results holds up in a longitudinal framework in the future.

UAA PSY project: Volunteering as a Longitudinal Predictor of Health and Happiness amongst Older Adults

*Researchers involved: Patrick Dulin, Ph.D. (UAA Professor of Psychology); Christine Stephens, Ph.D. (Professor, Massey University New Zealand)*

*Funding source (if any): New Zealand Health Research Council (original funder)*

This study stems from earlier work by the research team that indicated that volunteering was a unique predictor of emotional well-being amongst older adults (65-90 years old) in New Zealand. The current project examines whether or not volunteering is related to physical and mental health amongst older adults in a longitudinal framework amongst a large (N= 2800) sample of older adults in New Zealand.

UAA PSY project: Location-Based Monitoring and Intervention for Alcohol Use Disorders

*Researchers involved: Patrick Dulin, Ph.D. (UAA Professor of Psychology); Vivian Gonzalez, Ph. D. (UAA Associate Professor of Psychology).*

*Funding source (if any): National Institute of Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism*

We are continuing to analyze data from this study that was completed in 2013. Recent projects have examined the utility of a mobile health intervention system called the Location Based Monitoring and Intervention System that we developed in 2010 in reducing craving for alcohol over time amongst a group of alcohol dependent participants and which coping strategies that the system delivered were associated with improved cravings for alcohol. We also are examining whether or not participant had a concomitant reduction in depression pre-post and if the effect was mediated by reduced alcohol consumption over time amongst participants.

UAA PSY project: Evaluating the Feasibility and Acceptability of a Mobile Application for Self-management of Unhealthy Alcohol Use

*Researchers involved: Patrick Dulin, Ph.D. (UAA Professor of Psychology); Eric Hawkins, Ph.D. (Research Psychologist, Puget Sound VA Healthcare System); James Fitterling, Ph.D. (UAA Associate Professor of Psychology)*

*Funding: VA Health Services Research and Development*

This study aims to assess 1) recruitment feasibility, recruitment approaches, compliance with follow-up assessments and patterns of a stand-alone smartphone app for substance abuse treatment (Step Away), and 2) acceptability and usability dimensions of efficiency, effectiveness, satisfaction, learnability and attractiveness of Step Away among OEF/OIF Veterans in the community. An exploratory aim of the proposal is to evaluate change on alcohol use, psychological distress and health-related quality of life outcomes.

UAA PSY Project: Refugee SBIRT Program

*Researchers: Rebecca Volino Robinson (UAA); Sarah Dewane (Providence); Annie Derthick (Providence)*

*Funding: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (funded to Providence Family Medicine Center)*

We are developing, implementing, and evaluating a refugee mental health screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment program at Alaska Family Medicine Residency. The program includes educational components for medical residents and psychology interns. Results will provide baseline rates of positive mental health screens, uptake of treatment, and treatment outcome data.

UAA PSY Project: Trauma & Resilience at an Emergency Homeless Shelter

*Rebecca Volino Robinson (UAA); Steffi Kim (UAA Doctoral Student)  
Funding: Center for Community Engagement & Learning*

A mixed-method study exploring the interrelationship of adverse childhood experiences, current traumatic experiences, safety and security, sleep, resilience and well-being among guests of Brother Francis Shelter (BFS). The project is partnered with BFS to inform their efforts toward transitioning to a trauma-informed shelter.

UAA PSY Project: Teaching adults in Alaska to effectively work with children with autism using an e-training curriculum

*Researchers: Mychal Machado, Ashleigh Nero, Julie Heimerl-Lee, Harlyn Andrew, Felicia Glaser, and Grant Ensign  
Faculty Development Grant, CCEL Faculty Mini-Grant, and Community Engaged Student Assistant Award*

The purpose of this project to use the latest research on e-learning to develop and assess a curriculum for training adults to implement assessment and treatment strategies based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis.

UAA PSY Project: Reducing psychiatric readmissions by using cross-site training

*Researchers: Mychal Machado, Tamara Russell, Rashayne Zimmer, Julie Heimerl-Lee, and Harlyn Andrew*

The purpose of this project is to demonstrate that providing quality training in applied behavior analysis (ABA) will build staff competency related to the assessment and treatment of severe challenging behavior (e.g., aggression), and help individuals who exhibit these behaviors remain in their community placements and out of psychiatric hospitals. The purpose of this project to use the latest research on e-learning to develop and assess a curriculum for training adults to implement assessment and treatment strategies based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis.

UAA PSY Project: Comparison of error correction procedures via progressive prompt delay

*Researchers: Victoria Smith, Holly Ney, Mychal Machado, Faris Kronfli, and Nicole Rodriguez*

The purpose of this project is to compare and evaluate the level of commission errors produced by several commonly recommended error-correction strategies to improve behavioral services for children diagnosed with autism.

