

AFN HEALTH SEMINAR



MODERATORS' MEETING—Moderators of the workshops during the Seminar on Rural Health were, from left to right, Carl Jack, Clifford Black, George Erwin, and John Shively.



HEALTH CHIEF MEETS NEW PRESIDENT—Carl Jack, administrator of the Health Affairs Program, met with newly-elected AFN president Roger Lang to discuss health problems during the seminar.



DISCUSSING THE SEMINAR—Roger Lang, AFN President, Caleb Pungowiyi, center, executive director of the Norton Sound Health Corporation, and John Shively, AFN executive vice-president discuss meetings last week.

Representatives from Alaska's rural areas got together for the first time on a statewide basis to discuss health issues. The seminar met with all delegates present Wednesday morning and then divided into five workshops to discuss and identify health problems from a villager's perspective and to establish priorities for improvement of health delivery systems.

AFN Health Affairs Director Carl Jack welcomed the participants with an explanation of why elderly villagers were encouraged to join the seminar. "They are here to give us guidance in trying to solve our health problems," he said. "The time is now to address health problems," Jack added.

Newly-elected AFN president Roger Lang addressed participants, stating that because of the claims act and the determination of Natives to tackle social problems, there are now "unlimited opportunities to achieve social planning to meet the real needs of our people."

He predicted that health delivery planning has the potential to develop into a major industry in rural areas. "There is no privately owned industry to overcome to bring about social change."

Other addresses were given by Tanana Chief's Conference Traditional Chief Andrew Isaac. Chief Isaac told the participants of the change of life styles of Natives and encouraged the seminar to strive for social betterment for Natives.

Seminar Chairman Dave Hutchinson, Region Ten Program Director, introduced the seminar and explained assignments and tasks of workshops.

Village input was solicited throughout the seminar. Guest speaker during the group's luncheon on the first day was Della Keats of Kotzebue, who discussed Inupiat Eskimo medicine.

Keynote speaker former Senator Ernest Gruening addressed the group on Thursday. Gruening, a graduate of Harvard Medical School, has been a long advocate of improved health care and spoke with authority on the subject. He noted historic achievements in rural Alaska health care, at the same time citing areas drastically in need of attention.

The seminar concluded Friday after a panel on the ability of Alaska health organizations to make concerted efforts in improving health delivery systems and after AFN's health staff discussed organization for health planning. Frank Degnan, followed by Carl Jack, delivered closing remarks.

Participants rated the seminar as beneficial, both in establishing the roles of newly-organized health corporations as well as providing some direction for future comprehensive planning for designing Alaska health systems.