

State Health Center In Bethel to Move

"If there is constant discomfort, it's not good," said Mrs. Anna Wenzel, Regional Nursing Supervisor of the State Department of Health and Welfare, Division of Public Health, last week.

This statement may, or may not, be part of the idea of the partial closure of the regional office in Bethel sometime in the future. The office has a personnel of six nurses. One nurse, Mrs. Joerene Hout, will remain in Bethel.

On the other hand, some of the native people in town, including their leaders, are

apprehensive about the projected move.

"Lots of people, including Nora Guinn, Deputy Magistrate, don't want the agency to move," said Tony Lewis, businessman and president of the Kuskokwim Valley Native Association. "The efficiency of their service will be hampered and it would be detrimental to the area's economy."

The office is planning to move to Anchorage where it would work out of a central office. The nurses felt that it would be more efficient to operate from central head-

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Health Center . .

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quarters and the services would be more coordinated.

They said there is often overlapping of services with the federal agencies and with coordination, this could be corrected.

Lack of adequate facilities seems to be one of the main motivating reasons for the move. The Health Center in Bethel is in ill repair and it lacks space.

"The nurses have to do the maintenance and janitorial work," said Mrs. Wenzel. "There is a housing problem. They shovel snow. Pipes freeze and sometimes they have no heat."

Mrs. Wenzel was emphatic that the services were not being pulled out from Bethel. "I feel more services will result and will increase working from central headquarters. If we find it isn't working out, we will have other changes," she said.

One nurse interjected, "We don't mind working in villages and rough it, but it's nice to come back from a trip and have a nice bath."