

AFN 'Healthright' Program-

Program Can Meet Native Health Needs

The Alaska Federation of Natives has developed a health program (Healthright) which can meet the needs of the people, despite the disparity of living conditions in Alaska, according to a spokesman for the AFN.

Implementation of the Healthright program calls for local consumer control, he said, carried out by two autonomous corporations: the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YK-HC) in Bethel, and Norton Sound Health Corporation (NS-HC) in Nome.

Authority for program development is vested in the corporations and developed by the board of directors, he said.

And a new department of the AFN has been established in Anchorage to serve as a fiscal clearinghouse for the two corporations.

The program is funded through the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO).

Representatives from AFN, working with the U.S. Public Health Service, the Alaska Department of Health and Welfare and the Alaska State Medical Association, developed a curriculum for village health aides to prepare them to deliver more health services at the village level.

During FY71 a pilot training program was set up to train eight aides.

During FY72 30 aides will be trained to the advanced level, 30 aides will be trained in Bethel to a "Phase III" level, and 26 aides will be trained in Nome in the three levels in order to provide "for vertical movement up a health career ladder," the program spokesman said.

Negotiations with Anchorage Community College are underway, he said, to provide for certification of the advanced trained aides.

But the Healthright program includes much more than training. The Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation has been certified by the state as a comprehensive health planning agency for all of Southwest Alaska to allow local consumers to take an active part in the solution of all health problems, ranging from personal and community health problems to mental health, health education and health facilities planning, the spokesman said.

And it is hoped he added, that the newly formed corporation in Nome will be officially recognized as the planning agency for that area.

The Healthright program spokesman also indicated that program officials anticipate the receipt of additional funds to start such a corporation in the Interior-Tanana Chiefs Conference.

"The Healthright project,"

he said, "must be seen in broader terms than as a supplemental provider for health services."

"The creative energies of the people are being applied," he

added, "to effectively coordinate and, where necessary, change the existing systems of delivery to better serve the needs of the people."