

Tanana Service Unit Takes in Native Brd.

A newly-organized native board for the service unit of the Tanana Hospital has taken its first steps toward giving the natives a voice in planning health programs that affect them.

The Tanana Service Unit covers 26 villages in the Interior, including Fairbanks, and is one of seven such units in the State.

With four representatives chosen by the Tanana Chiefs Conference, two by the Fairbanks Native Association, and one by the village of Tanana, the board held its first meeting several weeks ago in Tanana.

Georgianna Lincoln of Fairbanks, who was elected chairman, said that a native board for the service unit is something that natives have wanted for a long time. Previously, she said, most of the planning has been done by staff members at the Tanana hospital and Public Health Service officials.

A plan for the next five years, 1971-1975, has already been drawn up, she explained.

The board has scheduled a session Sept. 30 and Oct. 1 just prior to a meeting of the Tanana Chiefs Conference in Fairbanks to plan for the next five years, 1972-1976. In addition to adding another year, the board can revise existing plans according to needs and monies available.

The plans are to act as a guide for the hospital and the implementation depends on budget approval, Mrs. Lincoln added.

Some of the goals adopted

by the board and subject to the approval of the Tanana Chiefs Conference are: to elevate native health status to the highest possible level through active participation of the native people, to improve the level of health education, to insure involvement of native people in planning, operating, and evaluating a health program, and to develop an awareness of health needs and of available health programs.

Housed in a frame building, the hospital at Tanana is operated by the Public Health Service and staffed with two physicians and a nursing staff of 15. A 26-bed hospital, the average patient load in fiscal year 1969 was 15.6.

Many of the villages have a village aide, who has taken at least a short training course at the hospital and who depends heavily on radio communications with nurses or physicians at the hospital for diagnosis and treatment.

The five year plan for this area covers a wide range of diseases with the greatest problem being alcoholism, according to the plan.

Other members of the health board are: Leonard Stickman of Nulato, vice-chairman; Eileen Kozevnikoff of Tanana, secretary; and members Sanders Cleavers of Koyukuk, Harold Simon of Stevens Village, Ruby Tansy of Cantwell and Edwin Simon of Stevens Village.