

Governor's EMS Awards Announced

A citizen from Nome, an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) from Nome, and an EMS Instructor from Fairbanks were the recipients of the Annual Governor's Awards for Emergency Medical Services (EMS). A nurse from Sitka received the Melissa Ann Peters Memorial Award for her contributions to EMS, and the Old Harbor Village Response Team was chosen for the "Outstanding Ambulance Service" Award. In addition, two young children in Kotzebue and a Kenai radio station owner received Special Commendation awards.

The awards, sponsored by the Governor's Alaska Council on Emergency Medical Services, were announced at the opening session of the annual State EMS Symposium on Friday morning, November 10, and were presented the evening of November 11 at the 23rd Annual Alaska EMS Awards Banquet at the Egan Convention Center in Anchorage.



The recipient of the EMS Citizen Award was Captain Louis Green, Jr. of Nome. He was recognized for his quick thinking and common sense actions that saved the life of a 17-year old female. As Capt. Green was piloting his ship into the harbor he noticed a young woman in the fifty-four degree water. Without regard

for his own safety, Capt. Green jumped into the water to help the woman. She was extremely weak and unable to climb aboard the ladder onto his boat. Two other crew members attempted to pull her to safety, but were unsuccessful. Search and Rescue and EMS were notified and Capt. Green then secured a line around the woman. Using a hoist, Capt. Green's crew was able to lift the woman on board the vessel and bring her to port where she was then transported to Norton Sound Regional Hospital for treatment.



Tom Vaden, an Emergency Medical Technician II (EMT) in Nome; was chosen for the EMS Provider Award.

Tom is recognized for his contribution to the EMS system and for continually looking for new ways to assist the ambulance department in providing more efficient and effective services to the members of the community. Tom teaches CPR, First Aid, Emergency Trauma Technician (ETT), EMT and Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS) courses



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Tony Knowles
Governor

Karen Perdue
Commissioner, DHSS

Elmer Lindstrom
Special Assistant

Peter M. Nakamura, MD, MPH
Director, Public Health

Mark S. Johnson, MPA
Chief, Community Health & EMS

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Manager, EMS Unit

THE ALASKA COUNCIL ON EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:

Charles F. Lean, Chair
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RESPONSE: EMS ALASKA
P.O. Box 110616
Juneau, AK 99811-0616
(907) 465-3027
(907) 465-4101 (fax)

<http://www.chems.alaska.gov>

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throughout the Norton Sound region. In conjunction with the Community Health Aide Training program, he developed a program to have health aide students take ambulance calls and he provides one-on-one training after each run to review what happened and the EMS skills that were involved.

The EMS Educator Award was given to Suzan Zehner, an EMT-II in Fairbanks.

Suzan teaches Emergency Trauma Technician (ETT), Emergency Medical Technician-I (EMT), Basic Trauma Life Support (BTLS), and Pre-Hospital Trauma Life Support (PHTLS) classes throughout the region. Suzan is one of the most active instructors in the Interior region. In addition, she serves as a regional faculty member of the American Heart Association for Basic Life Support (BLS) and is an Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) instructor. She is an energetic and motivating instructor who has an enthusiasm that is addictive to her students.



The **Melissa Ann Peters Memorial Award** is given in memory of a young nurse whose untimely death prompted her family and friends to remember her by honoring other nurses who have contributed in a special way to the encouragement of EMS skills, efforts, and education. **The ninth annual award recipient was Ida May (Joy) Silvey Blanchette, R.N., Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital Emergency Services Nurse Manager and Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc. (SEREMS) representative for the past ten years.**

Joy also served as SEREMS president from September, 1997 to September, 1999. Joy is passionate about improving the quality of emergency services at Mt. Edgecumbe Hospital and regionwide. She has initiated telephone follow-up calls for all emergency room visits, thereby ensuring that over 90% of patients complete recommended follow-up care. She is also an active Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS) and Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS) instructor. Joy demonstrates the vision, initiative, skills and dedication



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required to provide quality health services in today's changing environment.

