

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**For Immediate Release**

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### **SEARHC's Martha Pearson earns Master Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist credential**

**SITKA, July 9, 2008** — Martha Pearson of Sitka, a health educator for the SouthEast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) WISEWOMAN program, recently became the first person from Alaska to earn the Master Certified Tobacco Treatment Specialist (CTTS-M) credential.

Pearson earned her CTTS-M credential from the University of Massachusetts Medical School. To earn the credential, she had to undergo extensive training in tobacco dependence treatment, have a minimum of 2,000 hours of experience specifically in delivering tobacco dependence services, and meet all of the requirements for UMass Medical School certification, including an exam, performance review, take the online course "Basic Skills for Working With Smokers" and take a TTS Core Certification five-day course in Worcester, Mass.

"My master certification is the result of five years of tobacco cessation practice, coursework and testing," said Pearson, who provides tobacco cessation services through her work with the WISEWOMAN program. "When a person is ready to quit tobacco for their health and the health of their family, I feel good knowing that my training and experience can help them achieve that goal."

Quitting tobacco is one of the toughest lifestyle changes to make and one of the most important for health, Pearson said. It's not just about will power, Pearson said, and the combination of counseling and nicotine replacement therapy (NRT) is shown to be the most effective way for most people to quit tobacco.

The SEARHC Tobacco Program and Sitka Community Hospital have partnered so they both can offer one-on-one tobacco cessation counseling and access to nicotine replacement therapy to all Sitkans. The SEARHC Tobacco Program can be reached at 1-888-966-8875 (toll-free in Southeast Alaska), or SEARHC patients can call 766-6315 in Haines, 364-4440 in Juneau or 966-8721 in Sitka. The Alaska Quit Line (1-888-842-7848) also is free and it offers 24-hour statewide counseling and nicotine replacement therapy.

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