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For More Information Contact:
gcllemmer@urban-research.info

GIS AIDS ALASKA NATIVE HEALTH STUDY

Alaska Tribal Health Consortium uses innovative technology to analyze native health issues across the state.

Anchorage, AK – December 19, 2008 –The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium will publish a study in January 2009 which utilizes Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to analyze incidents of disease and injury across Alaska tribal health regions.

GIS technology allows the Consortium to analyze leading causes of death such as cancer, heart disease and injury in more complex and sophisticated ways. A comparative analysis of health disparities can be conducted, as well as identifying clusters of disease. GIS also provides a mechanism for visually displaying these statistics, which helps communicate the results to the public at large.

GIS is quickly becoming a very useful tool in the health field. In the future, the Consortium's Injury Prevention team would also like to map snow machine and four-wheeler crash data to improve safety throughout Alaska. Kyla Hagan, Injury Prevention Program Manager says, "It would be really great if we could identify areas on local rivers where the ice is thin and has repeatedly cracked causing snow mobiles and other vehicles to sink. We would love to map out thin ice danger zones to prevent further injuries."

To get up to speed on GIS, Hagan took a one-day GIS workshop titled "Mapping Alaska Communities" offered by New Urban Research, Inc. a leader in GIS training. The workshop is being offered in Anchorage January 8th and 9th, 2009. To register visit www.urban-research.info.