

Board focuses on hepatitis B; jail translators; polar conference

Over three hundred persons were able to attend the Health Fair and Statewide Conference held in mid-October, co-sponsored by the Alaska Native Health Board and the Alaska Federation of Natives; many, many more participated via video live broadcasts. It is our intention that every village's health practices will be bettered by the information provided in this Conference.

Board is now focusing on the problem of Hepatitis B, a virus known to cause liver cancer. Alaskan Natives are committed over three quarters of a million dollars to start an immunization program for those whom the risk is greatest.



The State is still planning entry into the program. It will take the combined maximum efforts of Federal, State, Regional and local health practitioners to remove the threat from the Alaskan scene. In our next newsletter we will publish more specifics about the disease and what you should look for and what can be done to treat and prevent it.

ANHB has asked the Governor to appoint Natives as advisors to the Department of Corrections concerning our people who are serving sentences. Please support our efforts through your representatives.

We have found instances in which Natives were excluded from court required programs because they do not speak English well; Natives are sometimes sent to Federal prisons in the lower 48 to help alleviate the overcrowding in Alaskan jails, but they have no translator there if needed and no chance for family visiting. About 40% of all prisoners are Alaskan Natives in the total state population; we want to know why, not being satisfied

with the answers previously

In May of 1984, a worldwide Arctumpolar Health Conference will be held in Anchorage to discuss common problems and solutions. We are now working with the Alaskan Public Health Association to develop a "Polar Health Policy Statement" to present at that conference. If you have any concerns you would like addressed in this statement, please let your Health Board Representative know of them or write us here.

We are still waiting to hear our fate in the FY '83 (current year) IHS budget. As this is being printed, Congress is marking up this and other budgets. At this moment, the House subcommittee has recommended funding at the FY '81 level for most items but next it goes to the full committee, then the Senate (December 3), then voting by the full Congress by houses and on to the President.

Congress indicates it wants to fund more than the President

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Board focus

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requests; they have included \$23 million for the CHR program (the President omitted this). Hopefully, by December 17, we will have firm figures in; the continuing resolution currently expires then.

If you have concerns or questions about any health issues or social services function that you want discussed, let us know. Tell your Board representative or write us. We represent you and will try to insure that concerns are heard.

Have a very Merry Christmas and a healthy New Year!