

# Rural Veterans Health Access Program



## State of Alaska



Department of Health and Social Services  
Division of Public Health

Section of Health Planning and  
Systems Development  
Office of Rural Health



Presentation to the State of Alaska Department of Behavioral Health  
Change Agent Training, December 13, 2012  
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# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

## Overview

- Funded by P.L. 112-74 – Section 1820 (g)(6) of the Social Security Act
- Funded through HRSA, ORHP, Office of the Advancement of Telemedicine
- Three demonstration projects in the U.S.
  - Alaska
  - Montana
  - Virginia



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

Funded by P.L. 112-74 – Section 1820 (g)(6) of the Social Security Act

“Grant funds to be used for the purchase and implementation of telehealth services, including pilot and demonstrations on the use of electronic health records to coordinate rural veterans care between rural providers.”



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

## Avoiding Duplication: Other Parallel Efforts

- Sharing Agreement between the VA and the Alaska Tribal Health System
- Pilot telebehavioral health project with VA and SEARCH in Sitka
- 13<sup>th</sup> Work Group – VA collaborative group looking at rural health



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

## System Gap Analysis

- Focus areas of System Gap Analysis
  - Types of facilities (Tribal, Community Health Centers, Critical Access Hospitals, Public Health Nursing)
  - VA Approved Vendor (Vendorized)
  - Gaps in Telebehavioral health networks



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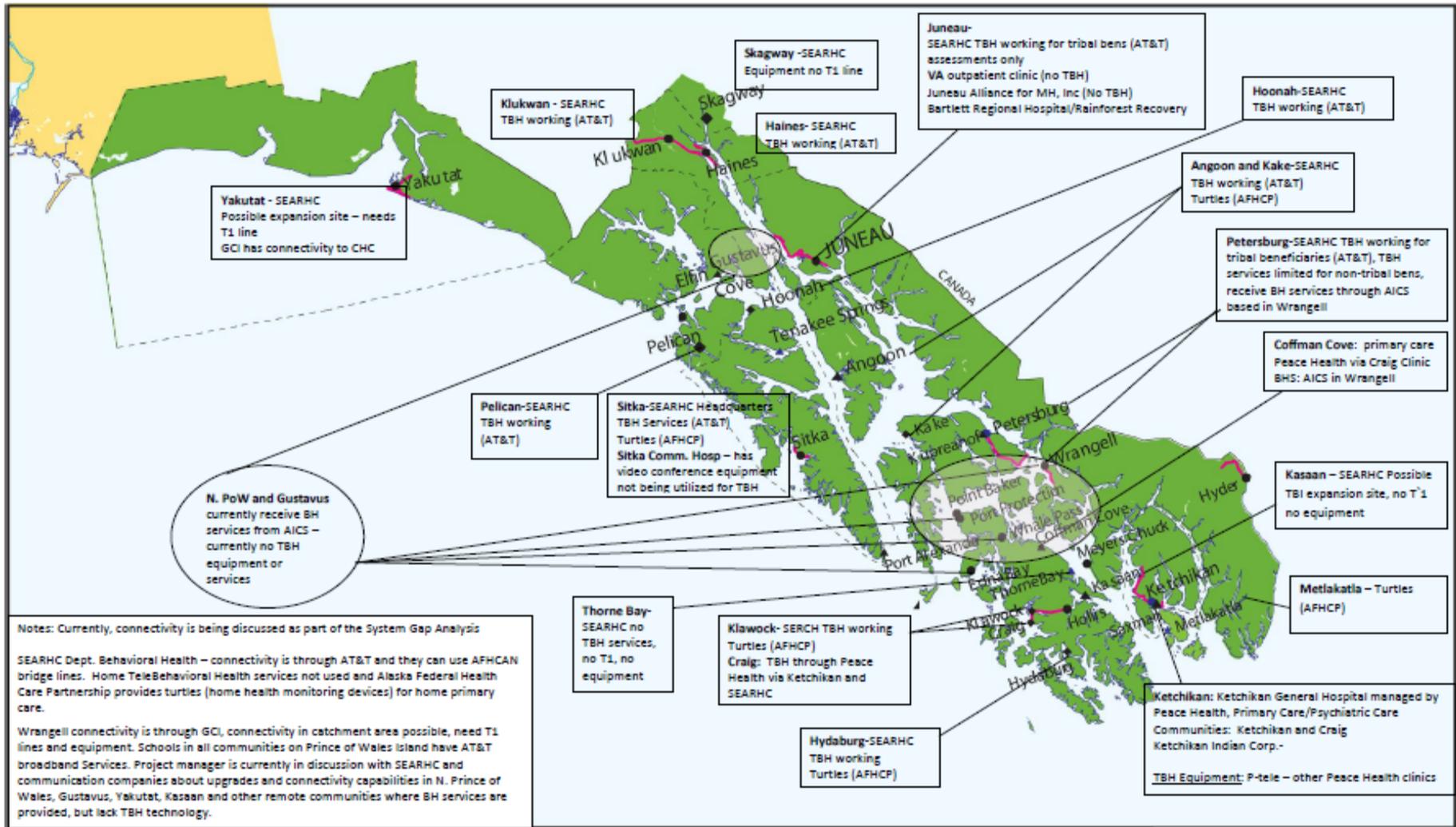
## System Gap Analysis (continued)

