

NINILCHIK TRADITIONAL COUNCIL COMMUNITY CLINICS

IHS PATIENT HANDBOOK



Ninilchik Clinic

15765 Kingsley Road
907-567-3970

Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM

Anchor Point Clinic

33880 Sterling Highway
907-206-2733

Monday – Thursday, 9AM – 7PM

Homer Clinic

4047 Bartlett Street
907-206-2730

Monday – Friday, 9AM – 5PM

Closed all Federal and State Holidays

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ELIGIBILITY

NTC provides local medical services to Indian Health Service (IHS) beneficiaries, as well as the public.

Upon registering as an IHS beneficiary for the first time at NTC Community Clinics (NTCCC), please be sure to bring documentation showing proof of eligibility. Patients must present at least one of the following:

- Tribal Enrollment Card from a federally recognized tribe
- Certificate of Indian Blood
- Valid Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC) Medical Records Number (MRN)

NTC Tribal Member spouses may receive primary care, labs, x-rays, urgent medications, and other in-house procedures free of charge. NTC Tribal Member spouses are financially responsible for any labs and prescriptions sent to an outside facility, as well as all care received outside of NTC clinics.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

We strive to meet the needs and expectations of our patients and clients and want you to be happy with the service we provide. We welcome your feedback and encourage you to fill out a customer satisfaction survey so we know how we are doing. The surveys can be found on our current online registration platform. If you prefer a paper version, they can be found in the exam rooms and at the front desk, or you may request one from any of our staff members.

PATIENT'S RIGHTS

Every patient of our clinics has the right:

- To be treated with respect, consideration, and dignity.
- To be provided appropriate privacy.
- To be free from all forms of abuse, harassment, and discrimination.
- To be provided complete information concerning your diagnosis, evaluation, treatment, and prognosis, to the degree known. If it is medically inadvisable to share this information with you, we will provide it to a legally authorized representative or a designated person of your choice.

- To have your protected health information disclosures and records treated confidentially.
- To receive a copy of your personal health information. You may request changes be made to correct errors in your records or to add information if any has been omitted. You may also request a list of any disclosures made to your personal health information.
- To participate in decisions regarding your health care, except when participation is not advisable for medical reasons.
- To have your rights posted in a visible location and made available upon request. This posting will include the name, address, and telephone number of a representative in the state agency to whom you can report complaints, as well as the website for the Office of Medicare Beneficiary Ombudsman (MBO).
- To request a change to your care team.
- To make a complaint, suggestion, or grievance without fear of retaliation.

PATIENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities of the patient include:

- Following your treatment plan and providing complete and accurate information about your health, including the use of any medications, over-the-counter products, and dietary supplements, as well as any allergies.
- Arranging reliable transportation to and from NTCCC if required under your treatment plan.
- Informing us of any living wills, medical powers of attorney, and other directives that could affect your care.
- Informing us of any changes to your personal information, including your address, phone number, legal name, and eligibility of health insurance coverage.
- Providing private insurance information or an alternate resource enrollment (Medicare, Medicaid, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Denali KidCare, or private insurance); and using those resources when receiving treatment at NTCCC.
- Understanding your insurance plan and coverage. We are happy to help if you have any questions about your plan.
- Understanding our financial policy and accepting financial responsibility for all portions of your treatment

not covered by your insurance or IHS including, but not limited to, co-pays, deductibles, and co-insurance.

RECORDS AND PRIVACY

It is important to us that your care and treatment remain a personal and private matter. We will always protect your right to privacy.

In addition to keeping your medical and non-medical information confidential, you can also expect:

- We will not release your information to any person or entity outside NTCCC without your authorization unless it is a medical emergency.
- We will exercise confidentiality whenever your care is discussed.
- Only staff members actively involved in your treatment may access your records.
- Although health records are considered property of NTCCC, the information contained in them is privileged between you, your provider, and other health professionals participating in your treatment.

If you would like to request a copy of your medical records, please let us know and we will assist you. These requests may take up to 14 days. Please ask us if you have any concerns about your privacy.

APPOINTMENT SCHEDULING

Appointments can be made by calling the clinic where you would like to be seen. We recommend that you arrive at least 15 minutes before your appointment to complete any required paperwork. If you are unable to make it to your scheduled appointment, please call to reschedule or cancel. If you are more than 15 minutes late for your appointment, you will be asked to reschedule your appointment or wait for the next available provider.

Emergency walk-ins may be triaged ahead of scheduled patients, based on urgency; however, there are no guarantees of availability without an appointment.

