



GOVERNOR
BILL WALKER

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
BYRON MALLOTT

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



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Dear Tribal Partners –

Over the past two years, we have taken great strides to strengthen our relationship with our tribal partners. We have established the Governor’s Tribal Advisory Council (GTAC), set up cross-departmental meetings with agency tribal liaisons, trained the Governor’s cabinet and office staff on Alaska Native peoples and cultures, revamped our Indian Child Welfare Act regulations and policies, recognized Indigenous People’s Day, & witnessed the release of the Fairbanks Four.

We’d also like to take this time to welcome Barbara Blake as Tribal Advisor. She is of Haida, Tlingit, and Ahtna Athabascan descent. Her lineage originates from Hydaburg, Klawock, and Chistochina. Barbara’s passion, wealth of experience, and knowledge have been put to good use, and we’re pleased her portfolio has grown to include Tribal relations.

GTAC has been a critical component of State decision-making and priority-

setting. GTAC is comprised of 11 Alaska Natives from across the state to advise the Governor’s Office on the wide variety of tribal-related issues that come across our desks. We would like to welcome new members Sam Thomas of Craig, and Vivian Korthuis of Bethel to GTAC, and congratulate Richard Petersen of Juneau on his re-appointment to the Council. A full list of GTAC members is [here](#). GTAC has asked for Tribal input on what issues to prioritize; please email [Barbara Blake](#) with your thoughts.



Participants and council members share a laugh during a GTAC Meeting.

In an effort to further solidify these relationships with tribal partners, each state agency has designated a tribal

liaison. These liaisons meet monthly to go over projects and progress in their respective agencies, and work collaboratively to find creative solutions and enhance opportunities for success between the state and tribes. The contact list for all liaisons is available [here](#).

For the first time in the history of the state, all staff in the Governor and Lt. Governor’s offices underwent training on Alaska Native people and cultures. The trainings were facilitated by the First Alaskans Institute, and held in Anchorage and Juneau.

We look forward to building on these successes, and further strengthening State-Tribal relations.

Sincerely,

Rural Education Update

DEED places priority on outreach, engagement with Native Communities

On the Federal level, the Department of Education and Early Development (DEED) has involved

tribal members in its year-long process of preparing a state plan to implement the new federal K-12 Law, the Every Student Succeeds Act

(ESSA). The Department continues to actively engage tribal leaders on the issues of standards, assessment, accountability, and school support and improvement. We have been greatly aided by the input of the Alaska Native and Tribal representatives on the state plan's advisory committee. There will be further engagement with Alaska Native and tribal leaders as the Department continues to work through the ESSA process. Special thanks to the Tanana Chiefs Conference, Central Council of Tlingit and Haida, and AFN for providing us with forums to update the community on ESSA progress.

The Alaska State Council on the Arts – which is part of DEED –

passed a regulation regarding laws in the Lower 48 that seek to discourage elephant poaching. The



Lt. Gov. Mallott addresses students at Thorne Bay School.

laws, while well-intentioned, fail to distinguish between ivory from elephants and ivory legally harvested by Alaska Native peoples from non-threatened walrus species in

Alaska. The Council

hopes the resolution and ensuing dialogue will help emphasize the necessary nuance that ought to exist to ensure the continued protection of ivory carvings and art created by Alaska Natives.

In February, DEED began work on Alaska's Education Challenge with a public survey. To seek participants, we solicited feedback directly from 229 tribal leaders, Ilisagvik College, AFN, and UAF Dept. of Native Studies and Rural Development. Governor announced the challenge during his State of the State Address, and the Department is committed to ensuring that Alaska's Native and Tribal leaders have voices in our discussions and seats at the table.

Fish & Game Update

Work continues on intertribal fish commission

The Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) is continuing its work with the intertribal fish commission on the Yukon River, with the goal of becoming a river-wide consortium in the future.



Lt. Gov. Mallott joins ADF&G's Commissioner Sam Cotton and BC Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett on a trip up the Taku River near the Canadian Border.

Last August, the Kuskokwim River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The agreement formalized the co-management of fish along the river between tribes and the Federal government. Both entities have reached out to the State to begin work on Phase II of the project; a Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) advisory group is to be established by 2020.



[First Alaskans Institute \(FAI\)](#) Fellow Meghan "Sig" Topkok presented her mapping project to Gov. Walker and Lt. Gov. Mallott, exploring who is working on climate change issues in Alaska. Over 300 entities ranging from tribal governments to international organizations were identified and mapped. The mapping project will be finalized this summer and online in the fall for the public to use. Topkok worked in the Lt. Governor's office and will take her bar exam before heading to Nome to work with the Norton Sound Regional Health Corporation. Topkok is one of several fellows and interns gaining access to the executive branch of state government through the Walker-Mallott Administration.