- Assessment of connectivity and telebehavioral health equipment costs
- Determine type of equipment that would be most cost effective given current technological and connectivity capabilities



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Preliminary Finding of System Gap Analysis of Current Telebehavioral Health Networks in Southeast Alaska

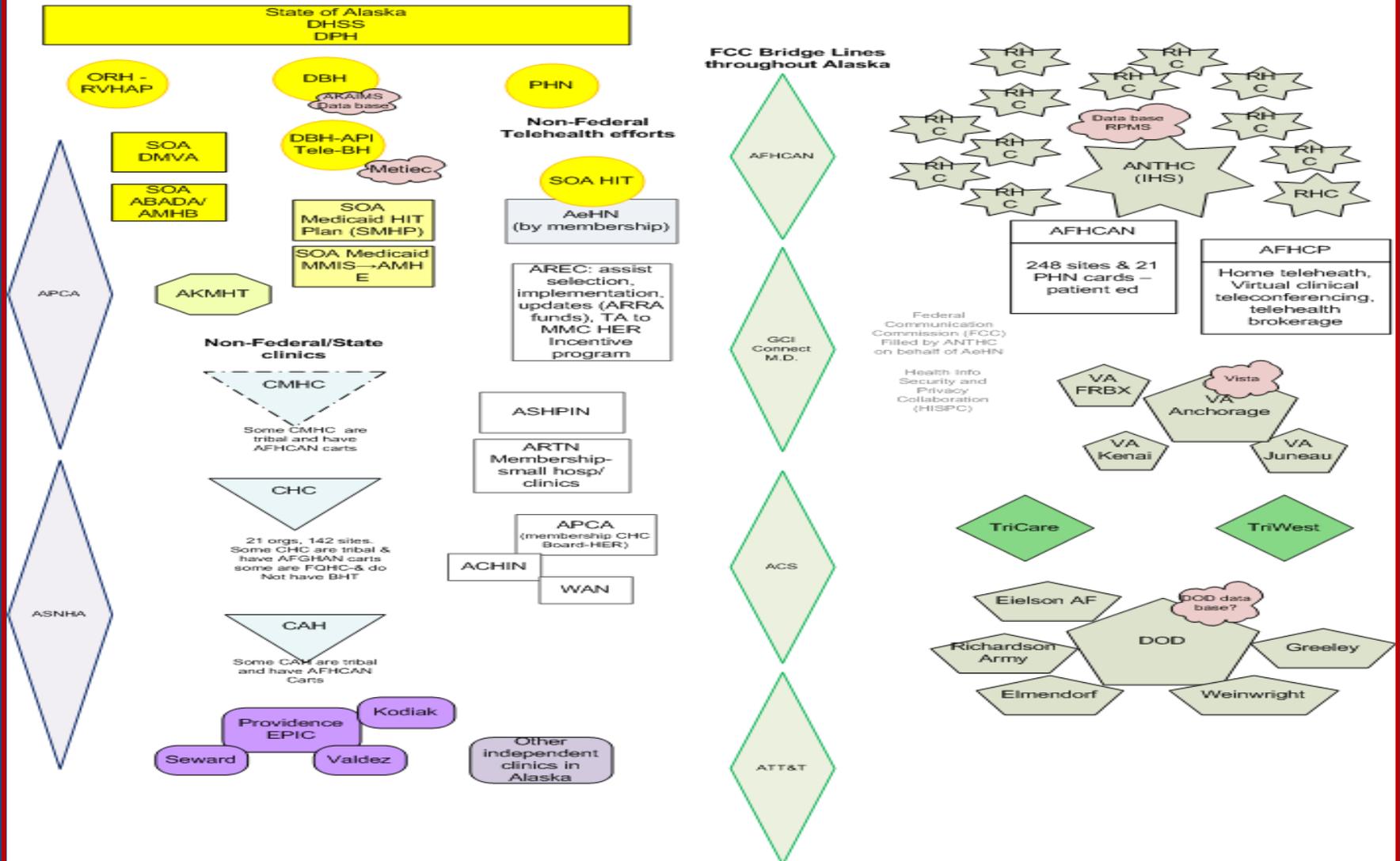


# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

**DRAFT** Telehealth Players in Alaska  
by non-Federal and Federal Systems of Care

## Non-Federal Health Care System

## Federal Health Care System



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

## Goals of RVHAP

Goal 1: Implement demonstration project that provides access to and increases the delivery of quality mental health services and other health care services to Veterans in remote communities in SE AK through...



