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## Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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### **National Health Service Corps celebrates 40 years**

*Providers in underserved communities recognized*

ANCHORAGE — On Thursday, Oct. 11, 2012, the Interior Community Health Center in Fairbanks will join thousands of primary care medical, dental and mental and behavioral health professionals across the nation to recognize the work of the National Health Service Corps (NHSC) in America's underserved areas.

The NHSC is a program of the federal Department of Health and Human Services that continues to build healthy communities by connecting primary health care providers to areas with limited access to care. Currently, there are about 65 NHSC providers practicing in Alaska.

The Corps was founded in 1972 and has been a leader in expanding access to health care. More than 40,000 NHSC professionals have served nationally since its inception. Today, there are more than 10,000 NHSC members providing culturally competent care to more than 10.5 million people in urban, rural, and frontier areas.

Dr. Thomas Nighswander of Anchorage was one of the Corps' first participants, and the first to serve in Alaska. Nighswander is currently the regional dean for the Alaska WWAMI program (a collaborative medical school among Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana and Idaho) and still sees patients at Southcentral Foundation.

"The NHSC sent me to Alaska in 1972 for a two-year stint. It changed my career and my wife's, too. We never thought that Alaska would be our home and the focus of our professional careers for 40 plus years," said Dr. Nighswander. "Our work here turned out to be an example of exactly what was hoped for when the NHSC was started. It has been a great personal journey, and we have been delighted and never once regretted that early decision."

For more information on the Alaska celebration, contact Interior Community Health Center CEO Cheryl Kilgore at 907-458-1558 or [Cheryl.Kilgore@inhc.org](mailto:Cheryl.Kilgore@inhc.org).

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