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State awards domestic violence prevention grants for rural Alaska

Grantees will serve the areas around Bethel, Dillingham, Kodiak and Sitka

ANCHORAGE — The State of Alaska on Friday, Jan. 28, awarded four grants to build violence-free communities in rural areas. Successful applicants proposed new ideas, demonstrated community involvement and set measurable goals to reduce domestic violence and sexual assault in their regions.

A grant of \$372,642 in the first year and up to \$1 million per year over the next three years, depending on future funding appropriations, was awarded to *Safe and Fear-Free Environment* in Dillingham; the grant will also serve Aleknagik.

Three grants of \$200,000 per year for this year and the next three years were awarded each to *Sitkans Against Family Violence*, which serves Sitka, Kake and Angoon; *Association of Village Council Presidents* to serve Bethel and surrounding villages; and *Kodiak Area Native Association* to serve Kodiak, Port Lions, Akhiok, Karluk, Old Harbor, Ouzinkie and Larsen Bay.

The grants will be overseen by the Department of Health & Social Services' Division of Behavioral Health as part of Gov. Sean Parnell's statewide initiative to end Alaska's epidemic of domestic violence and sexual assault within a decade.

Recent research has linked traumatic childhood experiences, including living with domestic violence and sexual assault, to later health issues such as obesity, alcohol addiction, tobacco use and injected drug use.

"We believe the work in these communities will be an important new approach to breaking the cycle of violence, sexual assault and substance abuse — especially the use and abuse of alcohol," Behavioral Health Director Melissa Stone said.

Follow this link for a fact sheet on the grantees:

http://hss.state.ak.us/press/2011/DVPrevGrants_fs_020111.pdf

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