



UPCOMING VTC EVENTS:

Check our website at www.afhcan.org for updated training events being offered over VTC

- "Medical Co-Morbidities in Serious Mental Illness" with Jenny Love, MD, of API on Tuesdays, June 9th and 23rd from 8:30 to 9:30 AM
- Pain Management with Anjana Kundu, MD, of NPCCCTN, June 18th, 11AM to 12 PM

Sign up information is available by contacting Tom Elmore at 729-3910 or telmore@afhcan.org

TELEHEALTH TIDBITS



- **AFHCAN** will be offering training on the AFHCAN cart and software via VTC beginning in July. Please contact your Telehealth Coordinator if you have specific training needs, and visit our website late June for the summer training schedule.
- Before taking ear images with the digital otoscope, remember to focus the otoscope by using the AFHCAN focus tool and pressing the Image Enhancement button on the front of the otoscope box.

AFHCAN
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Anchorage, AK 99508
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AFHCAN Update

JUNE 2009

American Telemedicine Association Executives Visit Alaska

Jon Linkous and Alice Watland, the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer of the American Telemedicine Association (ATA), recently visited Alaska to consider Anchorage as the future site for an ATA mid-year conference. During their visit, they spent a morning with ANTHC staff discussing the future of telemedicine and the impact that current stimulus funding opportunities are having at the national level.

Mr. Linkous noted that one of the biggest challenges facing telemedicine is linking networks together, but stated

that if the banking industry can do that very thing with ATM machines worldwide, then healthcare networks should be able to make the transition as well. He also discussed the high priority our government has placed on healthcare reform, stating that the combination of stimulus funding and the recent turnover in our national government has spurred change at an unprecedented pace. Mr. Linkous also referenced that ATA is developing guidelines for Telehealth reimbursement to aide healthcare organizations and providers

navigate the payment process. Ms. Watland stated that the telemedicine industry is currently experiencing a lot of movement, and that telemedicine is the only industry so far this year to have an increase in the number of people attending an annual conference (ATA 2008 was held in Las Vegas, NV in late April). She also commended AFHCAN staff for their work and noted AFHCAN as a model that is recognized both nationally and internationally for accomplishments in the field of telemedicine.

AFHCAN Upgrades Last of the Legacy 3.4 Systems

Systems Integration staff have been working feverishly to upgrade the remaining legacy 3.4 software and Version 1 AFHCAN carts to bring them up to the most recent platforms. Senior Telehealth Systems Integration Specialist Todd Russell, recently visited clinics in Tyonek, Kenai, Mentasta, Chistochina, Yakutat, and Seldovia to perform their AFHCAN cart hardware and software upgrades. Meanwhile, Telehealth Systems Integration Manager Deb Walser has been busy upgrading AFHCAN servers to the most recent version of the software, V4.9.

Upgrading the last of these legacy systems means that new software development no longer has to be tested against the legacy 3.4 software, which has been in existence for 9 years. The 3.4 software was developed using cold fusion software development platform. For the past 3 years, AFHCAN has been developing software using the Microsoft .NET platform, but due to the amount of time involved in upgrading all of the Telehealth servers and carts throughout Alaska, the newest software has had to be backwards compatible with the 3.4 software.

The upgrade from legacy 3.4 software also brings much needed enhancements for sites with satellite connectivity. The average time to create a telemedicine case has been dramatically reduced with the new software which also allows for cases to be created when connections are lost. AFHCAN software upgrades are released several times a year; the next release of the software (5.0) is scheduled for release in July and will include EHR patient updates and enhanced support for user created forms.