## **UAA Social Work:**

SWK Project: Java Music Club Pilot

*Researcher: Patrick M Cunningham*  
*Funder: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority*

Mutual support for cognitively impaired adults. Analyzing data from a year-long control group study completed at the Anchorage Pioneer Home.

SWK Project: Making Anchorage a “Dementia Friendly Community”

*Researcher: Patrick M. Cunningham*

Project with the Alzheimer’s Resource of Alaska Board of Directors and Educational Program.

SWK Project: Poverty-related Food Security

*Researcher: Tracey Burke*  
*Food Bank of Alaska and partners*

A related new project, in a partnership with the Catholic Social Services pantry, in the development stages.

SWK Project: BUILD EXITO

*Researcher: Tracey Burke*  
*National Institutes of Health through Portland State University*

BUILD is an NIH-funded initiative to recruit and support diverse undergraduates into health research careers, "health" very broadly defined. UAA is part of a collaborative based at Portland State University and will accept its third cohort of students this coming spring. Dr. Burke is the local PI and, in addition to student- and faculty-development activities, is involved in evaluating several aspects of the project.

SWK Projects: Various

*Researcher: Kathi Trawver*

Areas of research –

- Low-income mothers Intimate partner relationships and family functioning
- Homelessness among UAA students
- Mental health court team members’ identification of program factors impacting participant outcomes
- Impact of complex trauma histories among seriously mentally ill justice involved

adults  
Pathways to Alaskan homelessness  
Use of rural-based samples in social work research

SWK Project: Space, place and home: Mapping the social environment of Anchorage homeless populations

*Researcher: Donna Aguiniga*

Description: Analysis of qualitative data about the experiences of homeless youth in Anchorage

SWK Project: Low-income mothers and intimate partner relationships: The effect on family functioning

*Researcher: Donna Aguiniga*

Description: examination of the role of low-income mothers' intimate relationships

SWK Project: Birth Parent Counseling Options Project

*Researcher: Donna Aguiniga, with researchers from Baylor University and University of Texas at Arlington*

Dr. Aguiniga, with her co-PI and two student researchers, will begin gathering data for a national survey of youth-serving homeless shelters about their policies for transgender youth this semester.

### **UAF School of Education, Counseling:**

UAF COUN Projects: Developing a Culturally Attuned Workforce

*Researcher: Valerie Gifford*

*Funding: School of Education grant*

Dr. Gifford's research interest focuses on the development of a culturally attuned workforce in behavioral health and education for Alaska. Within this focus area, telehealth, clinical supervision, continuing education training, and the integration of Elders into university classrooms are examined. She has worked with 2 Master's students and 4 PhD students to further develop the effective use of clinical supervision in graduate training, with an emphasis on culturally competent supervision. Through a School of Education grant, Dr. Gifford, in conjunction with Dr. McEachern, is conducting a pilot study to gain Elder perspectives on participating as part of an instructor team in university behavioral health programs. Finally, a proposal is being developed for exploring the feasibility, utility, and efficacy of telebehavioral health services in a training environment with graduate student clinicians providing psychotherapy and counseling services via two-way videoconferencing.

### **UAF Human Services:**

HUMS Project: PC CARES



*Researcher: Diane McEachern*

Promoting Community Conversations About Research to End Suicide (PC CARES) is a community health education intervention that seeks to address the need for culturally responsive, multi-sector primary and secondary suicide prevention practice that builds on and extends community infrastructure and support. PC CARES brings together community members, village-based paraprofessionals, and regional health workers to attend nine three-hour learning circles over the course of a year, facilitated by local Indigenous leaders. These learning circles use research evidence on suicide prevention and wellness—mostly research conducted in the region or with other circumpolar Indigenous communities—to spark conversations; support the coordination of efforts across different sectors of the community; and build skills that help those in key positions identify vulnerable persons before they become suicidal, work together and within different spheres of influence to reduce risk, and create conditions that support safety and help-seeking.

### **UAF Psychology:**

UAF PSY Project: Prenatal Preventive Health in Interior Alaska: Impacts of Maternal Stress and Health

*Researcher: Kendra Campbell  
NIH Pilot Project grant*

The Family and Preventive Health Lab houses two primary lines of research in the areas of family relational health and integrated healthcare. The lab includes graduate and undergraduate students who actively participate in Dr. Campbell's research, as well as collaborate on their own projects under her mentorship. Her primary research line involves pre- and post-natal preventative health research examining psychoneuroimmunological factors associated with maternal stress and psychological adjustment during and after pregnancy with the aim of increasing the inclusion of prenatal maternal stress and psychological health in prenatal health prevention efforts. In 2015, she was awarded a 2-year \$75,000 NIH Pilot Project grant through the Center for Alaska Native Health Research to carry out her research project. Funding included a part-time RAship for one of her Ph.D. students.