Max Fonger of Safety, Inc. of Anchorage presented the nineteenth **"Outstanding Ambulance Service"** a \$500 gift certificate. From state wide nominations, **the Governor's Alaska Council on EMS selected Old Harbor Village Response Team from Kodiak Island.**



This group of 15 volunteer people work hard in providing the best level of service to their community. They continually initiate new training and started doing monthly drills about a year ago to refresh each member in how to respond to different crisis situations. Within the past couple of months, the team has been involved with two incidents where the difference between the patient's life and death was determined by the immediate and capable response of the Old Harbor Village Response Team.

Special Commendation is given to three Alaskan citizens:

"This special commendation is presented in recognition of the rapid and appropriate medical care and emergency aid provided under extremely stressful circumstances."

Lottie Judith Wells and Kacie Sampson, two 6-year olds, are recognized for their actions that saved Lottie's 2½ year old brother's life. After her brother fell through a lanyard hanging from a hook, Lottie held her brother off the ground, preventing him from choking, while Kacie ran for help, thus saving the life of the young child.

Jim Murdoch, KZXX radio station owner, is recognized for his outstanding support of injury prevention and public safety education by providing the Kenai Fire Department free airtime and technical support for two hours every Friday morning for the "Firefighter Friday Program."

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Upcoming Regional Symposia



Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc. and Interior Region EMS Council, Inc. will be holding their symposia this spring. These events provide an excellent opportunity to obtain continuing medical education, networking, and keeping abreast of the latest state and regional issues.

Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc.

The 17th Annual Southeast Region EMS Symposium will be held on April 18 –21, 2001 in Sitka. April 18 and 19 will be pre-symposium workshops with the main symposium on April 20 and 21. The focus of this year's symposium is Mass Casualty and will consist of a tabletop exercise. For more information contact Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc. Phone: (907) 747-8005 FAX: (907) 747-1406 Email: serems@ptialaska.net

Interior Region EMS Council, Inc.

The Interior Region EMS Symposium will be held May 17—20, 2001 in Fairbanks. May 17 and 18 are presymposium ,with May 19 and 20 the main event. During pre-symposium there will be the new ACLS—Experienced Provider course and a BLS Pediatric Education for Prehospital Professionals course. The main event will feature a variety of topics geared toward EMS providers, instructors, and management. New this year will be a clinical track for nurses, mid-level providers and physicians. For more information, contact Dave Rockney, MICP of Interior Region EMS Council, Inc. Phone: (907) 465-3978 FAX: (907) 456-3970 e-mail: training@iremsc.org, or web page: www.iremsc.org.

26th Annual EMS Symposium



It's not too early to start planning for the 26th Annual EMS Symposium. It will be held in Anchorage on November 8, 9 and 10, 2001 at the Egan Convention Center. The host hotel will be the Hotel Captain Cook.



The 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games Come to Anchorage

In March 2001, Anchorage will host the largest international sporting event in Alaskan history. No doubt this event will have huge implications on every aspect of the Anchorage area from restaurants to hotels and medical services. Plans are already being put in place to deal with the impacts, including a specific plan to handle medical needs large and small. But it's a plan that only will be successful with support from the entire medical community.

The 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games • Alaska will bring approximately 2,750 athletes and coaches from an estimated 80 nations to compete in seven official winter sports from March 4 - 11, 2001. The 2001 World Games is significant for the Anchorage bowl, as more than 7,000 people are expected to attend the Games including athletes, coaches, family and friends, dignitaries, media and spectators from across the globe.

Comparable in size to the Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan, the 2001 World Games is truly an extraordinary event for the city, state, and athletes. Spread throughout 27 housing and sport venues between Anchorage, Eagle River, and Girdwood, Alaska, 29 languages will be spoken and 30,000 hotel room nights will be filled throughout the 12-day event. Approximately 64,000 box lunches will be prepared for athletes, coaches, volunteers and officials during the event, an average of 5,500 per day.