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

## Goals of RVHAP

### Goal 1 (cont.)

...Through:

- The development and deployment of a telehealth network
- Use of electronic health information exchanges
- In-person and on-line clinical and health provider training/distant learning



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## Goals of RVHAP

### Goal 1

Objective A: by 9-31-2013 increase access to behavioral health services for Veterans living in rural and remote communities of SE AK by enhancing existing TBH capabilities and networks with the VA

Objective B: Rural pilot of the AeHN's "Ax the Fax" campaign for BH services



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## Goals of RVHAP

### Goal 1

Objective C: increase quality of BH services provided to veterans by increasing knowledge among health providers about military culture, screening for VA status, PTSD, TBI and other health issues common among veterans

Objective D: Establish on-line on-demand VA approved trainings for distance delivery education state-wide



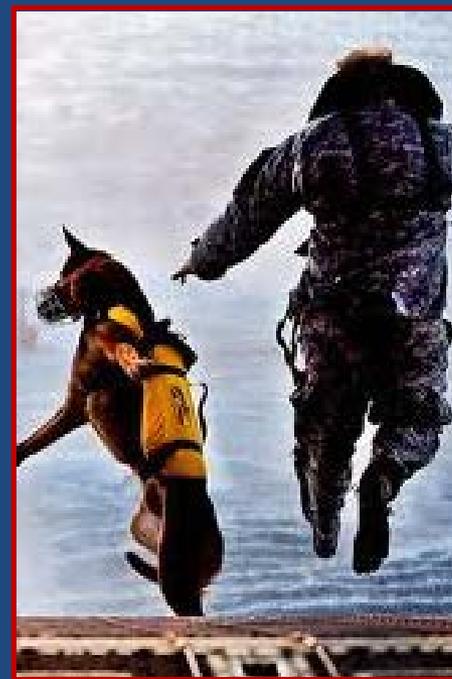
# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

## Goals of RVHAP

Goal 2a: Increase the number of Veterans enrolled in VA benefits within demonstration area

Objective A: Develop a community information campaign in clinical and non-clinical settings to increase Veterans' enrollment in VA services

Objective B: "Change Agent" training among BH providers



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

## Goals of RVHAP

Goal 2b: Increase the number of non-tribal health care facilities in SE AK that are VA approved vendors

Objective A: Conduct regional analysis, work with APCA, ASHNA, and the VA to provide necessary resources to encourage non-tribal health facilities to become vendors of VA services



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## Goals of RVHAP

Goal 3: I.D. where and how existing networks can be improved, expanded, or linked to increase access to services that meet the MH needs of rural Veterans living in the selected demonstration area in SE AK



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## Goals of RVHAP

### Goal 3:

Objective A: Establish and Maintain Core Steering Committee

Objective B: Secure any necessary working agreement between members of Core Steering Team and/or the VA





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## Goals of RVHAP

### Goal 4

Objective A: Development and execution of TBH system in demonstration area and upgrade equipment where needed to improve access and quality of care for Veterans



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

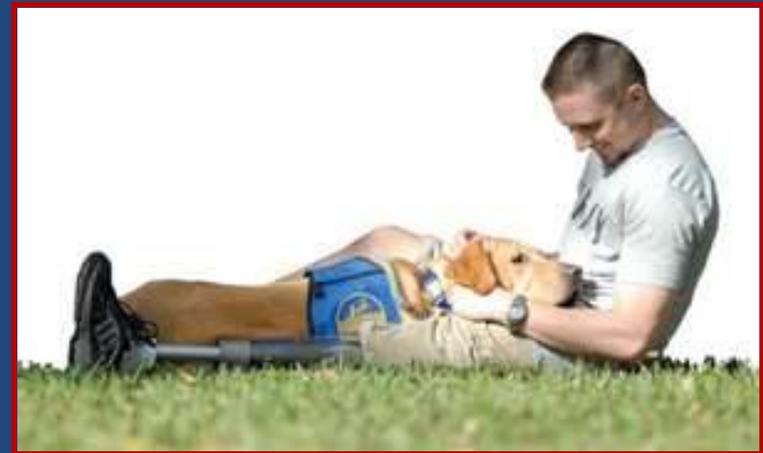
## Current Status of Project

- Selection of Pilot site and service area
- Established Core Steering Team
- Secured internal collaboration with SOA DMVA, DBH, HIT
- AKCACHE - Centralized repository on for on-line training/educational webinars for health providers



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

- Community infrastructure assessments
- Connectivity testing for TBH network on Prince of Wales Island
- Development of in-person Health provider trainings through AHEC
- Two in-person trainings Spring and summer of 2013



# Rural Veterans Health Access Program

- Information campaign to increase enrollment in VA benefits
- Collaboration with SOA DBH to begin looking at ways to expand TBH capabilities in rural AK
- Preliminary strategic planning with the VA to assist in developing MOA between the VA and all non-tribal CHC, CAH, and CMHC state-wide



The background of the image is a stylized American flag, featuring a blue field with white stars on the left and red and white stripes on the right. The flag is slightly blurred and has a soft, glowing effect.

# Thank You

*for serving our country &  
protecting our freedoms!*