

Center for Alaska Native Health Research (CANHR)

University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), Institute of Arctic Biology (IAB)
CANHR Director, Gerald V. Mohatt, (907) 474-5528, www.alaska.edu/canhr/

Goals

- **Build the University of Alaska's (UA) Health Research Capacity**

To build UA's research capacity to address current Alaska Native health disparities through the design and implementation of community-based health studies. The aim of these studies is to understand disease distribution and health risks, and identify effective approaches to prevention and treatment of obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease.

- **Build UA's Research Support Cores**

To build UA's biomedical research infrastructure through the establishment of five research support cores: Administrative, Epidemiology and Bioinformatics, Genetics, Cultural-Behavioral, and Knowledge Application and Dissemination.

- **Build Community Health Research Capacity**

To increase the health research capacity of the Yukon-Kuskokwim region in partnership with the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) and participating regional communities to gather, utilize, and disseminate health information.

Research

CANHR supports three research projects, developed in partnership with the YKHC, focusing on obesity and its relationship to diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

- **Genetics of Obesity and Diabetes**

This research identifies genetic and environmental risk factors and the interactions among genetic risk factors, diet, and lifestyle that contribute to the development of obesity. This information will be used to develop health programs designed to keep individuals at a healthy weight and to reduce their risk of other related diseases.

- **Diet and Nutrition Knowledge**

To understand the nutritional factors that contribute to an individual's weight and overall health it is necessary to know what a person eats. The amounts and types of traditional and store-bought foods consumed and how those foods are chosen are keys to understanding the benefits of a traditional diet. Nutritional information gathered from this project will be used to assess characteristics important in the prevention or risk of obesity.

- **Cultural Understandings of Health**

This research project works with Yup'ik elders, health-care providers, and others to bring together knowledge of how culture and health are related and to develop a survey that can be used by researchers and health providers interested in learning about health from a cultural perspective. The project will also use this knowledge to develop health promotion programs in Y-K villages that are based on Yup'ik values and knowledge.

Funding

A Center of Biomedical Research Excellence (COBRE) award from the National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Center for Research Resources (NCRR), supports the CANHR. The award provides five years of funding for multidisciplinary teams to develop biomedical faculty research expertise and competitiveness.