

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska awards worksite grants

**SITKA, May 19, 2008** — The SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program recently awarded small grants worth more than \$28,000 to nine organizations in Juneau, Sitka and Prince of Wales Island. The organizations will use the grants so they can implement employee wellness programs or policy changes.

The grants were available to organizations in Sitka, Juneau and Prince of Wales Island willing to organize and lead worksite-based employee wellness efforts that addressed one of the following four areas — healthy food choices in the workplace, physical activity during the work day, effective tobacco prevention and cessation in the workplace, and air quality in the workplace. Organizations will have to complete their projects by the end of September 2008. The goal of these grants is to help make the healthy choice the easy choice.

“It is exciting to see a dynamic group of organizations all with the common goal of having employees who are healthy and happy,” said Bradelle Padon, School and Workplace Health Coordinator for the Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program. “Our goal is that these small grants provide the impetus to create that kind of support.”

The grants were awarded to:

- **The United States Forest Service, Craig, \$3,580**, is completing a fitness challenge using monthly contests to promote healthy behaviors, such as eating more fruits and vegetables, drinking more water, getting more physical activity, quitting tobacco, etc. They plan to purchase a mountain bike for employee use as a means of promoting physical activity.
- **SEARHC Alicia Roberts Medical Center (ARMC), Klawock, \$3,900**, is promoting physical activity during the work week by teaming up with the Klawock School District to set up an exercise room that staff from both organizations can use. They plan to have individual fitness goals/activity logs and offer incentives, and also plan to hold monthly “lunch and learns” and organize some running/walking programs for the Prince of Wales International Marathon.
- **Alaska Commercial (AC) Grocery Store, Klawock, \$3,150**, plans to develop a space for employees to use as a workout area. It is promoting a program that encourages

physical activity and improved nutrition, including a campaign to have employees walk the local marathon and raise money for a local charity.

- **Southeast Regional Resource Center (SERRC), Juneau, \$3,130**, is starting an employee wellness campaign. It plans to promote physical activity using a lunch-time walking program and healthy choices using a nutrition program and a healthy options policy.
- **Catholic Community Service (CCS), Juneau, \$4,000**, is addressing healthy food choices in the workplace with a competition to increase healthy food choices and physical activity. They developed a policy about healthy food options, are in the process of changing their vending machines, and are starting to phase out the buying of soda pop and water for meetings.
- **SEARHC Ethel Lund Medical Center (ELMC), Juneau, \$2,845**, is creating a lending library of health information, including books and videos. The lending library will be housed in an area where employees have access to workout equipment before work, during lunch, and after work. In addition, ELMC will promote the use of the workout facility and lending library as a means of healthy living by proposing a flex-time policy to allow for more regular physical activity for employees.
- **Sealaska Corp., Juneau, \$1,250**, in conjunction with its employee wellness challenge, will offer a noon-time yoga class for its employees to promote regular physical activity.
- **Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Sitka, \$4,000**, plans to increase employee wellness through various facets of health. The focus will be on increasing physical activity through a walking program and offering membership to the Hames Athletic and Wellness Center. In addition, they will incorporate physical activity and culture into every monthly all-staff meeting by having an elder teach traditional Tlingit dancing.
- **Alaska Airlines, Sitka, \$2,460**, plans to conduct monthly “lunch and learns” and provide a library of information on wellness with a focus on nutrition and encouragement of consuming more fruits and vegetables. In addition, they plan to promote regular physical activity by forming a walking group.

The SEARHC Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program targets three main focus areas — obesity, diabetes and asthma — by working with schools, worksites and other community groups to increase physical activity, encourage healthy eating and reduce tobacco use. The Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska program is part of a national Steps to a Healthier US program run by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention. For more information, contact Steps to a Healthier SE Alaska Grant Manager Grace Brooks at 966-8865.

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