Public Safety, Law, and Justice Update

Cooperation, collaboration, and mutual agreement remain important

In January, Attorney General Jahna Lindemuth and Anvik Village signed a civil diversion agreement establishing a process for state law enforcement to refer certain low level offenses and crimes to the Anvik Tribal Court. Since that time, the Department of Law has been working with the Department of Public Safety to train law enforcement officers and state prosecutors, working towards full implementation in Anvik. The Department of Law is also continuing outreach efforts to encourage more tribes to consider the model civil diversion agreement as an option for state-tribal collaboration to build stronger communities. As a part of these efforts, Rob Henderson accepted an invitation to present information to the YK Delta Yupik and Athabascan Intertribal Conference in Bethel on March 8. More about the agreement with Anvik and the model civil diversion agreement can be found [here](#).



Thanks to Lt. Governor Byron Mallott settling a landmark language assistance lawsuit, the Alaska Division of Elections hired a language compliance officer, Indra Arriaga, and [expanded language coverage beyond the settlement's mandate](#). During the 2016 primary, Mallott flew to the plaintiff's village, Manokotak and there picked up Mike Toyukak and his wife, who flew with Mallott, Arriaga and others to observe the voting process in Togiak, New Stuyahok and Dillingham.

Healthcare Update

DHSS works to improve healthcare, flexibility

The Tribal unit within the Office of the Commissioner assisted Health Care Services with a variety of tribal consultation efforts across the Department. This is required for all state plan amendments sent to the Center for Medicaid services (CMS). In the past 10 months, there has been a lot of activity.

CMS approved a state plan amendment to allow for the reimbursement of all levels of community and behavioral health providers. This means 450 providers in some of Alaska's outlying regions and remote village communities will be eligible to be reimbursed for the necessary primary care and behavioral health services they provide.


CMS approved another change to the Medicaid state plan, which allows a government-to-government relationship with tribes for the provision of tribal transportation arrangements of air, taxi, hotel, and

per-diem for all AI/AN Medicaid beneficiaries. ANTHC and YKHC have taken on travel for their beneficiaries since the approval of this state plan. The plan also increases the reimbursement rate for Tribal pre-maternal and lodging locations to the federal per diem rate.

The Department is asking CMS to allow tribal health organizations to provide tribally-targeted case management to AI/AN Medicaid beneficiaries. Essentially, this would allow tribes to case manage chronic conditions such as diabetes management and high risk births.

In February, the Department completed tribal consultations on the process for confirming referral validations for AI/AN Medicaid beneficiaries going from tribal to non-tribal providers. The process is necessary to ensure that the Department can claim these services at a 100% federal match, and the Department hopes to be able to obtain \$32 million in tribal refinancing in FY 17 and another \$42 million in FY 18 as a result.

SAVE THE DATE



FIRST ANNUAL DHSS TRIBAL CONSULTATION & LISTENING SESSION

DENA'INA CENTER
TIKAHTNU ROOM
NOVEMBER 7-8, 2017

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

An in-person, interactive opportunity to seek your consultation, input, and identify ways in which the state and Tribes may further partner to ensure the health of all Alaskans in our great state. For more information, contact Natalie Norberg at 907-269-7800 or 465-3030.

Environmental and Conservation Update

Drinking water assistance, spill response critical DEC priorities

The Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) participated in planning and presenting at the Alaska Forum on the Environment. Topics included addressing contaminated sites, spill response, air quality, and solid waste. DEC's mission is to conserve, improve, and protect Alaska's natural resources and environment, and to enhance the health, safety, economic, and social well-being of all Alaskans.

DEC has been hard at work with Alaska Native Communities across the state. Earlier this year, the Division of Water Director and Seafood Permitting Section Chief traveled to Unalaska to meet with the Qawalangin Tribe to discuss seafood wastewater discharge concerns. The Division is also

providing notice to tribes about the progress of individual permits and general permits as required in the Alaska Pollutant Discharge Elimination System program description.

Additionally, the Division of Spill Prevention and Response (SPAR) participated in providing training in on spill prevention and response to 27 individuals from eight communities in Western and Northwest Alaska. The training was held in Bethel in August, 2016, and was coordinated and funded by the Institute for Tribal Environment Professionals. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Coast Guard also participated. SPAR is currently participating in planning with its partners for a similar training to be held in Dillingham in June 2017 for communities represented by Bristol Bay Native Association. The Department's Drinking Water Program has nearly daily contact with Tribes around

the State to provide technical assistance and support of rural drinking water systems. The Program is also participating in a public health initiative with the Division of Public Health and the community of Hydaburg to collect drinking water samples from all children under 18 to determine blood lead levels. The initiative plans on continued outreach efforts to explain results, and will conduct additional testing if needed.



Alaska Department of Fish & Game, Division of Subsistence recently conducted a moose skin brain-tanning class in Nondalton during a Culture Week April 24-28. They used mostly traditional tools, including bone and stone tools. They did a moose skin blanket toss too!

Keep in touch with Governor Walker and Lt. Governor Mallott



Official Websites:

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