

# Siberian scientists start cooperative research

By Jennifer Gordon

Tundra Times reporter

Doctors from Novosibirsk in the Soviet Union and the University of Alaska are working together this month for 10 days of intensive research that could provide helpful information to both countries.

A reception was held on Feb. 19 by Dr. Donald Behrend, the chancellor of the University of Alaska Anchorage, to welcome the nine Soviets to Alaska and to introduce them to their American colleagues.

"This research will attack problems vital to Alaska and Siberia," said Behrend.

The studies are part of an ongoing exchange of information set up by Dr. Ted Mala, director of the UAA Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies. The first contact with Soviet doctors was made seven years ago by an Alaska delegation to Magadan through the Soviet Trade Union.

"Alaska and Siberia have so very much in common that we need friendship," said Dr. Yuri Nikitin, vice president of the Siberian Branch of the USSR Academy of Medical Science.

Nikitin said that the doctors have waited years to be able to work together and that now they are finally starting "real practical work."

Dr. Bernard Segal, the director of health services at UAA, will be working with Dr. Caesar Korolenko to study alcoholism in northern climates.

Both societies have similar problems with alcoholism, said Segal, and while the two countries have been working separately on alcohol addiction, they are approaching the problem in a mutual way.



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Segal said that within Native communities in both countries problems include cultural displacement, a loss of traditional values and assimilation into the prominent cultures. He said these factors put the indigenous people at risk to alcoholism.

Korolenko said alcoholism is an integral disease that is not only biological, but psychological and has legal, administrative and educational sides as well.

He said that he studies alcoholism as a spoke in a wheel surrounding addictive behavior. Deviant behavior, asocial behavior and toxic behavior branch off of addictive behavior as well, he said.

Korolenko and Segal said that they have very similar philosophies on alcoholism. Their work together will study the effects that climate has on alcoholism. Along with working on their studies, Segal will be working with Korolenko on a paper dedicated to describing alcohol research in Siberia.