UAF PSY Project: Integrated Community Behavioral Health Programs

*Researcher: Kendra Campbell*

This research line involves evaluating the effectiveness, clinical utility, and patient and provider satisfaction associated with implementing integrated-behavioral health programs in the local community. Over the past two years, Dr. Campbell developed a novel integrated primary care-behavioral health program at the Tanana Valley Clinic, a local outpatient medical facility. This program also includes training of doctoral psychology students. Although a grant proposal to help fund this research was submitted, it does not presently have external funding.

UAF PSY Project: Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Research Program (DBTRP)

*Researcher(s): Mike Worrall, and students (Hugh Leonard, Jessica McKay)*

*National Institutes of Health's Biomedical Learning and Student Training program*

The Dialectical Behavior Therapy and Research Program (DBTRP) at UAF started in 2015 with the overarching goal of developing ways to more effectively disseminate Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) in Alaska, in particular in rural communities. DBT clinical services are provided via the UAF Community Mental Health Clinic, which is staffed by graduate student clinicians and which provides low-fee mental health services to Fairbanks-area community members. Current research projects include the development and evaluation of a DBT-informed brief couple intervention (Jessica McKay dissertation), a pilot project to evaluate and adapt/develop guidelines on the implementation of DBT in the cultural contexts of Alaskan Native peoples (Hugh Leonard), and an evaluation of the applicability of and issues associated with the use of DBT in ab initio graduate clinical training (e.g., Masters and PhD beginning practicum; lab paper in prep). Other research projects in progress include the evaluation of the effectiveness of an online training protocol for training DBT peer supervisors (the training is administered by the lab; paper in prep), and a theoretical paper on supervision in DBT and other evidence-based treatments (in prep).

The Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) Research Laboratory conducts multiple lines of research aimed at a large goal of dissemination of best Evidenced Based Practices. One line of research seeks to develop a validation protocol which can be used by clinicians conducting couples therapy. A second line of research seeks to adapt DBT to be culturally responsive for Alaska Native communities. This specific line of research is funded by a grant from the National Institutes of Health's Biomedical Learning and Student Training program.

UAF PSY Project: Nature Lab

*Researchers: Jen Petersen, Dani Sheppard*

The Nature Lab was created to investigate several connections between nature and health. Spending time in nature has been shown to improve overall mental and physical health, as well as providing other positive benefits such as improved attention and creativity. One current study examines the role of light exposure and time spent immersed in nature on psychological well-being in the Fairbanks area. This is an especially interesting area of study because of the inconsistencies surrounding Seasonal Affective Disorder literature, as well as the overall lack of focus on the people of interior Alaska.

UAF PSY Projects: Multiple projects

*Researcher: Inna Rivkin*

*Funding: Various*

The central theme of Dr. Inna Rivkin's research is adaptation in social and cultural context, involving examination of the factors that promote physical and psychological health for people coping with stress and cultural change, and development of culturally-resonant interventions that incorporate cultural and community strengths. Her research involves rural community partnerships, and her publications and presentations engage

students as co-authors. She has 29 publications, including 12 during the 2011-2016 period of review of which the majority (10) engaged PhD students as co-authors. During this review period she also has 11 conference presentations, of which 9 were co-authored with students. She was the project PI for the COBRE-funded Center for Alaska Native Health Research “Yup’ik Experiences of Stress and Coping” project (\$673,249 total direct costs). In June, she submitted an NIH NIMHD (National Institute of Minority Health Disparities) R21 application “Promoting Rural and Indigenous Youth Wellness through Intergenerational Dialogue Exchange and Action”, a collaboration with Nenana, which is pending review. In addition, she is investigator on Jacques Philip’s recently submitted BLaST faculty pilot project application “Stories and Images of Community Strength from a Youth Dog Mushing Program in Rural Alaska”, a collaboration with Huslia, which is pending review.

#### UAF PSY Projects: Multiple projects

*Researcher: Ellen Lopez*

Dr. Ellen Lopez has initiated and fostered a research program that adheres to the principles of community-based participatory research. In all efforts, the individuals, organizations and communities intended to benefit from her program of investigation and practice are involved as equal partners throughout the research and evaluation process. Lopez’ efforts focus on the Hopeful Connections Collaborative Cancer Research Program; a collaboration between the UAF and the Fairbanks Native Association (FNA). This program offers and evaluates community-driven, and culturally congruent cancer prevention, control and survivorship interventions and research studies. A related research focus involved understanding and addressing the needs of Alaska Native informal cancer caregivers (individuals who provide unpaid assistance and care to other persons who are dealing with illness or disability). In addition to her Alaska-based research program, Lopez is also the lead qualitative methodologist on a multi-state, multi-disciplinary team focused on analyzing a nationally representative dataset from the American Cancer Society’s (ASC) Study of Cancer Survivors II. Some of this information is found in the CANHR section.

#### UAF PSY Projects: Multiple Projects

*Researcher: Jason Whipple*

Dr. Jason Whipple’s primary area of research focuses on increasing the effectiveness of psychotherapy by way of identifying risk factors for deterioration during treatment and using outcome measures to predict and prevent premature termination.