Competition in seven official winter sports will be held at six venues throughout Anchorage, Eagle River, and Girdwood. Special Olympics athletes will compete in Alpine Skiing at Alyeska Resort, Girdwood; Cross Country Skiing at Kincaid Park, Anchorage; Figure Skating at Tesoro Sports Centre, Anchorage; Floor Hockey at the Federal Express Hangar, Anchorage, Snowboarding at Hilltop Ski Area, Anchorage; Snowshoeing at Kincaid Park, Anchorage; and, Speed Skating at Harry J. McDonald Memorial Center, Eagle River.

Traveling from as far away as Arabia, Bulgaria, China, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Korea, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia, Spain, and Sweden, among others, the 2001 World Games create a rare opportunity for athletes and coaches to travel outside of their native homeland.

With the tremendous onslaught of visitors from around the world will come an increased demand on the health care system in Anchorage. In an effort to reduce the impact on the existing local medical community, the Games Organizing Committee (GOC) has established a Medical Services volunteer workforce comprised of medical professionals from throughout Alaska. Jennifer Dow, MD, an emergency

department physician at Alaska Regional Hospital, is the Medical Co-Commissioner and a member of the Medical Advisory Board overseeing medical services for the 2001 World Games.

“This is a marvelous opportunity for Alaska medical professionals to get involved with a very worthwhile program,” said Dow. I am enjoying the challenge of overseeing the planning of medical services for these games and look forward to working with the Alaskan medical community to demonstrate to the world that Alaska offers some of the highest quality medical services available.”

Each venue will have medical stations on-site and will provide immediate care for an ill or injured athlete, coach, volunteer or spectator. From the time the athletes arrive at the Ted Stevens International Airport on February 28th, until they leave Anchorage on March 12th, the athletes and other members of their delegation will be provided with on-site medical coverage. To accomplish this, some 700 medical professionals including physicians, chiropractors, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, nurses, paramedics, EMTs, first-aid personnel, ski patrol, behavioral specialists, athletic trainers, massage therapists, physical therapists, and medical assistants will be asked to volunteer their time and medical skills at a variety of venues.

“This is a unique event for Alaskans, and a rare opportunity for the Alaskan medical community to come together and to provide medical services on a large scale,” said Dennis Brodigan, Medical Services Manager with the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games • Alaska. “We will be providing medical coverage at six sports venues from Girdwood to Eagle River. There will be 24-hour medical stations established at each hotel in which athletes will reside. We also will provide medical standby services to eight special events throughout the Games, and we will staff and operate a 24-hour medical clinic, the Polyclinic, at Health South. This effort encompasses a total volunteer medical staff of more than 2,800 shifts and more than 20,000 hours.”

The entire medical community will play a role in ensuring that the world receives the best that Alaska has to offer. Health South has donated the use of their medical clinic, allowing the Games to offer 24-hour medical services to athletes. Anchorage, Girdwood and Chugiak Fire Departments are augmenting their respective emergency medical coverage during the Games. Providence Alaska Medical Center, a major sponsor of the 2001 World Games, is donating much-needed medical equipment and supplies.

Those wishing to become a medical volunteer must complete a simple application form, which can be obtained through the mail by calling (907) 277-2497, or an application may be picked-up at 619 Ship Creek Road, Suite 232, Anchorage.

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For those with Internet access, log on to the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games • Alaska Web site at www.2001worldgames.org click on “volunteers,” then click on “volunteer application.”

Each volunteer will be required to attend a short (1 ½ hour) orientation session, receive medical-specific training and attend a walk-through of the specific venue to which the volunteer has been assigned. There are a variety of venues, locations and job functions from which to choose. Volunteers are strongly encouraged to sign up for as many shifts as possible.

Support of volunteers within the community will play an integral role in the success of the 2001 World Games. More than 5,500 people will be recruited to assist in all aspects of hosting the Games. Awards, communications, family services, hospitality, information centers, language services, logistics, recycling/waste management, registration, spectator teams, sports and competition, security, media, and special events are just a few of the other areas where volunteers can become involved.

“The community is definitely pulling together for this once-in-a-lifetime event. The 2001 World Games offer an incredible opportunity for Alaskans to take part in a movement of this magnitude, uniting nations from across the globe,” said 2001 World Games President and CEO Ben Stevens.

