

# COMMUNITY HEALTH AIDE

The Community Health Aide (CHA) profession is unique to Alaska, and is one of the most important health care providers in rural Alaska. CHAs work under the supervision of a referral physician who is employed by the Indian Health Service or one of the tribally managed hospitals or clinics. Because CHAs live and work in remote areas, they communicate regularly with their referral physicians by telemedicine, telephone, e-mail or radio.

Community Health Aides use the Alaska Community Health Aide/Practitioner Manual, 2006 to guide them through obtaining a medical history, performing a physical examination, making an assessment, and planning care. CHAs see a variety of patients including elders, pregnant women, infants and children, accident victims, and mental health and chronic disease patients. CHAs also coordinate the appointments of other visiting health care professionals who regularly visit the village to provide care, including public health nurses, dentists, and doctors.

## Where do community health aides work in Alaska?



Community Health Aides generally work in the village where they live, and are employed by their tribal council or tribal health organization. The village council usually makes the selection for employment and training. Some CHAs work as itinerants and may work in a number of villages each year.



## Hourly Wage Range\*

**\$9.20-\$39.95**

\*based on 2006 CHA/P Directors survey, range from new hire CHA to experienced Community Health Practitioner



## Years in School: 2 years or less\*

\*after high school graduation

## Educational Requirements



- Math and English skills at or beyond the 6th grade level. Some employers may require a higher standard for admission into a training program.
- Basic training consists of fifteen weeks divided into four sessions. All sessions include classroom time and clinical practice. Training may take place at any one of the four regional centers: Anchorage, Bethel, Nome, or Sitka. Completion of basic training may take from 14 months to several years. One of the benefits of the program is that a CHA is employed while being trained and therefore receives a salary.
- After CHAs complete the four basic training sessions, they may complete additional clinical requirements and take an examination to become a Community Health Practitioner or CHP. This is the highest level of accomplishment for training.
- All CHAs and CHPs may obtain certification at their level of training by meeting program requirements determined by the CHA Program Certification Board.
- CHAs and CHPs may work toward an Associate's degree from the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

## Academic Programs in Alaska

See State Contact

## State Contact

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Updated: October 13, 2009



developed by Alaska Center for Rural Health-Alaska's AHEC: <http://nursing.uaa.alaska.edu/acrh/>