

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING

Deadline is noon Monday • (907) 443-5235 • Fax (907)443-5112 • e-mail ads@nomenugget.com

Employment

Real Estate

Seeking Qualified Applicants



NORTON SOUND HEALTH CORPORATION

In Nome:

Accounting: Accountant I/II/III \$36.65 + DOE; Accounts Payable Technician I/II/III \$27.41 + DOE
Acute Care: Acute Care Technician \$34.25 + DOE
Audiology: Administrative Specialist I/II/III \$26.41 + DOE
Behavioral Health: Administrative Assistant & Relief \$25 + DOE; Administrative Specialist I/II \$26.41 + DOE; Clinical Associate \$27.41 + DOE; Recovery Coach \$27.41 + DOE
Dental: Dental Hygienist \$41.90 + DOE
Electronic Health Records: EHR Support Specialist \$34.25 + DOE; Population Health CMA \$34.25 + DOE
Emergency Department: Emergency Department Technician \$34.25 + DOE
Environmental Services: Environmental Service Worker I & Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Laundry Worker \$25.00 + DOE
In-Home Support Program: Care Coordinator \$34.25 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant I \$25.00 + DOE; IHSP Referral Coordinator \$30.02 + DOE
Laboratory: Medical Laboratory Technician \$41.90 + DOE; Laboratory Driver \$27.41 + DOE; Point of Care Testing Assistant \$30.02 + DOE
Materials Management: Patient Driver & Relief \$30.02 + DOE; Material Support Technician \$26.41 + DOE; Mail Clerk \$25.00 + DOE
Nutrition Services: Food Service Worker I/II/III Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Cook I \$30.02 + DOE; Inventory Technician \$30.02 + DOE
Patient Financial Services: Health Information Technician \$26.41 + DOE; Patient Account Representative \$30.02 + DOE; Patient Benefits Specialist \$30.02 + DOE; Switchboard Operator \$34.25 + DOE
Patient Hostel: Patient Hostel Attendant & Relief \$25.00 + DOE
Plant Operations: Maintenance Technician I/II/III \$31.73 + DOE; Grounds Maintenance \$25.00 + DOE; Fleet Maintenance Engineer \$36.65 + DOE
Quality Improvement: Administrative Specialist II \$27.41 + DOE
Quyanna Care: Certified Nursing Assistant \$34.25 + DOE
Sanitation: Remote Maintenance Worker I & Relief 36.65 + DOE
Security: Security Officer Trainee Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Security Officer Supervisor \$34.25 + DOE
Village Health Services (Nome based): Clinic Travel Specialist Supervisor \$41.90 + DOE
WIC: WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Relief \$20.00; Health Educator I \$26.41 + DOE

In Our Village Communities:

Brevig Mission: Personal Care Attendant Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE
Diomed: Environmental Services Worker & Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Maintenance Worker \$31.73 + DOE
Elim: Direct Care Attendant Relief \$25.00 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE
Gambell: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist \$26.41 + DOE
Golovin: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE
Koyuk: Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE
St Michael: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Maintenance Worker \$31.73 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE
Savoonga: Dental Assistant Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE
Shaktoolik: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41
Shishmaref: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE
Stebbins: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Environmental Services Worker Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant \$25.00 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Maintenance Worker \$31.73 + DOE; Village Based Counselor Trainee \$27.41 + DOE
Teller: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist Relief \$26.41
Unalakleet: Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist & Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Assistant Care Coordinator \$34.25 + DOE; Pharmacy Technician \$27.41 + DOE
Wales: Village Based Counselor Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Community Health Aide Trainee \$27.41 + DOE; Clinic Travel Specialist & Relief \$26.41 + DOE; Maintenance Worker \$31.73 + DOE; Personal Care Attendant Relief \$25.00 + DOE

For more information or an up-to-date vacancy list, go to www.NortonSoundHealth.org or contact Human Resources at (907) 443-4573. NSHC is a drug-free workplace and will apply Alaska Native/American Indian preference for hire (under PL 93-638 and Veteran Preferences). NSHC will also initiate a criminal history/background check for all positions.

