

# CIRI asks blessing, breaks ground on Native outpatient medical center

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by Janice Ryan

Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

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A groundbreaking ceremony and blessing were held on June 5 in Anchorage at the future site of the Anchorage Native Primary Health Care Center.

The new 40,000 sq. ft. facility will provide much-needed outpatient examination rooms for family medicine and other ambulatory services through the Alaska Native Medical Center.

The facility was made possible by an

agreement between Cook Inlet Region, Inc., Southcentral Foundation and the Indian Health Service. CIRI will build the facility immediately adjacent to the new hospital.

"We see this agreement as a great example of Alaska Native organizations working with the federal government to provide important health care and other services for Alaska Natives," said Carl Marrs, president of CIRI. "CIRI's Real Estate Department is financing the project, which will be leased by Southcentral Foundation to house services that will be

funded by IHS. The arrangement allows the regional corporation, non-profit health corporation and IHS to work together to meet a common goal."

The Anchorage Native Primary Health Care Center will accommodate the outpatient and ambulatory care needs that the new ANMC cannot provide.

"The need for these additional facilities resulted because the population projections used by the Indian Health Service (IHS) in the 1980s severely underestimated the immigration of Alaska Natives from rural communities to Anchorage and

the high birth rate of Native populations," Katherine Grosdidier, president and chief executive officer of SCF explained.

Alaska Native beneficiaries in the Anchorage area have increased from 10,000 in 1970 to nearly 25,000 in 1996.

The Anchorage Native Primary Health Care Center will capitalize on new medical practices which encourage cost-saving outpatient rather than inpatient treatment whenever possible.

The facility is scheduled to open in June 1997 when the new ANMC opens.