

# NSHC New Hospital Planning Infusing Village Culture into Design

## Healthcare Serving the Entire Bering Strait Region

The design for a replacement hospital facility in Nome that will serve the needs of the entire Bering Strait region depends on accurately understanding and incorporating the unique challenges facing healthcare service delivery for village residents traveling to Nome for care. The majority of the residents in the region will begin their healthcare encounter at one of the 15 village clinics staffed locally by community health aides who are directed by clinicians from Nome.

### Medically Directed Travel

For primary care that is not available in the villages, patients are medically directed to travel by small aircraft over hundreds of miles of uninhabited land to Nome; leaving home, family, friends, and work for what is often an indeterminate length of time to receive services that are routinely available locally for the rest of the Nation. For these patients, every healthcare encounter introduces a level of stress and disruption that is unparalleled for encounters in urban areas.

### Design Influence

To ensure that the design team develops an understanding of the logistical and emotional challenges of village, family, and home separation with an appropriate cultural background, key design members will travel to each of the enhanced service village clinics in the region. In each of the villages the team will meet with the local health aides, IRA and community leadership, elder council, and schools to gain input and understanding and to provide information about the project.

- Discuss healthcare and service delivery challenges.
- Uncover community barriers to effective healthcare.
- Meet with Individual Elders in their homes to listen.
- Present a project overview to the schoolchildren.
- Host a question and answer presentation with the Elder Council.
- Community potlatch.
- Attend other evening community events.
- Overnight in selected villages.

## Village Travel for the Design Team

Travel schedules for the design team will be developed to maximize the opportunity to hear a broad representation of voices from throughout the region and participate in scheduled community activities. Each of the trips will host representation from surrounding villages.

Village Travel for the design team is scheduled during the two week block beginning April 18, 2005.

<i>Shishmaref</i>	<i>Elim</i>
Little Diomedede	White Mountain
Wales	Golovin
<i>Brevig Mission</i>	<i>Unalakleet</i>
Teller	Koyuk
<i>Gambell</i>	Shaktoolik
<i>Savoonga</i>	Saint Michael
	Stebbins

Planning these trips to maximize the impact of the limited time that the design team has available to focus on identifying and understanding village needs for the new hospital design is essential. In advance of this intensive travel, substantial logistical coordination, working with each village, will be needed to identify resources and assist with community planning.

### Reaching out within each community

- Identify critical resources within each community.
- In partnership with the local school implement an essay assignment or competition "*What the New Hospital means to Me, My Family, My Village*" – sponsored by NSHC through the project office.
- Promote a drawing/painting/art project with the local school sharing a vision of healthcare and the new hospital – sponsored by NSHC through the project office.
- Identify Elders that will share their thoughts on healthcare.

### Design Impact

This effort will aide in designing spaces that lessen the trauma and stress of receiving healthcare services for village residents who are traveling to Nome for care in a culturally appropriate and respectful manner. The design team will incorporate into the new hospital campus effective building approach, layout, circulation, and way finding in the organization and use, of the clinical, public, and gathering spaces influenced by the information gathered.