

New clinics to be like small hospitals in villages

An emergency room area, a dental/eye clinic area, a consulting tele-health room with slow-scan video capabilities, itinerant health aide living quarters, a training area and an ambulance garage for indoor patient transfer are among the facilities being planned for North Slope Borough village health clinics.

"It will almost be like having a small hospital facility in each village," says North

Slope Borough Planner Tom Polak. "We have been working closely with the Borough Health Department on these plans. They are as eager as the villages to get these buildings up."

North Slope Borough Mayor Eugene Brower has made the construction of village health clinics a priority. Although talked about for some time, the health clinic project had remained stalled in plans for

a combined fire and health facility that was proposed before Mayor Brower came to office. One of the Mayor Brower's first acts was to separate the two projects.

"The combined facility idea was a planning nightmare," says Polak. "There was a constant shuffling of walls and facilities trying to meet the very different needs of the departments involved."

Now that the health clinics

are being considered as a separate building, a tentative floor plan has been produced and the Planning Department is in the process of identifying building sites in the villages.

In considering sites, the Planning Department has tried to balance the convenience of a central location with possible future expansion needs and concern for over-crowding existing facilities. Sites have been proposed or chosen in

Anaktuvuk Pass, Atkasuk, Nuiqsut and Point Lay. Building areas in Kaktovik and Wainwright are still being considered.

McCool and McDonald are the architects involved in designing the building.

Health clinics are slated for all the villages except Point Hope which has a health facility that was provided by the Federal Public Health Service.

