

# We can control many health risks in our lives

By Carl Hild

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As Health Educator I have been busy with ads for the radio. Women and alcohol, and venereal diseases are the two major topics on which I have been writing. Venerophobia, a fear of venereal disease, would be very justified for any sexually active person in Barrow. Recent statistics have not made us proud of that fact.

My major project is the Arctic Survival Manuals. They are coming along quite well. I am collecting traditional survival techniques from our area and will put them together with modern technology to make up the books.

If anyone has a skill that has helped them survive please send it to me at the North Slope Borough Health and Social Services Agency, P.O. Box 69, Barrow, Alaska 99723. Through training and education I hope to eliminate psychophobia - fear of the cold. However, fear of anything can creep in at any time in a survival situation. Education is the best tool against fear.

Fear is a result of risk assessment. How dangerous, do I think, is this activity? The major factor in making this decision is, how much control do I have over the situation?

The more the control the less the fear.

A second factor is how many people will get hurt or size of the problem. "If it affects just me it is not as bad as an explosion that kills hundreds" is not a sound statement. Another factor is how often or how familiar you are with a risk. If the risk happens every day, soon you have little or no fear of the activity. How often do you use a sharp knife?

Often there are things that you control, that only affect you and that you do many times a day that are very dangerous and can even be deadly. Smoking cigarettes is the number one preventable cause of cancer and premature death in the U.A.

Drinking alcohol is the number one factor in Alaska's leading cause of death or accidents. When will people get smart and start taking care of themselves?

Headlines like "Inflation Boosts Health Care Costs Astronomically" and new tax laws that "encourage consumers to confine medical care to the necessities." "The Reagan administration stands committed to the kind of changes that will encourage cost-conscious behavior in the health care system"

Note, this does not say provide better health care but health care that costs less. Perhaps we all should start looking at how we each can reduce our need to visit the doctor or health care provider and improve our own health.

What can we do? Some papers print health tips on a regular basis. For example, "Self-exam tips for women." Health articles appear and can lead to individual or community action.

of the breast every year.

3. Women between the ages of 35 to 40 should have a baseline mammogram.

4. Women under 50 should consult their personal physicians about the need for mammography.

5. Women over 50 should

have a mammogram every year when feasible.

6. Women with personal or family histories of breast cancer should consult their physicians about the need for more frequent examinations, or about beginning periodic mammography before age 50.

Harvard study finds WIC Helps in Growth: The study done by the Harvard School of Public Health, found that the Women, Infants, and Children Food Program of the federal government "positively affects the growth" of babies. Infants benefitting from the program grow faster and gain weight better than babies in comparable circumstances not-enrolled.

Johns Hopkins Department of Population Dynamics' study finds that sex education in schools does not promote promiscuity among teenagers and may even discourage teenage pregnancy.

The State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services has just released "School Health Education: A Manual for Making it Happen in Your District." Copies are available from your local health agency.

Lots of things have changed in this state over the past ten years. "Pipeline Impact" is a common phrase. This chart shows changes in the North Slope community for the first seven years of the past twelve years.