REGISTRATION

We ask that you use our current online registration platform to complete medical questionnaires associated with your visit, receive appointment reminders, and access your telehealth visits. At each appointment, you will be asked for your current phone number, mailing address, and insurance information (Veterans, Medicare, Medicaid, Denali Kid Care, and private insurance). This information is important to communicate with you and to ensure proper coverage for your care is obtained.

ALTERNATE HEALTH COVERAGE

We encourage all beneficiaries to apply for alternate resources such as Medicare, Medicaid, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Denali KidCare, or private insurance. These are important for costs that can be associated with your care that are not covered by IHS.

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC) offers a Tribally-Sponsored Health Insurance Program for private insurance. To speak with an ANTHC Health Benefits Specialist, please email hbs@anthc.org or call 907-729-5696. If you have other health insurance, please provide a copy of your health coverage when visiting NTCCC.

It is important that you understand that IHS is not an insurance plan, nor is NTC.

PURCHASED REFERRED CARE

ANMC Purchased Referred Care (PRC) offers limited benefits to eligible Alaska Native and American Indian beneficiaries to help with emergency medical care while traveling outside of Alaska. Patients who meet ANMC's eligibility criteria and residency requirements qualify for this benefit. To meet residency requirements, the Alaska Native and American Indian patients must be Alaska residents for 180 days prior to the date of service and have the intent to remain in Alaska indefinitely. Children of an eligible Alaska Native and American Indian people, including non-Alaska Native and American Indian foster children, adopted children, and stepchildren (until age 19), and non-Alaska Native and American Indian

women pregnant with an eligible Alaska Native and American Indian's child are also eligible.

Coverage for those traveling outside of Alaska is limited to emergency medical care. It is the responsibility of the patient to notify ANMC PRC within 72 hours of treatment.

For questions regarding ANMC PRC's Traveler program or to provide your 72-hour notice, call the office at (907) 729-2470 or toll-free at 1-800-478-1636 or visit www.anmc.org/prc

MEDICAL CARE

Medical Care is delivered by physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, and medical assistants. We provide a wide range of services to meet the needs of our community, though not all services are available at every clinic site. Our services are available to all Alaska Native and American Indian people as well as the general public.

NTCCC provides primary care services at all three locations, including wellness exams and management of chronic medical problems. Telemedicine and in-person services are available.

Services available at all clinics include:

- Sick and non-emergency urgent care visits
- Treatment for minor wounds and injuries
- Wellness exams including well child checks, pap smears, and Medicare wellness exams
- Medication for addiction treatment, as well as counseling and case management to maintain recovery
- Management of medical conditions such as diabetes, COPD, high blood pressure, depression, etc.
- Immunizations for adults and children (we recommend calling ahead to ensure what you need is available for our Anchor Point and Homer clinics)
- Consultations for birth control and pregnancy testing
- In-house testing for urine infections, pregnancy, HIV and Hepatitis C, cholesterol and diabetes, COVID-19, and influenza
- Gender affirming care
- Hepatitis C treatment and treatment for other STIs

- Office procedures like stitches, freezing warts, toenail care, skin biopsies, and removal of cysts
- Employment, school, and CDL physicals

REFERRALS

DIAGNOSTIC TESTING

Urgent diagnostic labs and ultrasounds may be referred to South Peninsula Hospital (SPH) or Central Peninsula Hospital (CPH), otherwise all diagnostic referrals (colonoscopy, MRI, CT scans, and mammograms) will be made to ANMC.

Prenatal Care

NTC provides pregnancy testing and some prenatal care. Pregnant IHS patients are referred to ANMC; however, if a patient prefers to deliver locally, they will be referred to the contracted obstetrician-gynecologist (OB-GYN) in Soldotna. This excludes Homer patients. The patient is responsible for applying for Denali Kid Care and, if denied, submitting a copy of the denial letter to NTC before the referral is made.

Dental Coverage

NTC will cover dental lab costs (root canals, dentures, partials, and crowns) associated with work completed at ANMC, SCF, or NTC's contracted local dentist. These costs will be limited to no more than \$1,500 per year per eligible IHS beneficiary.

The following requirements must be met for NTC to pay for dental care:

- Must apply for and/or use alternate resources (Medicare, Medicaid, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Denali KidCare, or private insurance).
- Must be an eligible IHS beneficiary, non-IHS spouses are excluded.
- Must be an active clinic user within the last year and have lived in the Ninilchik Tribal service area (excluding Homer) for at least one year.
- Must be preapproved prior to any work being completed.

Optometry

All IHS beneficiaries can receive optometry care at the Dena'ina Wellness Center, Southcentral Foundation Optometry, or at our clinic when an optometrist visits annually.

CPAP

NTC will cover \$600 towards the cost of a CPAP machine for beneficiaries who are current, active clinic users, and must have prior approval by the Tribal Health Director.

