

ANMC to become smoke-free

Beginning January 1, 1986 the Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) in Anchorage will become the first Alaska hospital to be designated a totally smoke-free building.

Smoking will not be permitted anywhere inside the building, with the policy applying to all visitors, hospital employees and patients.

According to Dr. Michael Westley, chairman of the hospital's "Committee for a Smoke-Free Hospital," ANMC has been moving toward the goal of a smoke-free hospital over the past decade. The Alaska Native Health Board requested the cessation of all smoking in the hospital and numerous groups within the hospital have advocated a smoke-free building, including the medical and nursing staff, hospital workers and patients who do not wish to be exposed to tobacco

smoke. However, the momentum for the final move to a totally smoke-free building has come from the Surgeon General, D.C. Everett Koop and Dr. Everett Rhoades, Director of the Indian Health Service. Dr. Koop is a vocal proponent of a "smoke-free society" while Dr. Rhoades has vigorously promoted smoke-free Indian Health Service Facilities throughout the United States.

Eight other Indian Health Service hospitals and 33 clinics, including the Alaska Native Health Center in Fairbanks are currently smoke-free.

Of no less importance than the actual physical protection of patients and staff afforded by a smoke-free environment is a hospital's recognized responsibility as a role model for health, declaring clearly that smoking is bad for everyone's health.