

**PROJECT TITLE: ALASKA HEALTH INFORMATION  
OUTREACH PROJECT**

**Project Type: Outreach Project Award: Health Information Project**

Final Report

State of Alaska  
Department of Health and Social Services  
Division of Public Health  
Section of Epidemiology

Submitted by:  
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Project Period: February 15, 2005 through April 30, 2006

May 4, 2006

## **NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION**

### **Summary/Introduction:**

The Alaska Health Information Outreach Project was conducted from January 2005 through April 2006 through this subcontract. Through this time, we were able to develop new and expand existing partnerships and collaboratives with a variety of partners. An advisory group was formed at the beginning of the project to provide guidance in developing the specific outreach areas and topics.

Eight trainings occurred throughout the course of this project, as well as seven exhibits. A variety of training venues were used, including hands-on computer-based training, webcast, television, and teleconferencing. For the most part, statewide conferences and meetings were targeted in order to broaden the target audience reach.

In addition to the trainings, the seven exhibits were conducted with hands-on demonstration of NNLM and state developed on-line health resources. Promotional and marketing materials were distributed. One of the most effective ways to promote materials was to ask participants for a topic they were interested in learning more about. The exhibiter was then able to explain the differences between the different tools, while walking them through a search. Business card CD Roms for the Alaska Health Education Consortium are a very helpful marketing tool, which people were pleased to take home with them.

### **Geographic region/number of counties:**

This was a statewide project with a reach to all regions of Alaska.

### **Collaborations/Partnerships:**

A planning/advisory committee was formed at the beginning of the project, and included representation from the following groups: the University of Alaska Health Sciences Library, Alaska Public Health Nursing, the Alaska Public Health Training Network, the Division of Public Health Workforce Development Coordinator, and the Governor's Council on Development Disabilities. This group met three times to review the scope of the project, and provide input on the topics and exhibits.

The strongest partnership already existed, but has been strengthened by this project. This is the one with the University of Alaska's Health Science Library Project. In addition to planning and collaborating on projects, they have provided technical assistance and consultation on project evaluation, as well as sharing additional resources.

### **Training:**

A total of eight training sessions were conducted as part of this project. Minority populations were not tracked for most of these sessions, but a total of 174 people

participated in these eight sessions, all of which were health care and service providers.

- One training site was located in Sitka, Alaska at the University of Alaska Southeast computer lab. This session was conducted for 18 Community Wellness Advocate students.
- Three training sessions were conducted in Anchorage as part of statewide conferences and meetings. The audiences were Emergency Medical Services staff, school physical education and health teachers, and members of the Alaska Health Education Consortium. The one directed at teachers was a hands-on session at a high school computer lab.
- Two trainings were conducted via teleconference and a weblink system called iLink. The first group targeted public health nurses in Southeast Alaska, and the second group targeted public health nurses participating in a statewide training academy.
- The final three trainings were conducted via cable television and webcast through the Alaska Public Health Training Network and the University of Alaska Southeast. These trainings targeted health professionals throughout Alaska.
- Two hands-on trainings were planned to occur in conjunction with the annual Alaska Health Summit. Logistical details, however, compromised our ability to hold these sessions, which were cancelled. It is important to develop hands-on capacity through wireless connections at the training sites.

#### Exhibits:

Meeting name	Dates	Location	# of contacts	# of demos	General impressions
1 AK EMS Symposium	11/9-11/11/05	Anchorage, Alaska	76	43	Very positive
2 Alaska Health Summit	11/28-30/05	Anchorage, Alaska	42	42	Less visibility than expected. Poor location for general traffic.
3 Alaska Diabetes Educators Conference	12/8-9/06	Anchorage, Alaska	50	6	Many people were aware of this resource but grateful for the reminder that it exists
4 Alaska Pharmacists Conference	2/9-10/06	Anchorage	50	24	This might be good to target every 2 years
5 Alaska Rural Health Conference	2/15-16/06	Anchorage, Alaska	82	23	This conference is held every two years, and should be considered a staple of our health information outreach efforts.
6 Behavioral Health Summit	9/28-29/05	Anchorage, Alaska	90	50	Positive
7 Community Health Aid Program Forum 2006	4/24-27, 2006	Anchorage, Alaska	18	2	Need to strive for training next year.
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>408</b>	<b>190</b>	

#### Resource Materials:

Items developed for this project included Power Points for presentations, and flyers for the Public Health Training Network session.