Welcome Home! We Buy Homes!!
 Nome Sweet Homes 907-443-7368

Income Property!
 Four plex with cash flow
 Vaulted Ceilings, Downtown

Classifieds

WANTED – Mark Knapp at The Cutting Edge in Fairbanks is buying legal ancient walrus ivory, musk ox horn, mammoth ivory and teeth. Very good prices. 907-452-7477.
 Knapp's Cutting Edge 1971 Fox Ave Fairbanks AK 99701. cuttingedge@gci.net

Have something to sell?
Advertise in our Classifieds section

JOB OPENINGS

NMS is seeking to hire for several openings within its Custodial and Maintenance Department at the Nome Public Schools. Each position makes a significant difference and plays a vital role to maintain NPS facilities. Seeking **FT & PT Custodians, a Custodian Services Manager and Maintenance Technician** Positions. Each position requires some knowledge and experience. Come work with us! Apply today by visiting www.careers.nmsusa.com to get started. Have questions? Contact Facility Manager/Jonathan Duarte, at (907) 244-4121.



Trooper Beat

Wales
 Custodial Interference: On November 4, 2023, the Alaska State Troopers were notified that 36-year-old Georgia resident Roman Bey had traveled to Wales with two young juveniles. Bey was allegedly attempting to travel to Russia with the children that he was ordered to return to their lawful guardian by a Georgia court. Community members of Wales temporarily housed and provided food for Bey and his children. Troopers traveled to Wales on November 6, 2023, and transported Bey and the two children back to Nome. Bey was arrested without incident in Nome and remanded to Anvil Mountain Correctional Center on one count of Custodial Interference 1 and violating a protective order.

Legal

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA
SECOND JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT NOME
 In the Matter of the Estate of:
 CASE NO. 2NO-23-00081PR
 Sandra Medearis
 DECEDENT
 DOB: January 8, 1941

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

You are notified that the court appointed as personal representative Kevin Hall of this estate. All persons having claims against the person who died are required to present their claims within four months after the date of the first publication of this notice or the claims will be forever barred.

DATED this 6th day of November, 2023.
 S/Kevin Hall
 Personal Representative of the Estate of Sandra Medearis
 1920 Drake Ave.
 Panama City, Florida 32405
 11.9-16-23.2023

Seawall

Nome Police Department
Weekly press releases
Activities reported between
11/6/2023 – 11/12/2023

During this period there were 254 calls for service received at the Nome Police Communications Center; 40 (16%) of these calls involved alcohol.
 The Nome Volunteer Ambulance Department responded to 8 ambulance calls. The Nome Volunteer Fire Department responded to 1 fire call during this period. NPD responded to 8 calls reporting intoxicated persons needing assistance. Nobody was remanded to AMCC as protective hold; and 1 person remained at the hospital for medical evaluation/treatment.

Arrests
 A total of 4 arrests made with 4 (100%) alcohol related.
Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023
 Charges: Disorderly conduct; two counts Violating Conditions of Release. Name: Tami Horton. Location: Greg Kruschek Ave.
Wednesday, Nov. 8, 2023
 Charge: Warrant. Name: Andrea Irrigoo. Location: Seppala Dr.
Saturday, Nov. 11, 2023
 Charge: Assault in the fourth degree, DV. Name: Kevin Ozenna. Location: E. 5th Ave. Charges: Terroristic threatening in the second degree; Harassment in the second degree. Name: Darin Olanna. Location: E. 5th Ave.

Traffic
 A total of 5 traffic stops were conducted, 1 citation and 4 warnings issued. NPD responded to 1 report of a Motor Vehicle accident during this reporting period.
 Friday, November 10, 2023
 Charge: Speeding. Name: Nathan Adams. Location: Nome-Teller Highway.

Disclaimer: This is a record of activity by the Nome Police Dept. The reports are provided by the Nome Police Department and are not independently verified by The Nome Nugget. The issuance of citations or the act of arrest does not assign guilt to any identified party. Officers refer all cases to the District Attorney.

NSED
Job Opportunities
 Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation offers an attractive compensation and benefits package including competitive pay, 401K retirement program, and comprehensive healthcare options.

Quota Analyst (Anchorage, Nome or Unalakleet):
 The Quota Analyst assists in managing and administering all quota activities and fishery acquisitions/investments (primarily non-regional). This includes, but is not limited to, Community Development Quota (CDQ) and Individual Fishing Quota (IFQ) harvest related negotiations, allocations, monitoring, reporting, and regulations.

Facility & Fleet Manager (Nome or Unalakleet):
 The Facility & Fleet Manager develops and provides oversight of maintenance and repair programs and procedures for NSED-owned facilities and vehicles. The position oversees repair and maintenance personnel.

