

Improved resident health a Borough goal

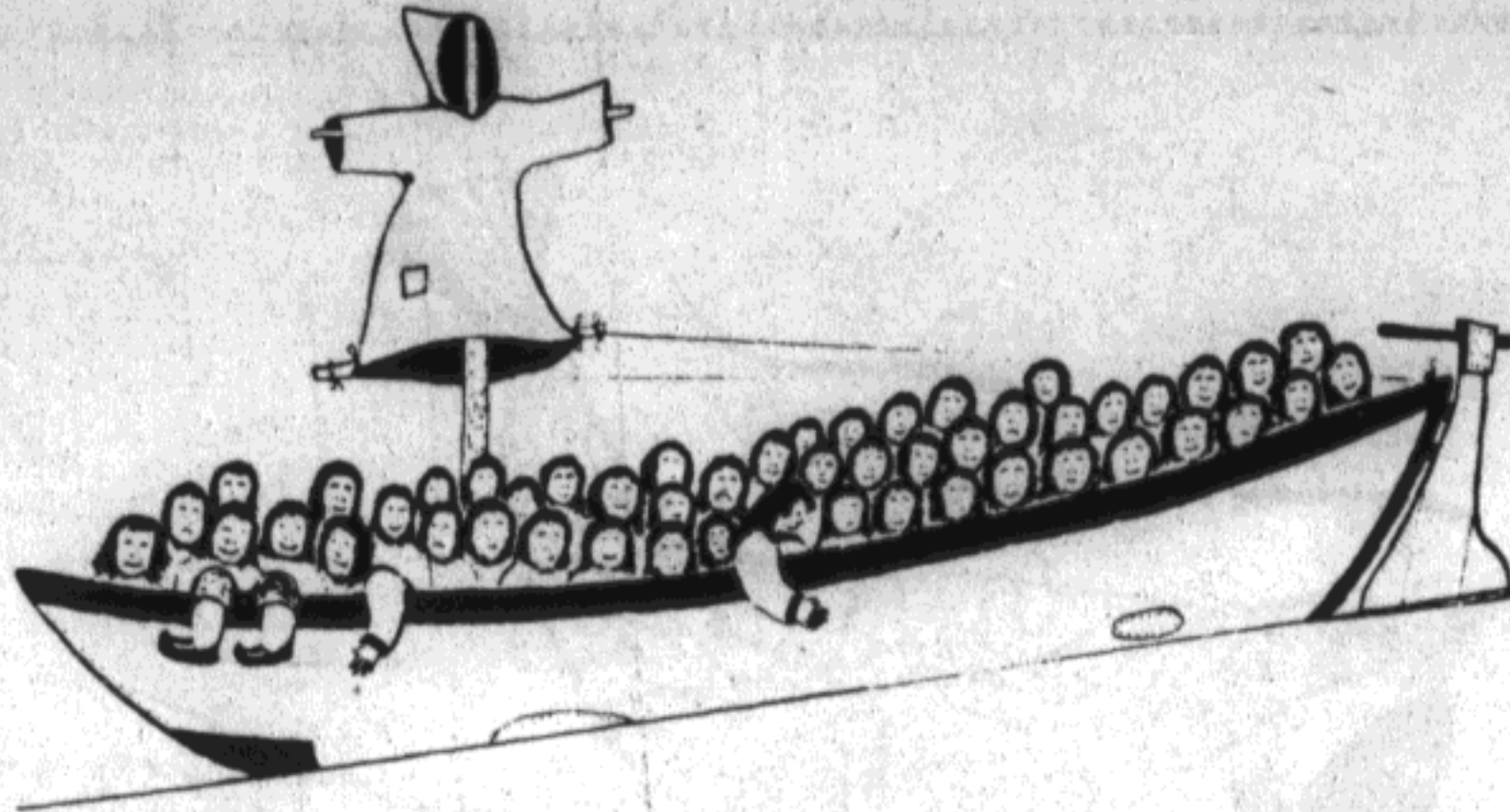
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The North Slope Borough has recently put out a Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the plan there are references to preserving the traditional activities and character of the Inupiaq culture, and the care of subsistence areas and resources. Under the section on Socioeconomic Factors is the main portion that addresses health. Goal No.7 is "Improved Resident Health."

"Improved Resident Health" is a very broad statement. The first objective of that goal is listed "develop a Borough-wide Comprehensive Health Plan." In conversations of late, in this office, it is felt that the basis of the North Slope Borough Comprehensive Health Plan should be a statement that will fit with the goal of "Improved Resident Health." However, it will put the emphasis of that improvement on the residents and not



on the Borough.

During the last week of July, I went to Washington D.C. as a member of the American Public Health Association's National Task Force to develop a National Arctic Health Policy. As the policies, goals and objectives were laid out to be included, I kept in mind

that the individual is responsible for his own health.

The National and the Borough Health Policy should help that individual with that responsibility but they should not take the responsibility from him.

The North Slope Borough Health and Social Services

Agency can help the residents and visitors to the Borough in their desire to be healthy. We can provide counseling for family, social, emotional, mental and physical health problems. We can aid the physical body. We can encourage the spirit. However, the individual must want to be healthy.

You must take responsibility for your own health.

If you care about the trash in the street, then you will tie your dog and use the trash bins. If you care about the people who abuse alcohol, then you will not allow your friends to drink too much at your parties.

If you take care of yourself, then the clinic lines will be shorter. If you take care of your teeth, then your bi-yearly dental visits will be just for professional cleaning and checking. If you take care of yourself, then you become an active part of the health care system.

I am looking forward to the results of both the National Arctic Health Policy and the Borough's Comprehensive Health Plan. They should be good working documents that will aid the people of the Arctic. Ultimately, like so many things, it is up to you.

Remember, only you can maintain your health.