Hearing Aids

NTC will cover up to \$2,500 towards the cost of hearing aids for beneficiaries who are current, active clinic users, and must have prior approval by the Tribal Health Director.

EMERGENCY ROOM POLICY

NTC does not have Purchased Referred Care (formerly Contract Health), but we have set aside a small amount of money for emergency services for living within Tribal boundaries, excluding Homer.

An emergency is one that requires immediate treatment by a physician. Medical conditions in which a delay in care would be hazardous to life or would result in serious complications are also considered emergencies.

The following requirements must be met for NTC to pay for emergency care:

- Must apply for and/or use alternate resources (Medicare, Medicaid, U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Denali KidCare, or private insurance).
- Must be a true emergency. For example: chest pain, acute respiratory distress, severe abdominal pain, loss of consciousness, stroke symptoms, severe wound, hemorrhage, sudden onset of weakness, numbness, severe injuries, and the like.
- Must be an eligible IHS beneficiary; non-IHS spouses are excluded.
- Must be an active NTCCC user within the last year and have lived in the Ninilchik Tribal service area (excluding Homer) for at least one year.
- During clinic hours, you must be seen at NTCCC first then be referred to the ER by a provider. We recommend being seen earlier in the day if possible.
- Must notify NTC within 72 hours of occurrence.

The following conditions do not warrant a trip to the Emergency Room:

- Recurrent migraine headaches
- Earaches
- Sore throat
- Toothache
- Flu or cold symptoms
- Alcohol/drug intoxication related
- Pain medication

Due to the limited funding, NTC providers will carefully determine eligibility and may or may not cover emergency care. Coverage will be based on the above criteria and after careful examination of emergency room medical records. There is a cap of \$3,000 per year per eligible IHS beneficiary. This includes \$1,100 towards an ambulance ride.

ROAD TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Patient Road Travel Reimbursement is for patients referred to ANMC and/or SCF Primary Care Clinics for medical and/or dental services not available locally through IHS. Patient must be an active clinic user within the past 6 months (does not include lab draws or blood pressure checks; must have been seen by a medical provider) and have lived in the Niniilchik Tribal Boundaries for at least one year. Patients may choose to purchase an airline ticket instead of driving to Anchorage; however, reimbursement will remain at the designated Road Travel Reimbursement flat rate or the current government mileage rate. NTCCC will provide one road travel reimbursement per week. Road Travel Reimbursement will not be paid for separate road trips within the same week, or for individual appointments where the patient remains in Anchorage for multiple visits.

Due to limited funding, NTCCC providers will carefully determine eligibility and may or may not authorize road travel reimbursement. Coverage will be determined on a case-by-case basis, based on the above criteria, and after careful examination of a patient's Road Travel Reimbursement request.

WELLNESS AND OUTREACH SERVICES

Alaska Native and American Indian patients and clients have access to all our provided services. We offer medical care, behavioral health, addiction medicine, pharmacy support, youth services, and elder services at any of the three locations. You can use the health club facility in Ninilchik as well. These services are free to Tribal Members, however, there may be additional costs for supplemental or complementary interests, like limited personal training, massage therapy, special medications (when generic medications are accessible), etc.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Alaska Native and American Indian patients/clients have **prioritized** access to NTC Behavioral Health (NTCBH) services.

NTCCC is integrated with the NTCBH program. NTCBH's integrated care incorporates substance use screening, medical screening, system level change, and use of best practice strategies as they best suit the needs for services by the patient. This means that NTCBH providers may work directly with primary care providers (PCP) as well as the Medication for Addiction Treatment (MAT) team. NTCBH uses a model that is a comprehensive integrated system of care with special attention to continuity.

HIGH RISK AND CRISIS CLIENTS

Individuals in crisis will be seen by a clinician or referred to a clinician in the community immediately.

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please call NTCBH at 907-567-3370 or 907-567-3970 during regular business hours. NTCBH does NOT offer crisis services after hours.

If you need crisis services after hours, please call one of the following phone numbers:

- 911 for immediate emergency services (24/7)
- 988 for Mental Health emergencies (24/7)
- 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (24/7)
- 1-877-266-4357 (HELP) Alaska's Careline (24/7)

- 1-907-235-8101 The Center Mental Health Emergency Line, Homer AK (24/7)
- 1-907-235-0386 South Peninsula Hospital, Homer AK
- 1-907-714-4404 Central Peninsula Hospital, Soldotna AK
- Poison Control 1-800-222-1222

The NTC staff member will make every attempt to keep an individual in crisis at the medical or Behavioral Health clinic until adequate referrals and services may be arranged but will not hold the client against their will. The State Troopers will be notified immediately for all callers or clients reporting homicidal ideation. They will also be contacted in any case requiring immediate transportation to a different location.