For an application or a complete job description, visit www.nsedc.com or contact NSED Human Resources via phone: (907) 274-2248 (Anchorage) or 800-650-2248 (toll-free), or via email: hr@nsedc.com.

•Lt. Gov. Nancy Dahlstrom

continued from page 11

ballot in the August primary election. The top four finishers will advance to the general election in November, where a final victor will be chosen

via ranked choice voting. Alaska's statewide U.S. House district is one of just five in the country to have voted for former President Donald Trump in 2020 and a Democrat for House in 2022.

That circumstance has made the district a top priority for national Republicans, and the National Republican Congressional Committee has already begun running ads against Peltola.

Neither the NRCC or the Alaska Republican Party have named a preferred Republican candidate.

This story is printed with permission and was first published at www.alaskabeacon.com on November 14, 2023.

Court

Week ending 11/10/23 Civil

Discover Bank v. Dolly Miller; Debt Collection
Estate of Florence Kuzuguk v. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation; Wrongful Death
Leona R. Goodhope v. Alfred R. Kaakona; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Gideon Okpowruk v. Wilfred Olanna, Jr.; Stalking: Short-Term
Gideon Okpowruk v. Wilfred Olanna, Jr.; Stalking: Short-Term
Jane Doe v. Bering Straits Native Corporation; Other Tort
Bank of America v. Luke Phillip Topkok; Debt Collection
Holly Nayokpuk v. Patrick Iyatunguk; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Natalie Olanna v. Christopher Olanna; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Colleen Spears v. Bryan Daniel Spears; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Bessie Milligrock-Ozenna v. Dick Kugzruk; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Jane Doe v. Bering Straits Native Corporation; Other Contract
Barbara Pete v. Jen Winkelman; Other Superior Court Complaint
Darrell Takak v. State of Alaska; Post-Conviction Relief (after felony or misdemeanor conviction and sentencing in superior court)
Denise Anderson, and William Martin, Jr. v. Mikel Henry, and Any and All Other Occupants; Eviction - District Court (may include rent and damages)
Raichel Sahlin v. Jessica Russell; Sexual Assault: Short-Term
Steven W. Longley v. Natasha N. Gamache; Unmarried Parents do NOT Agree (or are unsure) on Parenting Plan
Anderson and Sons LLC v. Deanna Ready Fischer, Lisa Clem, Jeff Bagley, Lela F. Johnson, Lynn Johnson, Paul Warren Johnson, Debby Ann Rader, Philip Arthur Johnson, and Steve Johnson; Quiet Title (establish ownership)
Gina Larsen v. Courtney L. Tucker; Stalking: Short-Term
George Leland Jackson, Jr. v. Lucinda May Ivanoff; Unmarried Parents do NOT Agree (or are unsure) on Parenting Plan

Christopher Olanna v. Renee J. Ellanna; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Not Published v. Renee J. Ellanna; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Not Published v. Renee J. Ellanna; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Fallon Johnson v. Clyde Pullock; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Lillian Olanna v. Melanie Wasky; Stalking: Short-Term
John William Aluska v. State of Alaska; Post-Conviction Relief (after felony or misdemeanor conviction and sentencing in superior court)
Gwen Mueller v. Arnold Mueller; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
Melissa K. Ford v. June Etukeok, John McCarthy, Stella Moore, The Cooperative Small Boat Fishermens Assoc of AK, Their Heirs, Successors and Assigns, and All Persons Unknown Claiming a Right Title or Inte; Quiet Title (establish ownership)
MK Property, LLC v. Beatrice Lee Zarccone, Samuel Kakik, Their Heirs, Successors and Assigns, All Persons Unknown Claiming a Right Title or Inte; Quiet Title (establish ownership)
Erica Mae Outwater v. Andrew Jordan Koweluk; Domestic Violence: Short-Term
This is a record of court filing activity. The civil filings of protective order petitions do not reflect that the court issued an order or made a judgment.

