

TB on the Increase—

98 in 1969, 124 in 1971

FAIRBANKS—If you think tuberculosis is on the decrease in Alaska, you're mistaken.

"We haven't licked tuberculosis yet," said Leo Kaye, the Executive Director of the Alaska Tuberculosis and Respiratory Disease Association, located in Anchorage.

Since his organization stands as "a watchdog" he said he wants "to sound off."

As of December 31, 1971, he said, there were 124 new cases of active tuberculosis in the state. In 1970 there were 105 cases, and in 1969, 98.

"We have the instruments to control the disease," Kaye said, "simple, preventive medication" that can be taken, but "people with tuberculosis infection are ignoring the advice of their

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physicians."

Ninety per cent of Alaska natives "are TB positive on the tuberculin tests," Kaye said. "This means that tuberculin germs are in their bodies."

These persons—all persons—with positive Tine (tuberculin) Tests, said Kaye should have periodical chest x-rays to be sure that the tuberculin germs in their bodies have not become active.

And if an individual's physician prescribes Isoniazid—a preventive medication—for him, the patient should take the Isoniazid pills for a full 12 months if he is to have any assurance that he will not develop active tuberculosis, Kaye said.

The program to prevent tuberculosis is free, Kaye emphasized, paid for by the state.

Kaye said he also wished to thank Fairbanks residents for their "terrific efforts" on behalf of the Tuberculosis Association. Their efforts, he said, will help others know the value of following the advice of their physicians and carrying out the steps of preventive medicine which can overcome such problems as that of tuberculosis in Alaska.