**Web Sites:**

The Alaska Health Education Library Project (AHELP) web site is functioning under a hosting agreement with Digital Forest, Inc. It has the capacity for online data submission and remote access that allows the project coordinator to edit and post data. However, the AHELP web site does not have a contract in place to make modifications to the site. The lack of professional service contract has hampered the posting and utilization of the downloadable health education materials and multi-site license feature. Project staff has been working with the State of Alaska's contract office for the past year attempting to get a new contract in place.

Records in the AHELP database on the web site and the AHELP printed directory were updated during February/March 2006.

**Document delivery and reference services:** Not applicable

**Approaches and interventions used:**

The project developed an outreach plan with the help of the advisory committee, which included a listing of annual meetings and conferences. This identifies opportunities for displaying or presenting information or training. The advisory committee recommended broadening our outreach efforts beyond traditional public health users. We were able to incorporate pharmacists and behavioral health audiences into this year's efforts.

**Evaluation:**

**Overall Goal:** To increase Alaskan's capacity to obtain, interpret, and understand basic health information and services and the competence to use such information for better health.

**Outcomes:**

1. Increase health professionals' utilization of health information resources and health education tools to inform education and empower health consumers.
  - a. Reviewing web hits to the Alaska Health Education Library site will assess this.
2. Increase health professionals' knowledge and skills on locating and using health information and health education resources and tools.
  - a. A survey of health professionals will be conducted in the six months to assess knowledge and skill level around internet health information and education resources and tools.

**Objectives:**

1. By April 30, 2006, produce and offer four two-hour trainings sessions on health information and health education via the Alaska Public Health Training Network.
  - a. Three two-hour sessions were provided via the Alaska Public Health Training Network.
  - b. Two additional sessions were provided via teleconference and web link formats.
  - c. Three additional trainings were conducted at statewide meetings in Anchorage.
2. By April 30, 2006, three hands-on computer-based trainings will be held between Anchorage, Juneau and Sitka in computer labs.
  - a. Two hands-on computer-based trainings were conducted, one in Anchorage and one in Sitka. Two additional trainings were scheduled as part of the Alaska Health Summit, but were cancelled due to logistical problems.
3. By April 30, 2006, NNLM resources will be promoted in a minimum of six statewide meetings and trainings.
  - a. In addition to the trainings, NNLM resources were promoted through exhibits at seven statewide meetings and conferences. We were registered for an eighth exhibit with the Public Health Nurses conference in April 2006, but had to cancel at the last minute due to illness.

**Problems or barriers encountered:**

As we expand our outreach, it becomes increasingly clear that we need to do a coordinated marketing effort through public health. This will not be realistic until we have a contract completed to update and revitalize the Alaska Health Education Library Project. Internal issues with the Department of Health and Social Services' contract office has made it very difficult to proceed with this contract. We are hoping to have a final contract within the next two-three months.

Although some may consider it a barrier, we were quite successful at using internet and television as venues for conducting training on NNLM and state health information resources. Because of the size of Alaska, this is a viable option, and one that needs to be explored for additional potential.

**Continuation plans:**

We intend to continue this project, although the scope and depth of the outreach and training will be dependent on available funding. Without this subcontract some of these services will be covered through the existing Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant, although we are facing reductions in this funding source, and expect more over the next year.

In addition to increasing the outreaching and marketing of the existing resources, one potential area for expansion arose while we were exhibiting at the Rural Health

Conference in February. The Alaska Tribal Health Consortium has a telemedicine project that is entering its second phase. Existing computer equipment is being replaced with stronger, bigger equipment. Native health clinics throughout Alaska will be encouraged to use the existing computers for obtaining web-based health information and resources. We have discussed the possibility that our project could provide training and technical assistance to these health providers on how to locate and utilize these resources.

**Impact:**

Every contact made under this project has resulted in a positive response of some sort from the participants. Further evaluation is needed to determine actual changes in NNLM utilization.

**Recommendations for improvement:**

Through our partnership with the University of Alaska Anchorage Health Sciences Library, we are increasingly aware of the array of NNLM resources. It would be wonderful to have some training and technical assistance on what else is available that we may incorporate into our efforts.

**Responses to follow-up questions:**

**Were your original project goals and objectives met? If not, why not?**

Yes.

**What significant lessons were learned which would be of interest or use to others conducting outreach projects? Which strategies were the most effective in implementing the project?**

The most effective strategies are the hands-on trainings with follow-up contact.

**If you were to start all over again, what, if anything, would you change about your goals, project plans, etc.?**

If starting over again, I'd like to do more preparation around which materials are available, as well as to have a fully functioning state website to feature. I would also work at incorporating more outcome evaluation measures into the project to better assess the effect the project is having on our target audience.

**What advice or recommendations would you give to anyone considering a similar outreach effort?**

Go for it!