Small Claims

Credit Union 1 v. Chantal K.D. Mikla-hook-Noongwook; Small Claim more than \$2,500
Credit Union 1 v. Eric T. Iyapana; Small Claim \$2,500 or less
Credit Union 1 v. Renita L. Toolie; Small Claim more than \$2,500

Criminal

State of Alaska v. Jared A. Topkok (9/9/99); Order to Probation on Suspended Entry of Judgment; CTN 001: Harassment 2; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; Pay Suspended Jail Surcharge; Suspended Entry of Judgment and Notice of Hearing; Probation 12 months (judgment dated 11/2/23); Hearing:

11/4/24 at 2:30 p.m.; If court finds before the hearing date the defendant successfully complied with probation conditions checked below, the court may cancel the hearing and dismiss the case; Obey all state, federal, and local laws and ordinances; Do not consume or possess alcohol; Do not enter a place where alcohol is the primary item for sale: no bars or liquor stores; Do not have any alcohol at his residence; Must submit to a portable breath test when requested by law enforcement upon probable cause of a probation violation; Obtain Behavioral Health Assessment within 3 months and follow all treatment recommendations; Perform 25 hours of community work service (CWS) and file proof of completion with the court by 11/4/24.

State of Alaska v. John J. Topkok (11/18/65); Assault 4-Cause Fear of Injury; DV; Date of Violation: 7/31/22; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; 60 days, 60 days suspended; Obtain Behavioral Health Assessment and follow all recommended treatment; Pay Suspended Jail Surcharge; Probation until 11/2/24; Comply with all direct court order listed above by the deadlines stated; Obey all state, federal, and local laws and ordinances; Do not consume or possess alcohol; Do not enter a place where alcohol is the primary item for sale; Subject to warrantless arrest upon probable cause of a probation violation.

State of Alaska v. Arther Kobuk (5/28/97); Judgment and Order of Commitment/Probation; CTN 001: Assault 2 - Injury w/Weapon, Intent; Class: B Felony; Counsel, Moshe C. Zorea and DA present on sentencing date; 7 years, 3 years suspended; Unsuspended 4 years shall be served immediately; Unsuspended term of incarceration: 4 years; Credited for time already served in this case; Surcharges due; Submit DNA; 5 years probation date (judgment date: 11/8/23); Proposed General and Special Conditions of Probation, set; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated.

State of Alaska v. Ethan Kulowiya (9/11/96); CTN 001: Import Alcohol-Dry Area - Small Amt; Class: A Misdemeanor; Date of Violation: 4/27/21; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; 60 days, 40 days suspended; Unsuspended 20 days shall be served by 12/31/23; 11/30/23; \$3,000 fine, \$0 suspended; Unsuspended \$3,000 shall be paid no later than 11/7/26; Surcharges due; Probation until 11/7/26; Comply with all direct court orders listed above by the deadlines stated; Obey all state, federal, and local laws and ordinances; Person and baggage are subject to warrantless search at any airport en route to local option community upon probable cause; Do not consume or buy alcohol; Any driver's license or state ID is subject to cancellation under cited Alaska Statutes; Any new license or state ID must list the AS alcohol buying re-

striction until the restriction expires.

State of Alaska v. Aloysius Muktoyuk (5/19/71); CTN 001: Assault 3 - Commit Assault 4, 2+ Convictions; DV; Class: C Felony; Date of Violation: 4/20/23; Guilty and convicted of Assault 4 - Injury; Class: Misdemeanor A; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; 180 days, 150 days suspended; Unsuspended 30 days shall be served immediately with credit for time served; No contact, effective immediately, and until unconditional discharge, defendant will have no direct or indirect contact with J.A. without consent; Defendant ordered to participate in and comply with the following treatment program: Obtain a Behavioral Health assessment and follow all recommended treatment; Complete an anger management class; Surcharges due; Probation until 11/9/25; Comply with all direct court orders listed above by the deadlines stated; Obey all state, federal, and local laws and ordinances.

State of Alaska v. Jackilyne Mokiyuk (7/13/98); 2NO-23-169CR CTN 001: Reckless Endangerment; DV; Date of Violation: 4/20/23; Any appearance or performance bond in this case is exonerated; 90 days, 90 days suspended; Surcharge due; Probation until 11/9/24; Comply with felony probation conditions set in 2NO-21-382CR.

NOTICE OF RUNOFF ELECTION

2023 Regional Educational Attendance Areas (REAA)

Friday, November 24, 2023

REAA #2 Bering Strait School District, Seat F

Absentee voting official located at:

REAA 02, Unalakleet City Office
Monday – Friday, Nov 9 – Nov 22, Nov 24
8:00a.m. – 12:00p.m., 1:00p.m. – 4:00p.m.

