

AFN Health Chairman Clarifies PHS Situation

September 6, 1968

**Members, Board of Directors, AFN
Village Councils
Native Associations
Native People of Alaska:**

In my recent meetings with Dr. John Lee and his staff of the U.S. P.H.S., Alaska Native Health Service in Anchorage on August 26, 27 and 30, the following is the present situation of their existing problem. As follows:

- 1. 15% cut back on present budget for this year.**
- 2. Employment freeze to the 1966 level.**
- 3. 176 more employees are needed to fulfill present programs now in existence and new programs for health services.**

Essentially all present programs are not directly effected by the cut back, but will be in fact be effected by the employment freeze, some of the present programs and new programs may be curtailed or delayed this year or may be abandoned until this present employment freeze is lifted entirely. A good example of the delay of particularly the Dental Health Travel Team, which has this year been expanded, because of the employemnt freeze the dental team will not be able to make their field trips because they

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cannot hire the aid of a dental assistant, which is in part a vital part of their dental team.

At the time of my meeting with Dr. Lee, they were in need of 176 full time employees and with each passing day with the quitting, transferring or firing of any employee, this vacated position cannot be immediately filled but only on a one for two basis, that is for every two employees that had quit or are transferred or even had died as the case may be, only one position may be filled. This will only create a hardship on the present employees and to the natives as well. This depletion will in effect be felt more readily by our Native people in the "Bush" areas.

As your Health and Welfare Chairman, I highly recommend and solicit your support by your writing to our Congressional Delegation in Washington, D. C., to Senators Bartlett, Gruening (Also to Gravel) and to Congressman Pollock as well as to Wilbur Cohen, Secretary of H.E.W., and to Senator Lister Hill in support of Senator Hill's bill exempting Division of Indian Health, U.S.P.H.S. in any cut back in funds or employment for these Departments that give direct health services to all of our Indian People and Natives of Alaska throughout the United States.

If this Bill is passed it will lift all restrictions on U.S.P.H.S. Alaska Native Health Service, in Alaska and in the lower 48. The more letters written, especially from our Native People from the "Bush" areas will give added support to the passage of this bill.

On the brighter side of my report I'm happy to mention that PHS has at long last received funds of \$300,000.00 for payment to village health aides for this coming year. The direct disbursements of these funds will be left entirely up to either the village councils, native associations or to an area wide association on a contractual basis by PHS. I'm certain that this will be brought up and thoroughly discussed and debated by our delegates at the forthcoming convention in Fairbanks this October. Also the following Service Unit Hospitals will schedule health aide training sessions as follows:

Anchorage Service Unit: September 9 thru September 20 (2 weeks);

Kanakanak Service Unit: September 30 thru October 11 (2 weeks); December 2 thru December 13 (2 weeks); February 24 thru March 14 (3 weeks).

Tanana Service Unit: October 21 thru November 1 (2 weeks); February 3 thru February 14 (2 weeks); March 24 thru April 11 (3 weeks).

Bethel Service Unit: April 21 thru May 1 (2 weeks).

Kotzebue Service Unit: November 11 thru November 22 (2 weeks); May 11 thru May 29 (3 weeks).

In 1968, 63 village health aides have already received either all or a partial training, and the projected health aides to be trained will be an additional 119 health aides to adequately service virtually every major village in Alaska. The above report I will elaborate or give a much broader coverage in my written annual report for the AFN Convention in Fairbanks this October.

In the matter of health aides I would strongly recommend that village councils, village leaders, or native associations select and recommend a health aide and also to select alternates where possible for future health aide training sessions, and that the selection of these aides as to their ability, capabilities and that they must be willing to return to their respective villages. Please submit your selections to either myself:

Lloyd J. Sutton Health & Welfare Chairman, AFN P.O. Box 346 Amchitka, Alaska 99541; or to: Mr. Don Shook U.S.P.H.S. Area Offices P.O. Box 7-741 Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

With this list we will be better able to coordinate the Health Aide Program with the respective Service Units in your area.

In closing I must again emphasize the need of your support by your letters and the sooner the better. I thank you and remain

Most sincerely yours,

Lloyd J. Sutton

Health & Welfare Chairman, AFN

cc: AFN, Emil Notti

Tundra Times, Howard Rock

Board of Directors, AFN

Dr. Lee, US PHS, Anchorage