For more general information about the 2001 Special Olympics World Winter Games • Alaska, call (907) 277-2477, or visit our Web site at www.2001worldgames.org. For information specific to medical services, contact Dennis Brodigan, Medical Services Manager at (907) 277-2630 or e-mail dennis_brodigan@2001worldgames.org.

*Kathy Day
Media Relations Manager
2001 Special Olympics
World Winter Games Alaska*

New From EMSC

Be on the lookout for some new and exciting things from the Alaska Emergency Medical Services for Children (EMSC) program. Some of the highlights include:



- Development of two pediatric self-study modules: Pediatric Trauma and Pediatric Airway Management and Respiratory Emergencies.
- Injury prevention materials designed for Alaska Native Children.
- Web-based pediatric case studies.

- Pediatric educational offerings via Alaska 3 satellite television.
- Public service announcements (PSA), one on the EMSC program and another on helmet use.
- Pediatric Education for Prehospital Professionals (PEPP) courses sponsored throughout the state.

Visit the EMSC web page at: http://www.chems.alaska.gov/ems_for_children.htm for more information or call Doreen Risley at 465-8633.

Fall Injury Prevention Tips

Each year 1500 Alaskans are hospitalized because of fall injuries. That's over a third of all injuries in the Alaska Trauma Registry. By sheer numbers, this would seem to be a leading priority in injury prevention. But because they occur in such a variety of circumstances, fall injuries are difficult to prevent.

Sharon Ulrich, trauma registrar at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, has been collecting data for the trauma registry for just under a year, but already fall injuries have become personal for her. “I was just amazed at the number of falls that were occurring and the devastating effects that they can have on a person.” She has since found out a few facts about footwear. For example, hard rubber slips, but soft flexible rubber will not. “I thought the boots with the big tread were the best, but they don't work well on ice. They are like skates.” Similarly, rubber sole shoes like sneakers and running shoes, which do a great job of grabbing dry surfaces, slip and slide uncontrollably on ice.

Sharon has found the perfect shoe for herself. It is called the Salomon snow clog. According to Sharon they are warm, comfortable, and don't slip. “They are the best boot for anyone who needs to walk on snow or ice. I just love them.”

Ryan Hill, injury prevention specialist at Maniilaq Association, has discovered that Yaktrax ice creepers work well to prevent falls on ice. “They are relatively inexpensive, easy on and off, and have coils and not spikes so they won't tear up your floor or catch on the carpet if you walk inside with them.” He purchased 150 pairs and plans to ask local physicians to “prescribe” them in their practices to the elders in the Kotzebue area who are at greatest risk of falling.

Ryan Hill considers trauma registry data an invaluable tool in his injury prevention program. After reading through the fall injuries, he found not only that people over age 65 were five times more likely to be hospitalized for a fall injury, but also that one-third of the falls occur inside the home. His next step is to go into homes and do safety inspections to identify fall hazards.

*Martha Moore
Injury Surveillance and Prevention Program Manager*

THE CODE BLUE PROJECT

Over the past decade, there has been a silent crisis in our EMS system as rural, volunteer squads shut their doors or lowered the levels of care provided to their communities. The crisis is particularly insidious because it is occurring in the communities least capable of drawing attention to their plights. The decreases in capabilities were first identified by the Regional EMS Offices and resulted in the publication of a paper titled, *System in Crisis* in 1997. Two of the major causes of these decreases in services were identified as old and failing equipment and unmet training needs.

We recognized that these problems were likely to increase in frequency and severity if there was not a substantial influx of resources to provide the equipment and training necessary for volunteer emergency medical personnel to do their jobs in a safe and effective manner. With the support of many, the Code Blue Project was born.

The purpose of the project is to quantify the unmet needs in the rural Alaskan EMS system and to address the deficiencies in as many ways as possible. The development and continuing evolution of the Code Blue project involves a partnership between our department, the Regional and subarea EMS offices, local communities, and others, such as the Alaska Council on Emergency Medical Services.