This is a by-mail election. No polling places will be open on Election Day. The Division of Elections mailed ballots to registered voters in Koyuk, Shaktoolik and Unalakleet no later than Thursday, November 2, 2023. If you are not at your current mailing address or if you did not get a ballot in the mail, please contact the Region IV Elections Office.

Ballots must be voted, signed, witnessed, and postmarked by Friday, November 24, 2023.

Absentee Voting – November 9 – November 24

Absentee voting will be available in the Juneau, Anchorage, Wasilla, Fairbanks and Nome Elections Offices, Monday through Friday, 8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Offices will be closed on November 23. For more information on absentee voting procedures and polling place locations, please call your Regional Election Office or visit our website at: www.elections.alaska.gov.

Assistance

If you need assistance while voting, you may ask an election board member or bring a person of your choice to assist you, as long as that person is not a candidate, your employer, agent of your employer, or an agent of a union you belong to.

For more information, contact the Region IV Election Office in Nome at 907-443-5285 or toll-free at 1-866-953-8683

For Alaska Native language assistance, call 1-866-954-8683

The State of Alaska, Division of Elections, complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. If you are a person with a disability who may need special assistance and/or accommodations to vote, please contact your local Division of Elections office to make necessary arrangements. STATEWIDE TDD 1-888-622-3020



AVEC Board Nominations are Open

Alaska Village Electric Cooperative is accepting nominations to fill three seats on its seven-member board of directors. The terms of directors, Phyllis Clough, of Old Harbor, Helena Jones of Ambler, and Peter Demoski of Nulato, end in April 2024. They are eligible for re-election. Nominees for the board of directors must be members of AVEC and have no past due accounts. All Board seats are at-large, representing the entire membership. Board members are elected by a vote of the entire membership and serve a three-year term.

AVEC members who are interested in serving on the AVEC board of directors are encouraged to send a completed nomination form to the nominating committee. The nominating committee, composed of six community delegates, will review eligibility requirements, and select members to be included on the ballot. As an alternative to selection by the nominating committee, members in good standing can also be nominated by ten or more other members.

Forms and instructions can be found on the AVEC website, <https://avec.org/about/board-of-directors/> or by contacting Lisa Scheerer at AVEC, 1-907-565-5343.

The nomination forms must be received by 5:00 p.m., Friday, December 29, 2023. Nomination forms and letters of interest can be submitted by sending one of the following ways:

Mail to: 4831 Eagle Street, Attn: Lisa Scheerer, Anchorage, AK 99503
Email: Lisa Scheerer at lscheerer@avec.org OR Fax: 1-866-561-2388

• Auditor

continued from page 11

money the Department of Law could spend on outside contracts related to lawsuits associated with the governor's union dues plan.

Legislative attorneys said that approach would allow the department to use in-house attorneys, but not hire outside counsel.

In January 2020, months before the legislative action, the Department of Law had signed a \$600,000 contract with Consvooy McCarthy PLLC, for legal representation on the issue.

Some lawmakers objected to the cost of the contract, which included

hourly rates of up to \$600 per hour.

At the time, the Department of Law said the Legislature's attempt to block its spending violated the confinement clause of the Alaska Constitution, and the Dunleavy administration ignored the attempt to limit its spending.

No resolution yet

The Department of Law, responding in October to a preliminary version of the auditor's report, reiterated its belief that the Legislature's action was unconstitutional, and that the agency acted appropriately when it ignored legislative instructions.

In a letter to legislative auditor Kris Curtis, Attorney General Treg

Taylor also criticized the legislative audit process itself, writing, "The Department of Law acted in conformity with the reasonable legal advice of its attorneys, which is the normal and prudent practice when navigating a question of unsettled law. The Department is not bound by the legal opinions of Legislative Legal, and certainly not by those of the Division of Legislative Audit."

The agency did not have additional comment when contacted Monday.

Curtis said she stands by her conclusions.

"Now, could the courts decide in favor of the attorney general? Absolutely. But it is my opinion that

Legislative Legal had a stronger argument, and my hired attorney agreed," she said on Monday.

Josephson said the Legislature could sue over the issue, seeking to obtain a final determination. But that wouldn't affect what's already happened; it would merely change the way future legislators and governors approach a similar situation.

A third party could also sue, Josephson said. The Legislature could also take the reverse action, retroactively authorizing the spending by the Department of Law.

Taylor, in his letter, said his department "does not believe that ratification is necessary."

There's also a fourth option:

Doing nothing. If no further action is taken, the issue will remain unresolved.

