

Good minds, self reliance mean good health

By Elise Sereni Patkovak

You might have noticed a recent trend in our newsletter that continually reiterates the theme of self-reliance, preventative health care, and the promotion of a positive attitude towards maintaining good health.

These are the themes that constantly float on the fringe



of any health care delivery system. They are usually referred to in vague and glorious sounding terms as "vital to the continued health" of the population to be served.

Having made these grand allusions in the "statement of purpose" or other policy document, most health delivery systems then proceed to develop programs that provide direct services to sick people and the idea of health promotion is relegated to a misty future time when all "direct care needs have been met."

There is really no one to blame for this. It's almost inev-

itable. Sick people are a priority because their physical or emotional life is being threatened and an immediate response must be provided. When dollars are limited - and they always are - the immediate emergency is the one that invariably captures your attention.

The irony of this situation is that as dollars become more and more limited, the wisdom of preventative health education and programs to promote good health habits grows in inverse proportion. The less service you can provide, the



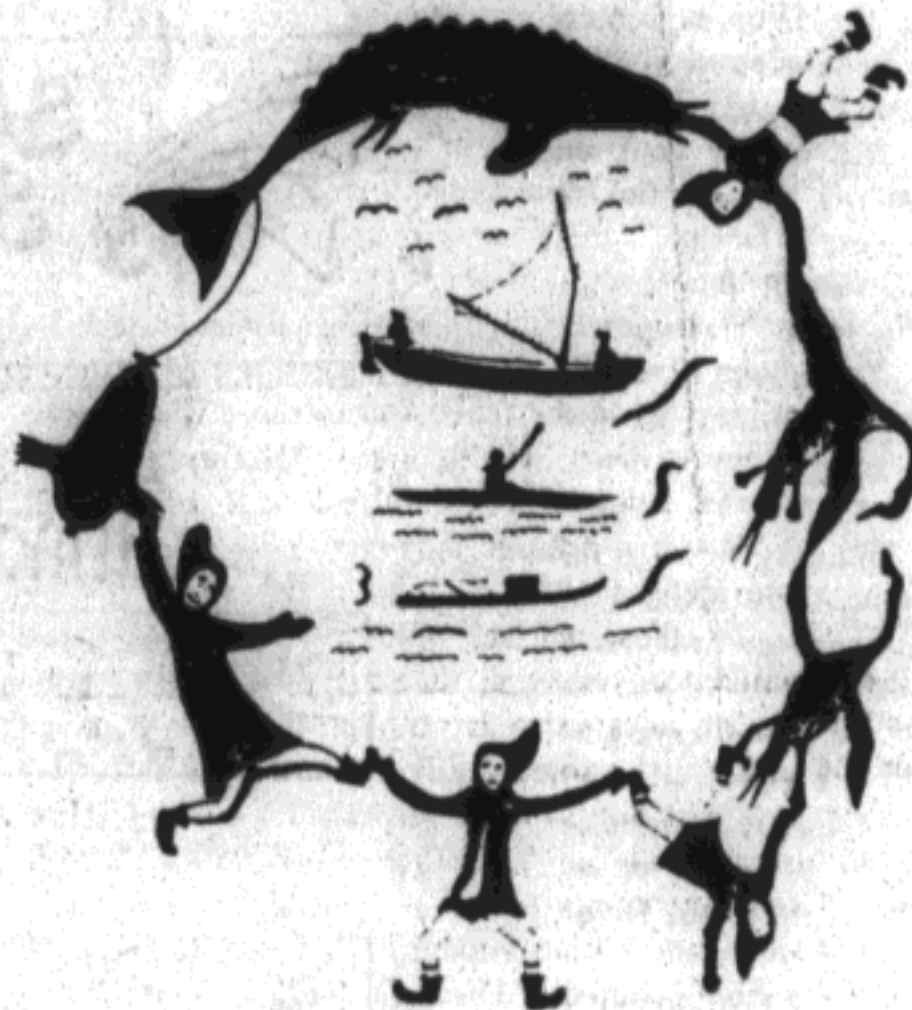
more necessary it becomes to keep people healthy so they do not need the service.

I wish I could say that this department was smart enough to avoid the situation just described. I wish we were an

exception to the general trend. But, unfortunately, we're not. And that is why so much of our newsletter now addresses self-reliance and maintenance of good health.

effort is usually the first to be eliminated during a budget crunch so that dollars can go to direct care. And health care programs revert to an informal, do-it-when-possible

minish your appreciation of what is being said. In the end, staying healthy makes a lot more sense than hoping someone can find the right treatment to cure your illness within an artificially limited budget.



If you take care of yourself, you lower the chance that you'll need someone to care for you. Being ill means giving up some control over your life to the person responsible for treating you. Being well means you are giving yourself the best possible chance to achieve your goals and live a full life.

Don't give in to the system. Fight for your health as hard as you fight for your land and your cultural identity.

It's equally important.

'Til next month

It's an important message that should be treated with respect. It holds the key to breaking the cycle of illness. But money for this type of

method of delivering the message.

But the message is vital. Do not let our mistakes in getting it across to you di-