

ANMC REFUTES IUD CHARGES

Chief of Native Affairs Denies Implantation of Birth Control Devices

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW
Staff Writer

Jerry Ivey, Chief of Native Affairs for the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage, refuted charges that IUD's (Intrauterine devices for birth control) have been implanted in native women without their knowledge or consent.

Ivey said it was "impossible that it could have happened. There are regular procedures for that sort of thing. Women are counseled, they see a social worker (who is an American Indian) and they go through a complete process before birth control devices are implanted."

Ivey said staff doctors at the Center were indignant at charges that medical experimentation had been conducted on native patients.

"The Public Health Service is one of the most conservative groups in this country," he added. "They are not inclined to be experimental. We have some very high calibre physicians on our staff and they come here because they want to work with native people."

"If there are problems and legitimate gripes," said Ivey, "let's bring them out."

But he emphasized that it is necessary to "ferret out facts from fantasy."

Irresponsible charges and sensational press coverage, said demoralizing to the staff at the hospital.

"My concern is that we're going to be losing some of our top career people here."

Ivey said that to his knowledge there was no such thing as an Alaska Native Medical Center Survivors Committee, and hospital officials are not meeting with such a committee.

"When the Violet Arrow death first happened, there was a great deal of emotion and there was a meeting, in fact, there were two meetings in the same day. Someone stuck that name on those meetings, and that's what hit the papers and flooded the news."

A concerned and responsible committee that is meeting with

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ANMC Official . . .

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ANMC officials is called the Alaska Native Ad Hoc Health Committee. Head of the Ad Hoc committee is Mike Harper, RurAL CAP, Brenda Itta, newly appointed AFN Health advisor, and Carl Jack, director of the Healthrite Program.

Ivey called the Ad Hoc group a "positively oriented group." However, he added that ANMC also works very closely with the Alaska Native Health Board, which only recently reorganized to conform to the twelve region concept of the Land Claims Act.

"We look to them for official direction," he stated. "We can't listen to fifty different voices."

Brenda Itta confirmed that the Alaska Native Ad Hoc Committee was formed to look into the death of Violet Arrow.

"We were given specific instructions to look into the

treatment and policies on alcoholism," said Ms. Itta, but she added, "It is evolving into something bigger than that."

The Ad Hoc Health Committee was reviewing the Patient Bill of Rights, a unique paper developed by the American Medical Association and revised by the Public Health Service.

Ivey said the ANMC is the only hospital in the state that even has a Patient Bill of Rights.

"There is a section in it on experimentation, NOT to allow experimentation," said Ivey.

Itta did not see the Ad Hoc committee as a permanent one but one that is acting in the interim period.

"I know there are many, many things that are dehumanizing to the patient," she said, "and that's what our committee is working on."