One of our primary concerns is the state of EMS vehicles and equipment in rural Alaska. During our initial research, we found that 41 of the 125 ambulances owned by ground ambulance services certified by our department were more than 15 years old and we hear numerous stories of ambulance failures endangering rescuers and patients.

In addition to ambulances and patient transport vehicles, our Code Blue database contains essential patient care equipment, from backboards to defibrillators, training equipment such as CPR and intubation manikins, and both mobile and fixed communications equipment. There remain too many places on our road system where normal radio communications are impossible and rescuers cannot call for additional assistance or engage in essential medical communications.

Currently, the Code Blue project totals over \$7,000,000. This represents a snapshot of EMS needs and has been updated by our office and the Regional EMS Directors as new priorities have been identified or equipment on the list has been purchased or replaced. Our refinement of the list continues.

We have been communicating extensively with potential funding agencies to understand their missions and capabilities in hopes that we can work together to address as many of these essential needs of rural EMS agencies as possible, and we are understandably pleased that Governor Knowles has included \$533,000 in his upcoming capital budget as matching funds for the Code Blue Project.

As you know, the best equipped EMS agency is little more than a taxi service without properly trained and equipped personnel. Despite the dedicated cadre of EMS instructors serving Alaska, there is a well documented need for additional training in small, rural communities. Through the Code Blue Project, we hope to develop additional resources to ensure that comprehensive, locally relevant training is available to EMS squads throughout rural Alaska.

The first EMTs were trained in Alaska more than 30 years ago. Since that time, the emergency medical services system has developed into one which is very capable of meeting the challenges of prioritizing and distributing essential equipment and training resources.

The system in Alaska is dependent upon a mix of highly dedicated professionals, both paid and volunteer, who respond to injured and ill citizens and visitors, often in the harshest of environments. We are hopeful that this project will make their jobs safer and enable them to be as effective as possible. We are extremely grateful for the support of this project that we have received to date. For more information on the Code Blue Project, contact your Regional EMS Office or the Section of Community Health and EMS.

Matt Anderson
EMS Unit Manager

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EMT Skills Competition Awards

This year there were eight teams that participated in the Skills Competition, the top five teams received awards.

1st Place

Bear Creek

Jon Moreland, EMT-I

Mike Waun, EMT-I

2nd Place

Anchor Point VFD & Rescue

Mari Turtainen, EMT-III

RJ Austin Jr., EMT-III

3rd Place

Seward Volunteer Ambulance Corps

Jim Krasnansky, EMT-III

Mike Waldron, EMT-II

4th Place

Big Lake Ambulance

Lori Miner, EMT-II

Nicole Sherwood, EMT-II

5th Place

North Pole Fire Department

Brian Hayley, EMT-III

Geneva Nygren, EMT-II



New on the CHEMS Web Site:

We've been adding many new files to the EMS section of the CHEMS web site at <http://www.chems.alaska.gov>. If you haven't visited in awhile, surf on over to find the updated EMS Directory (soon to be an on-line database!), the NEW EMS skill sheets, new model standing orders, and many, many other files.



LifeGuard Alaska receives international certification



LifeGuard Alaska, Providence Alaska Medical Center's air ambulance service, became the first exclusively Alaska-based service to receive international certification July 16. In fact, it becomes one of only 79 services worldwide to receive this distinction (Airlift Northwest, which serves Southeast Alaska, is also certified).

LifeGuard Alaska received this honor from the Commission on Accreditation of Medical Transport Systems (CAMTS) after voluntarily applying for the independent appraisal earlier this year. Developed exclusively by and for air medical and critical care ground ambulance services, this international accreditation process focuses on quality of patient care and safety of the transport environment through an in-depth and thorough review by the commission.

"Receiving this accreditation was really important to us," said Jason Schwebach, LifeGuard director. "We've been serving Alaska for more than 14 years with a terrific record for patient care and safety. It's great to be officially recognized for that."

LifeGuard Alaska is a service offering both helicopter and fixed wing transport for critically ill and injured patients in Alaska with an all-registered nurse staff. The air ambulance service also boasts the only state-certified, fully equipped neonatal and maternal specialty care transport team. The service has flown thousands of emergency missions in Alaska, Canada, Russia and the lower 48 states.

