



RurAL-CAP

## ACTION REPORTS



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## RurAl CAP hosts otitis media clinic

### RurAl CAP aids in development of state energy plan

The nationwide energy crisis of the mid-'70's has resulted in the formation of new programs on the state and federal level to address ways of cutting down on the national fuel consumption while improving living conditions. In Alaska with its severe winters, high fuel costs, lack of bulk storage facilities, and high cost of building materials and transportation, what has always been a concern is now reality. The Community Services Administration was the first Federal agency to recognize the need and consequently established the Weatherization Program in 1975.

In order to more closely assess needs in each state, the Director of the Community Services Administration called upon each State Equal Opportunity Office to develop a statewide energy plan for FY-'77. This was accomplished by the Alaska State Equal Opportunity Office (Div. of Community & Rural Development), in conjunction with the RurAl CAP Energy

& Power Development, and the Older Persons Action Group.

The plan addresses itself to the energy needs of Alaska, specifically weatherization activity, and calls for vitalization of new programs in consumer education/conservation, crisis intervention, establishment of a statewide board appointed solely to address rural and urban energy needs and to ascertain and make recommendations to those agencies involved in energy issues, i.e., utility rate structures, alternate energy resources, electrification, fuel shortages, etc. Effective legislation is another priority of the plan to lessen the economic crunch of rising costs on the poor and to establish a State-funded energy needs revolving loan fund.

Since 1975, the RurAl CAP Energy Office has been involved in the weatherization of 513 low-income homes in rural Alaska, and is currently conducting weatherization activity in the Doyon and Calista regions.

During the week of October 18-22, the RurAl CAP Otitis Media Project conducted a surgical clinic in the Bethel Hospital as a part of Head Start's commitment to direct care for children's ears and hearing. Forty-nine children from ten Yupik Eskimo village in Southwest Alaska received operations for the relief of a disease condition known as SERIOUS OTITIS MEDIA.

The SERIOUS condition is one which a child's eardrum is not perforated or draining (as in CHRONIC or ACUTE otitis media). The drum is intact but can be retracted inward, and the tiny chamber behind it maybe partially filled with fluid (instead of air) which accumulates because of cycle of head colds has closed down the child's Eustachian tubes. In many cases, the child will experience some degree of hearing loss, and if such a loss should continue for extended periods during the early years, a child may suffer from permanent language and intellectual deficiency. All the children recently operated on had evidenced a continuing SERIOUS pattern during the previous year in which RurAl CAP and audiologists of the Communicative Disorders Program had watched them closely.

Dr. J. David Williams, an otolaryngologist (a physician who treats disorders of the ear,

nose and throat) contracted by RurAl CAP, examined more than 350 Head Start children in 11 villages in September and referred a total of 53 for a special kind of surgery in October. Written operative consents were obtained from parents or guardians after Dr. Williams carefully explained the comparatively simple procedure: 1) The insertion of a tiny plastic ventilation tube through the eardrum to allow air into the middle ear cleft, open up the Eustachian tube and drain the fluids, and 2) the removal of any existing adenoid tissue (adenoidectomy) from the inner nasal passages above the mouth.

Of the 53 children referred, an astounding 49 actually came in from the villages with their adult escorts (Community Health Aides, Head Start Teacher Directors and Teacher Aides and parents). Each child spent the evening prior to surgery in the Bethel Hospital. The operations were performed (an average of nine per day) on the following morning by Dr. Williams and his four-member surgical team (1 anesthesiologist and three nurses), and the children were wide awake and ready to be released on the same afternoon. Most children were up and around and showed little effect from the anesthetic within 30 minutes of completing the

operation. One parent commented "It's almost like going to the dentist. Really quick!" Children and escorts stayed overnight following surgery at the Kuskowim Inn and were flown back to their respective villages within 48 hours of their original departure.

One of the important by-products of the surgical clinic was the educational experience for village Health Aides, who were invited into the operating room to observe the surgical procedures through the high-power otological microscope. Since Health Aides are the first line of diagnosis and care in villages, it is very important that Health Aides become familiar with the various stages of childhood ear disease, their symptoms and the chemical and surgical procedures used to alleviate them. Health Aides and parents will be very important during the next year or so while the tubes remain in the children's ear drums, making certain that the tubes do not become infected by water or other external sources of disease. In the long run, parents, teachers and village health aides are the crucial people in any village who must know about childhood ear disease and work to prevent it.

