



Health Careers In Alaska

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Behavioral Health Aide

The Behavioral Health Aide Program is unique to Alaska and a new system for providing behavioral health care services within the Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS). Behavioral Health Aides (BHA) work to help Alaska Natives/American Indians address behavioral health concerns in rural communities who often times have limited access to behavioral health care. The purpose of the BHA Program is to enhance village-based behavioral health services to promote healthy individuals, families and communities in rural and remote Alaska villages. BHAs are an integral part of the rural behavioral health care delivery system. This special group of workers is critical to rural service delivery, and to support prevention and early intervention activities to avoid more costly and higher-acuity of care.

BHAs work with a range of clients from individuals to families to entire communities. A BHA may help individuals facing serious health problems related to lifestyle choices such as cancer, heart disease, influenza, and pneumonia. They may assist families in dealing with disruptions such as abuse, neglect or violence. BHAs may also work with whole communities in coping with injuries or deaths related to accidental or intentional injuries. They also provide suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention activities and services.

BHAs work under the supervision of a licensed clinician who is employed by an Alaska Tribal health organization. Because BHAs live and work in remote areas, they communicate regularly with their supervisors by tele-video, telephone, email, and some in-person visits.

Behavioral Health Aide Facts:

Where do behavioral health aides work in Alaska?

BHAs generally work in the village where they live, and are employed by their tribal health organization. Some BHAs work as itinerants and may work in a number of villages throughout the year.

Educational Requirements

BHAs have the opportunity to obtain certification based on their level of training or experience and by meeting program requirements set by the Community Health Aide Program Certification Board (CHAP-CB). After BHAs complete training they may complete additional clinical work requirements to become a certified BHA.

BHAs are provided with foundational knowledge and practice information regarding working with clients of different ethnic or racial heritage, age, gender, life-style, or socioeconomic status. The BHA Certification is a multi-level provider model comprised of a BHA trainee (non-certified), BHA levels I, II, III, and a BH Practitioner. The certified BHA I & II are primary functions and the certified BHA III & BH Practitioner are expanded functions for more complex behavioral health services.

Hourly Wage Range:

\$10.00-\$27.00 (Mean \$17.00)
(source: ANTHC Staff)

Years in School:

2 years or less *(after high school graduation).*

Academic Programs in Alaska

Some BHA trainings are organized by the tribal health organizations. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) hosts an Annual Behavioral Health Aide Forum every year in Anchorage during the fall. The Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) has created a BHA Academy in Bethel. Contact your local behavioral health program or tribal health organization for more information about what training is offered in your area.

State Contact:

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