LifeGuard Alaska's aviation services are provided by ERA Helicopters, Inc., and NorthWestern Arctic Air, Inc., both based in Anchorage.



New Skill Sheets Released

A completely updated version of the Alaska Skill Sheets is available on-line at the CEMS web site. The Section of Community Health and EMS expresses its sincere appreciation to **David Rockney**, of Interior Region EMS Council, Inc., **Jodi Zufelt**, of Southern Region EMS, and **Rob Janik**, of Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc., for the countless hours they spent revising the Skill Sheets and the corresponding practical examinations.

Interior Region

Dan Johnson
Executive Director
Interior Region EMS
Council, Inc.
3522 Industrial Ave.
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907/456-3978

Tim Biggane
Emergency Manager
Fairbanks North Star
Borough
3175 Peger Road
Fairbanks, AK 99709
907/459-1219

Josephine Malemute, Director
Rural Health Service
Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc.
122 1st Avenue
Fairbanks, AK 99701
907/459-8251 ext. 3448

North Slope Borough Region

Gary Judd
Regional EMS Coordinator
North Slope Borough
P.O. Box 69
Barrow, AK 99723
907/852-0234

Northwest Arctic Borough Region

Aggie Lie, EMS Director
Maniilaq Association
P.O. Box 43
Kotzebue, AK 99752
907/442-7126

Norton Sound Region

Mike Owens, EMS Director
Norton Sound Health Corp.
P.O. Box 966
Nome, AK 99762
907/443-3311

Southeast Region

Bobbi Leichy, Executive Director
Southeast Region EMS Council, Inc.
P. O. Box 269
Sitka, AK 99835
907/747-8005

Mike Motti, EMS Coordinator
S.E. Alaska Regional Health
Consortium
222 Tongass Drive
Sitka, AK 99835
907/966-8771

Rachael Askren, EMS Coordinator
Metlakatla Indian Community
P.O. Box 8
Metlakatla, Alaska 99926
907/886-4741

Southern Region

Ronni Sullivan
President/Executive Director
Southern Region EMS Council, Inc.
6130 Tuttle Place
Anchorage, AK 99507
907/562-6449

Aleutian/Pribilof Island

Sub-Area - East
Liam "Chris" Devlin
Executive Director
Eastern Aleutian Tribes, Inc.
1600 A Street, Suite 104
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-5146
907/277-1440

Aleutian/Pribilof Island

Sub-Area - West
Harriet Cutshall, EMS Coordinator
Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Assoc.
201 E. 3rd Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
907/276-2700

Anchorage Sub-Area

Frank Nolan, MICP
Battalion Chief of EMS Training
Anchorage Regional Fire
Training Center
1140 Airport Heights Road
Anchorage, AK 99508
907/279-5002

Bristol Bay Sub-Area

Teresa Seybert
EMS Coordinator
Bristol Bay Area Health Corp.
P.O. Box 130
Dillingham, Alaska 99576
907/842-5201

Copper River Sub-Area

David LeBaron, EMS Administrator
Copper River EMS Council
P.O. Box 529
Glennallen, Alaska 99588
907/822-3671

Kenai Peninsula Sub-Area

Sue Hecks, EMS Coordinator
Kenai Peninsula EMS Council
P. O. Box 215
Seldovia, AK 99663
907/234-8900

Kodiak Sub-Area

Teresa Stone, EMS Coordinator
Kodiak Area Native Association
3449 Rezanof Drive East
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
907/486-9827

Matanuska-Susitna Sub-Area

Mel Vostry, EMS Coordinator
Mat-Su Borough
680 N. Seward Meridian Parkway
Wasilla, Alaska 99654
907/373-8800

Prince William Sound Sub-Area

Skip Richards, EMS Coordinator
Chugachmuit
4252 Hohe Street, Suite B
Homer, Alaska 99603
907/235-0577

Yukon-Kuskokwim Region

Curt Madison
EMS Coordinator
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health
Corporation
P.O. Box 528
Bethel, Alaska 99559
907/543-6168