RurAl CAP will be publishing a final report on its year-long Otitis Media Project and the surgical clinic which concluded it. One of the important questions will be the effectiveness of the tube myringotomies for children in villages. If the tubes remain in place, do not become infected and continue to alleviate the SERIOUS condition, then an important and feasible surgical procedure will have been demonstrated, and RurAl CAP will urge the United States Public Health Service and the State of Alaska to set up standing orders for surgical, as well as medical, intervention in this ear disease pattern.

The Board and staff of RurAl CAP and the entire Child Development Division wish to extend sincere gratitude to all those people whose cooperation was necessary for the success of the project: Dr. Williams and his surgical staff, the audiologic staff of the Communicative Disorders Project (especially Dave Canterbury, Bill Orr and Carl Dixon), Drs. Doug Cowgill and Ben Marchello of the Bethel Hospital, Mr. Richard Marchant of the Bethel Hospital, Jack Corey and the staff of the Sea Airmobile Charter Service, T.C. Arbuckle and the staff of the Kuskowim Inn, and the staff of Yupitak Bista, Inc. Finally, a special note of thanks goes to those village Health Aides, Teacher Directors and parents in Southwest Alaska whose hard work and dedication helped us to make significant improvements in the health of 49 Head Start children.

## Koyukon and Kodiak Develop. corporations boards meet

The Boards of Directors of two Community Development Corporations funded by RurAl CAP recently held fall meetings. The Directors of Koyukon Development Corporation, which has offices in Galena, met in McGrath on October 28 and 29, and the Kodiak Area Community Development Corporation held its Board meeting in Kodiak on November 3.

The Koyukon Board had a busy two days approving their proposed 1977 work program and budget, listening to numerous guest speakers, and electing new Board Officers. Guest speakers included representatives of Wien Air Alaska, Dept. of Community and Regional Affairs, Tanana Chiefs, U of A Cooperative Extension Service, Fish and Game, Dept. of Highways, and RurAl CAP. The various speakers brought village delegates up to date on programs affecting the 17 communities in the Koyukon region.

The Koyukon Board approved a work program which tackles local air service problems, among other things. The delegates decided to institute a formal

system of collecting villager complaints on all communication/transportation problems, especially air service, in order to have solid evidence to point to when arguing for better service. People living in the Koyukon area villages have been asked to write all complaints (ie: perishable foods arriving frozen, long delays in freight delivery, passenger and baggage mixups) on paper and give them to their village delegate who will forward the complaints to the Koyukon office at the end of each month. The Koyukon staff will seek a resolution to the problems.

Toward the end of the meeting five new Board Officers were elected with former Vice President Mike Andon of Tanana elected new President. Other officers are: Jim Farmer - Ruby (1st V.P.), Woodie Morrison - Shageluk (Treasurer), and Edith Barrett - Grayling (Secretary).

In Kodiak the Kodiak Area Community Development Corporation (KACDC) Board gathered primarily to hire a new Director. Wayne Marshall, formerly a program specialist with KACDC, was selected from

among four applicants. Wayne replaces Steve Cole who left to join Alaska Legal Services.

The KACDC Board also discussed two programs which are just getting underway, a locally controlled Food Stamp program and a Village Ordinance program. KACDC has been contracted by the Dept. of Community and Regional Affairs to work with the Councils of the 6 Island Villages in setting up basic Village Ordinances. The Kodiak Legal Services Office will perform the codification of ordinances desired by Village residents making it possible for a magistrate to come into the village and settle local problems. After codification is completed a village travel schedule for a magistrate will be set up. The program came about as a response to village complaints that the present justice delivery system is not adequate.

The Food Stamp pilot project was developed as a response to village complaints too. Funded by the State Food Stamp office (Health and Social Services, Division of Public Assistance), the program will provide for the

direct sale of food stamps in villages on the Island, hopefully eliminating the confusion and time delays caused by routine mail service.

### Vide Bartlett Services held in Fairbanks

Funeral services were held November 21 in Fairbanks for Vide Bartlett, wife of the late Alaska Senator E.L. "Bob" Bartlett. Mrs. Bartlett died November 18 in Fairbanks. Mrs. Bartlett was born in 1904 in Dawson, Y. T. and married the late senator in Valdez in 1930. Mrs. Bartlett remained active in Alaskan affairs until the time of her death, and energetically undertook responsibilities related to her membership on the University of Alaska's board of regents.

Mrs. Bartlett leaves two daughters, Susan Peterson of Simsbury, Conn. and Doris Ann Bartlett of Eugene, Ore.