

Telehealth spreading on North Slope

North Slope Bor. Telehealth
By Marvel Branwell
Village Health Services
Coordinator

On September 15, I presented the NSB Telehealth Program at the 3rd Annual Alaska Conference on Computer Graphics and Geoprocessing. These are some of the topics I covered.

Telehealth first touched Alaska in 1975 during a 9

months demo project co-sponsored by IHS and the Lester Hill National Center for Bio-Medical Communications. The study was called the ATS-6 Demo, or Applications Technology Satellite-Six Bio-Medical Demonstration.

The recommendations from this study were utilized by a medical group in Ontario, Canada. They initiated the first real Telehealth System in

1977.

The NSB Telehealth Project began after the appropriate system was found in October 1981. A testing of the system on the North Slope was successfully conducted in January '82.

Our first Telehealth site was established at the NSB Health Department in March 82. Our system utilizes a conference telephone, a data telephone, a slow scan video system with receiver/sender capacity, a video camera, and when needed, usage of the standard telephone bridge.

Our second site was established at Nuiqsut Health Clinic. We soon will have our third system at the Barrow PHS hospital. We will have 9 sites on the North Slope and 1 at the Alaska Native Clinic in Anchorage. We are also hoping for sites at Fairbanks Clinic and Kotzebue Hospital later on.

We will use the system for patient consultation between the community health aides and the doctors, patient con-

sultation between doctors, Community Health Aid training both live and taped (using standard stereo voice-grade recording system), and other NSB Health Department staff can follow patients/clients in the villages.

Slides of the North Slope and the system were shown. Tapes from previous teleconference between Nuiqsut, Barrow, Colorado, and the Sher-

aton Hotel in Anchorage! Mae Clow and Maggie Hopson, CHAs at Nuiqsut Clinic, roleplayed a patient consult so well that one of the conference people asked me later how the patient was! Lois Henderson, C/I transmitted pictures of herself and Cindy Young C/I and some educational diagrams. We used a dial-up telephone bridge in Colorado. All sites received and sent well.

