

Curriculum for Health Aides

A Statewide curriculum for Community Health Aides will be presented to Alaskan universities in the coming months for their approval. The proposed curriculum will lead to an Associate Degree in Applied Science and provides for off-campus delivery of courses through the existing training agencies and health corporations.

It also allows for the granting of college credits for prior training and work experience as long as the student fulfills the educational objectives of a given course. If University approval is granted this summer, the degree program will be initiated in the Fall of 1975. The intent of the project has been:

1. To upgrade and standardize CHA education, thus improving the quality of care in rural Alaska;
2. To provide Community Health Aides with the

opportunity to pursue academic training beyond what is now offered, while they are employed;

3. To give recognition to the fact that CHA's are indeed health professionals, having equal status with other members of the medical community.

The development of the curriculum has been a joint effort of AFN, Inc. Health Affairs Division and members of the Community Health Aide Education staffs of Norton Sound Health Corporation, Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation and the Indian Health Service.

The Indian Health Service, in conjunction with representatives of the Regional Health Corporations, has been developing a manual to be used by all CHA's in the State. To be titled, "Primary Care in the Village", the manual will provide

uniform guidelines and methodology of medical problem solving, with specific emphasis on the health problems most commonly encountered in Rural Alaska.

It will also serve as the primary textbook for all Community Health Aide Training programs - to be used by students for study and reference, and by educators as the standard for developing lesson plans and appropriate learning experiences.

It is scheduled for completion during the Winter of 1975 and will be distributed shortly thereafter.

The first Statewide meeting of Community Health Aides was held at Alyeska from May 5-9. Fourteen CHA's were in attendance representing the following areas: Bristol Bay, Yukon-Kuskokwim, Norton Sound-Kotzebue, Interior (Tanana-Chiefs) and North Slope Borough.

Topics of discussion included State certification of CHA's, University accreditation, the Statewide manual, methods of evaluating the health care delivery system, standardization of pay scales for CHA's, and the formation of a Statewide association.

There was much discussion and sharing of common ideas, problems and possible solutions and a decision was made to begin the process of forming a Statewide Association of Community Health Aides.

In the coming months, letters of invitation will be sent to all Regions of the State to participate in an organizational meeting in the fall and preliminary work will be done on the goals, objectives, and functions of the Association.