Josephson said he intends to present the issue to the Legislative Council, a joint House-Senate body able to take actions — including the filing of lawsuits — on behalf of the Legislature. Its next meeting is Friday.

This story is printed with permission and was first published at www.alaskabeacon.com on November 14, 2023.

Advocates link Alaska's high rate of traumatic brain injury with domestic violence

By Claire Stremple,
Alaska Beacon

S. can't remember how many times she has been hit in the head, but she remembers vividly the time she was choked. Those are two categories of injury she has survived over the course of her abusive marriages, and they are distinct because they can cause or contribute to traumatic brain injury.

"I attract sociopaths, not abusers," she said from her art-filled room in permanent supportive housing in Interior Alaska. "Sociopaths."

One of her husbands threw her down a flight of stairs. Her last boyfriend tried to strangle her. The Alaska Beacon is not naming her for safety reasons — one of her abusers has tracked her to her new home before. S. speaks quickly but pauses frequently and often cannot remember where she left off. "Brain stop," she said at one point, or, another time, "I apologize, my brain is like—" and then muddled her fingers together in a jumbled gesture.

S.'s body is a map of scars from abuse that spans from childhood until she made it to shelter just under a decade ago. She is visibly wracked with pain, and said she rarely sleeps.

"I'm brain damaged from abuse. I don't claim the brain damage, though," she said. "It's not on my medical record. I don't want another disability. I've got too many going on."

Alaska has the highest rate of deaths from traumatic brain injury in the nation and among the highest rates of domestic violence, but it is only recently that advocates and caregivers began to link the two. And as S.'s story bears out, as high as the Alaska rates are for both traumatic brain injury and domestic violence, experts have said they are undercounted.

'They're not going crazy. This is a real medical diagnosis'

Few people who provide services understand the link between traumatic brain injury and domestic violence better than Kimberly Sumner, who manages the state's Traumatic and Acquired Brain Injury grant program in Juneau. She identifies as a survivor of both TBI and of domestic violence. Now she helps other people who have sustained trauma.

"I knew that the lack of services in the community for people with

traumatic brain injuries was huge, but I didn't know how huge it was. And I also saw a great need for it," she said.

Sumner worked in victim's services with Juneau's domestic violence shelter for more than a dozen years. She said she saw evidence of brain injury among many of the people she helped, but there wasn't a specific screening that might help them get a diagnosis. Now, she works with Southeast Alaska Independent Living and can connect clients to resources, like the state grant she manages and a number of support groups she runs.

Since 2003, the state has managed a program that awards grants to support people who have sustained traumatic brain injuries. One-year grants can be up to \$2,500 or awardees can receive up to \$5,000 over five years.

The grant program is not new, but Sumner's approach is, said her supervisor, Bridget Thompson.

"What the other agencies don't do as much as we do here — and it's because of Kim's background — is that awareness around domestic violence," she said. "Everything that Kim brought to the traumatic and acquired brain injury program is from her lived experience."

Thompson said when people think of traumatic and acquired brain injuries, they consider causes like car accidents, strokes and concussions, "but very rarely are people thinking of domestic violence or any sort of emotional abuse. And that's something that's totally different than the other programs throughout the state."

Another thing that Sumner does for clients sounds simple: She listens. But she listens without judgment, she said, because she has experienced trauma, and understands how devastating it can be.

Sumner also uses art as therapy. One afternoon, after hosting a small group at a support meeting, she sat among the leftover snacks, colored pencils and painting supplies.

"I think it just takes one voice at a time to get the word out there," she said. "I want to be there for the survivors. I want them to know: They're not alone. And they're not going crazy. This is a real medical diagnosis. And they have lots of support out there."

Invisible wound

Patty Raymond Turner, a traumatic brain injury expert with the University of Alaska's Center for Human Development, has devoted her career to raising awareness about TBI.

As part of a statewide campaign, she compiled the numerous symptoms of TBI in a brochure. It reads like a list of common complaints from women who have experienced domestic violence or trauma, and there is overlap with the symptoms of post-traumatic stress syndrome: trouble sleeping and concentrating, mood changes, memory issues.

There is data to track traumatic brain injury and data to track domestic violence, but not much that tracks the overlap, she said.

"It tends to be kept hidden, especially in Alaska," she said of domestic violence.

