

Grant money allows UAF to establish health research facilities in Fairbanks and Bethel

by Jeff Richardson / jrichardson@newsminer.com

8 hrs ago | 252 views | 0  | 1  |  | 

FAIRBANKS — A \$7.5 million federal grant will allow the University of Alaska Fairbanks to establish the state's first clinical health research facilities in Fairbanks and Bethel next year.

The funding will boost ongoing studies by the Center for Alaska Native Health Research, which has been analyzing health problems among Yupik residents of 11 Southwest communities since 2001.

The new facilities will give researchers the ability to conduct clinical trials at the sites, studying the effects of nutrition, exercise and other factors on Alaska Natives. Although the research has been under way for nearly a decade, the research center's acting director, Bert Boyer, said the work has often been stunted because Alaska's meager facilities often prevented full-scale clinical trials.

"We're limited by having a clinical facility to do it in — we don't have a medical school in Alaska," Boyer said.

The \$3.6 million UAF project will enclose a seldom-used atrium area at the Arctic Health Research Building, converting the space into 1,566 square feet of research and office space. The university will also renovate a building at its Kuskokwim Campus to create a nearly identical \$3.8 million facility in Bethel, which will allow researchers to perform the same tests at both locations.

UAF Institute of Arctic Biology Director Brian Barnes said the Fairbanks renovation project is tentatively planned for 2011 and should be completed by that fall.

The new facilities will include space for physical activity evaluations, body measurements and nutritional data collection. Office space and teleconference equipment is also included, along with a new stable isotope analysis lab.

Stable isotope analysis can be used for a variety of purposes, but health researchers find it useful for its ability to analyze nutrition through tissue samples. Beyer said it can even determine how often a person eats cold-water fish or farm-raised livestock.

The ongoing health studies are funded by the National Institutes of Health, which funds research to look at health disparities among Alaska Natives. Since launching the program in 2001, NIH has awarded \$22 million to conduct an ongoing research program that is funded through at least 2012.

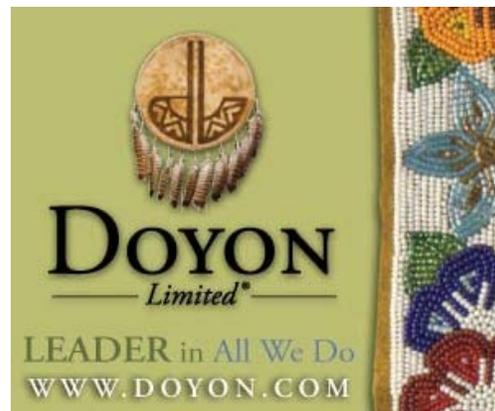
Beyer said the Fairbanks facility will allow the trials to expand to Athabascans and people from other ethnicities.

Research topics include the nutrition of subsistence foods, the genetics of human obesity and Yupik ways of coping with stress.

Boyer said some of that previous work probably helped attract the money for the new research facilities.

"I think our success in the past put us in a position to get these funds," he said.

Share This Article:



[Delicious](#) [Digg](#) [Buzz up!](#) [reddit](#) [Facebook](#) [LinkedIn](#)
[Twitter](#) [StumbleUpon](#) [Mixx it!](#) [Fark](#) [Newsvine](#)

[post a comment](#)

comments (0)

no comments yet

Average Auto Insurance Cost: \$69/Mo*
 Think You Pay Too Much? Find Out!



Select Your State

- AL
- AK
- AZ
- AR
- CA

[Calculate New Payment](#)

LowerMyBills.com *NAIC 2004/2005 Auto Insurance Database Report

Also Inside [Today's news / Photos / Local / Alaska / Sports / Opinion](#)

Features [Sundays / Health / Food / Outdoors / Latitude 65 / Youth / Business](#)

[newsminer.com](#) [Archives / About / Feedback / Privacy Policy / User Agreement / Hot Jobs / Contact / RSS Feeds / Twitter / YouTube](#)

Submit [Letters to the Editor / Applause / Events / Obituaries / Products](#)

*software copyright © 2010 matchbin inc. content copyright © 2010 Fairbanks
 this software is in a public beta test phase [read our privacy policy](#)
 Fairbanks - The voice of Interior Alaska since 1903. is in fairbanks, AK*

