

USPHS Fact Sheet Offers Clarification

FACT SHEET CONCERNING CONTRACT MEDICAL CARE FOR ALASKA NATIVES BY U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE, ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH AREA—specifically, with the two Fairbanks Medical Clinics.

1. A new contract between PHS Alaska Native Health Area and Fairbanks Medical and Surgical Clinic has been signed and is effective beginning July 1, 1968.

(a) Purpose of the contract is to authorize payment of funds by PHS to the clinic for providing to eligible Alaskans certain health services, according to conditions stated in the contract and according to procedures set up permitting eligible Alaskans to seek such health services.

2. This contract, which is in addition to the one already in existence with the Tanana Valley Clinic, was brought about because:

(a) A number of eligible Alaskans asked PHS to consider it

(b) Fairbanks M&S Clinic asked for such a contract

3. Contracts for the two clinics are essentially the same.

4. The second contract makes it possible for eligible Alaskans to seek professional health services from a wider group of physicians.

(a) The contract does not, however, change either the quality or type of professional health services from that available in the past.

1. PHS authorized payment to several individuals associated with the Fairbanks M&S Clinic prior to this contract to give certain specialized health service not otherwise available (for example: eye and heart care).

5. This and all other PHS contracts contain terms which allow Alaska Native Health Area officials to evaluate the quality of health services given.

(a) When any Alaskan eligible for health services under these contracts has reason to question the quality of health service received, there is a way to tell about this concern and for PHS to investigate.

1. Such a complaint may be made to the Officer in Charge of the PHS Fairbanks Health Center at 528 Fifth Avenue in person or in writing.

6. Similar contracts are in existence throughout Alaska with hospitals or clinics where there is no PHS facility—such as Nome, Kodiak, Seward, Palmer, Soldotna, Cordova, Juneau, Petersburg, Wrangell, Ketchikan and Glennallen.

(a) Contracts with Clinics or hospitals are not to be confused with contracts made with individual doctors for specialized services.

7. Priority of health services for which payment is authorized is:

First—Emergencies (auto or other accidents, accidental poisonings, severe injuries, severe sickness, etc.)

Second—Urgencies (meaning health matters which are not a

(Continued on page 7)

USPHS Offers Clarification . . .

(continued from Page 2)

crisis life—or-death matter at the moment, but nevertheless need professional attention).

Third— Electives (meaning health matters which might benefit from a doctor's attention but which might be managed by the patient himself or which do not necessarily need a doctor's attention.)

(a) At present there is not enough money to permit such elective care by contract doctors. Arrangements can be made to furnish this service in an existing PHS Hospital. For the Fairbanks situation, this would be at Tanana or Anchorage. Such arrangements would be made by consulting with the Officer in Charge at the Health Center.

8. Permission for Eligible Alaskans to seek the care they need at either of the clinics is received through the Fairbanks Health Center at 528 Fifth Ave., telephone 452-3359.

(a) The person needing care may go in person or if he is too ill, someone may go for him. Permission for authorizing payment is written at the Health Center.

(b) In cases of emergency such as severe injury or illness, the patient may be taken or go to the clinic of his choice directly, with another person or the doctor getting payment authorization by notifying the Health Center of the situation.

(c) Persons who come to the clinics without the authorizing permission will be sent back for it.

(d) Permission to go for health service means all the treatment needed for any one episode of sickness. For example, a child who falls and gashes his head and needs to have the wound stitched, and later checked and still later have the stitches removed would not need to go for a new permission for each treatment visit. The same would be true of a single illness which required several visits to a physician.

(e) When emergencies occur on weekends, holidays or at night, patients go directly to the hospital for emergency care, with arrangements for authorization made when the Health Center is open.

(f) Persons who live outside Fairbanks and come to the city from villages for health service

will be referred by the Fairbanks Health Center to Bassett Army Hospital at Fort Wainwright where PHS has an agreement for them to provide such service.

9. Under the contracts, doctors from either clinic may send emergencies to the hospital and PHS will authorize payment if they notify Alaska Native Health Area contract office of this decision.

10. All Alaskans are encouraged to learn about and use good health and safety measures in their daily lives so they won't need to see a doctor so often for illness or accident.

(a) Every Alaskan eligible for health care under these contracts will receive permission to seek the care he needs.

(b) PHS Alaska Native Health Area through the Service Unit Director at Tanana will be happy to assist with suggestion and guidance to form a health council or committee through which plans can be developed to help the people learn and use these health and safety measures.

1. Such requests may be

made to the Service Unit Director, Tanana

2. Several communities and Native Associations already have health committees or councils for this purpose and are well along with plans for action. (Kodiak, Barrow and Southeastern Alaska for example.)

11. All Services offered by or paid for by USPHS Alaska Native Health Area Office depend on what resources are available — money, doctors, buildings, equipment, etc.

(a) Amount of money available is always the primary consideration.

(b) Availability of qualified professional health workers is also important, as well a certain equipment, buildings, etc.

This outline was prepared to clarify any questions regarding the situation in Fairbanks since the new contract was signed and also to help Native Alaskans have a more exact understanding of procedures and situations. Further questions may be sent to the Alaska Native Health Area Director, Box 7-741, Anchorage 99501.