Research in this area is scarce, but an Ohio study showed that among victims of domestic violence, 85 percent experienced blows to the head — of those, it happened to half of them more times than they could count. Further, 83 percent experienced strangulation, which can also cause traumatic brain injury. A national study found that 80 percent of domestic violence victims have sustained multiple traumatic brain injuries, but only about 20 percent sought medical attention at the time of an injury.

Raymond Turner's mission is to make sure people with brain injuries know they have them and can get help, no matter the cause.

"TBIs, whether they're mild or severe, can seriously disrupt people's lives. And sometimes they don't know what's causing the issues," she said.

"Sometimes people don't know what's causing it and they don't know how to help make it better. And it can impact their personal lives. You know, relationships with their spouse or partner or kids."

Raymond Turner added that not everybody has all the symptoms. Some people only experience one or two of them. She said control by an abuser is one of the main reasons women do not or cannot report their injury, but other reasons include shame, and a lack of awareness about the link between the violence and brain injury symptoms.

"Maybe they're having trouble concentrating, they're having trouble remembering things, they feel

really anxious," she said. "Maybe they're thinking, 'That's just my emotions, because of the quality of my relationship,' and they're not making the connection that it might be because they've been hit in the head over and over again."

She said even though Alaska has very high rates of TBI, she knows it goes largely unreported.

A tool for change

But that may soon change, as awareness grows. Kelley Hartlieb, a project coordinator for the University of Alaska Anchorage's Center for Human Development, is part of the team that is working on the Alaska State Plan for Brain Injury.

"Recognizing that survivors of interpersonal violence are people who experience brain injury at an increased rate, my part in the project is to develop a screening tool," she said.

That facet of the work has taken off in the last two years, she said. The goal is for victim advocates to understand the intersection between domestic or intimate partner violence and brain injuries — and how to better help clients who have them.

The tool is called BASKETS, which is an acronym for the ways people might acquire a TBI or next steps they might take:

Brain bumped, banged, beaten, bruised?

Acquired and injured in other ways?

Strangled, suffocated, stopped breathing?

Knocked out?

Emergency services ever encouraged?

Trouble now?

Support, services, self-advocacy, self-care.

Hartlieb used to work with the Anchorage domestic violence shelter, and she said advocates didn't know to screen people for traumatic brain injury. The tool she's developing will allow them to do that.

Shelters can be noisy, busy, light-filled places, Hartlieb said, which can be a painful environment to navigate for someone with traumatic brain injury, who may be sensitive to all of those factors.

Hartlieb said the state and advocacy groups haven't been tracking traumatic brain injury among people who survive domestic violence, even though blows to the head and strangulation are known to be very common injuries among

that population.

"Usually, it's repeated concussive incidents that people get and that makes it harder and harder for them to recover. It makes them more and more vulnerable and susceptible to continued increasing injury," she said. "Some of the impacts make them even more susceptible to abuse because it can often result in foggy memory or lack of attention span, forgetfulness, tiredness and fatigue and all of these symptoms that then the perpetrator can say, 'You're nuts. You're crazy.'"

Her experience working with survivors taught her that perpetrators can use cognitive difficulties against their victims by telling them that they're stupid, lazy or unfit to care for their children, when in reality the victims are trying to function after brain injury.

"They might think, 'He's right, because I can't keep it together and I'm having trouble,'" Hartlieb explained. "It might be an 'Aha moment' to say, 'You know what? Maybe you've got something that you can get some support around. You're not lazy or stupid. It's the impact, potentially, of something going on in your brain.'"

Hartlieb has shown it to some people in the field, and said they are clamoring for the tool. It isn't in use yet, but the Center for Human Development aims to have it in a pilot program in the Anchorage shelter by the end of the year.

There are supports for people with brain injury in Alaska:

Access Alaska: Anchorage 907-248-4777, Mat-Su 907-357-2599, Fairbanks 907-479-7940

Independent Living Center: PeninsulaILC.org or 907-235-7911

Maniilaq Association: maniilaq.org or 907-442-7887

Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL): info@sailinc.org or 800-478-7245

BrainMattersAK.com

Brain Injury Association of Alaska: biaak.org

This article was produced as a project for the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism's 2023 Domestic Violence Impact Fund. This story is printed with permission and was first published on November 2, 2023 at www.alaskabeacon.com.

Adopt your best friend!

Email pawsofnome@gmail.com to start the application process. Support Animal Rescue & Rehoming - make your donation today!
Make animal control-related reports to Nome Police Dispatch at 443-5262.