ELDER'S PROGRAM

The NTC Elders Outreach Program provides services to Enrolled Alaska Native/American Indian Tribal Elders 55 and older living within Ninilchik Tribal Boundaries or in neighboring Cook Inlet areas.

The Elders Outreach Program serves lunch at noon at the Subsistence Building every Monday, including most NTC holidays for Enrolled Tribal Elders. Meals can be delivered to homebound Elders who cannot make it to the luncheon.

We provide home visits for Enrolled Tribal Elders to assess home health, home safety, prevent isolation, and assess whether Elders can live independently. We also provide Elders with transportation to appointments, as well as assistance with grocery shopping and picking up medications. We require at least 24 hours advance notice for this service.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLUB

The Ninilchik Health & Wellness Club is our full-service gym that's free for IHS Beneficiaries and NTC Tribal Members and open to the public. Located behind Three Bears in Ninilchik, we offer a cardio and weight room with commercial-grade exercise equipment and a large multipurpose studio for yoga and fitness classes.

Tammy Z. is a certified personal trainer, who offers 30- and 60-minute personal training sessions. Periodically, Tammy Z.

also leads classes for people of all fitness levels and abilities. IHS beneficiaries and NTC Tribal Members may book two personal training sessions per week at no cost. Call 907-252-5115 to book a session or consultation.

We also offer a tanning bed and a full-spectrum infrared sauna. These services are available for a fee.

Revolution Sport & Spine Therapy has three offices located inside our facility offering physical and occupational therapy. Visit revolutionak.com or call 907-420-0836 for information.

If you have any questions regarding our health club facility, please call 907-567-3455 or visit www.ninilchikhealthclub.com.

NTCCC CAMPUS POLICIES

Prescription Drugs

All legally prescribed medications taken by the patient must be disclosed to the clinician to determine if the substance(s) interferes with treatment or if the client could be considered impaired or under the influence while using the prescribed medication. The clinician has the right to request that the session be postponed, and the client return when the effects of the medications are not a distraction.

Tobacco

All NTC buildings are smoke-free, and smoking is not permitted inside the buildings. “No Smoking” signs are clearly posted at each facility. Tobacco products must be used outside in designated areas only.

Illegal/Illicit Drugs and Weapons

Illegal substances, illicit drugs, and weapons are prohibited at NTCCC. No client shall be under the influence of illicit or illegal substances while on any NTC property.

Any illegal substances or weapons discovered at NTCCC and any individual who is found to be in possession of illegal substances will be reported to the Alaska State Troopers.

Illicit drugs include prescription drugs, marijuana (in any form), heroin, pills, methamphetamine, cocaine, hallucinogens, and any other drug or substance used to alter the mind or body. It

also includes paraphernalia such as needles, pipes, etc. used for introducing substances into your body.

Any person discovered to be carrying a firearm or other weapon on their person will be asked to leave the building and informed of our weapons policy. Only law enforcement officers in the performance of their duties are permitted to possess or carry firearms or weapons.

Weapons include guns, knives, box cutters, brass knuckles, picks, explosive devices, pepper spray, mace, etc.

Animals

Animals are not allowed in NTCCC buildings. The exception is an approved working service animal that has been trained to perform certain tasks that assist a physically disabled person and does NOT include emotional support animals. Our Behavioral Health staff are trained to provide emotional support during your appointments if needed.

TERMINATION OF SERVICES

NTCCC seeks to provide quality health services consistent with community standards and to utilize its limited resources wisely to enhance its mission. Patients may be discharged from the practice immediately if they are deemed to be abusive or threatening to the staff. Patients who are perceived to be difficult, with respect to recurrent hostile behavior, inappropriate use of NTCCC services, excessive non-compliance, inappropriate use of controlled substances, or other patterns of behavior that represent excessive lack of respect or responsibility on the part of the patient, may be referred to the Tribal Health Director for review and discharge.

THANK YOU

NTCCC has a history of over 30 years of dedication to helping people with their medical needs. Today we continue to provide medical services, promote health and safety, and give reassurance to our patients.

NTCCC continues to evolve as it meets the increased demands of providing medical services under federal regulations, changes in the IHS system, and changes in requirements for services through ANMC and SCF Primary Care Clinics.

Please know our goal to you remains the same. We aim to improve our quality of services, to operate in an efficient, professional manner, and to retain the Ninilchik heritage of helping one another.

We are not a finished product and we will continue to change to meet the needs of the people and satisfy the requirements placed upon us.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding NTCCC, please call the Tribal Health Director, Janet Mullen, at 907-567-3370 x3125.



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