

Alaska Journal of Anthropology

A special issue for 2021

“Current Directions in the Anthropology of Health in Alaska”

Call for Papers

Medical anthropology is a growing field within Alaska, as evidenced by the past decade of medical anthropological conference sessions at the Alaska Anthropological Association annual meetings; an increasing number of medical anthropology faculty, students, and course offerings in Alaskan universities; and the different agencies that employ medical anthropologists in Alaska. There are also a number of anthropologists based outside who are contributing to health scholarship in Alaska. Although there are several of us out there, we are spread out across the places where we work and live, different types of employment, and across a wide array of research interests.

Alaska is the only U.S. state located in the Arctic/circumpolar north. It is home to over 200 Indigenous tribes, and made up mostly of diverse rural populations (both on- and off-road; both coastal and inland) tied to just a few urban centers. Anchorage, the largest city, is one of the most ethnically-, economically-, and linguistically-diverse populations in the entire United States. Alaska was colonized relatively later than much of the rest of the United States, and the early establishment of settlements, trade routes, mining, land grabs, missionization, and boarding schools more closely resembles the experiences of our neighboring regions in Canada: northern B.C., The Yukon, and Northwest Territories. The socioeconomic system we have today, characterized by relatively high rates of seasonal-, contract-, and chronic under- and un-employment, was developed rapidly following World War II, and The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) remains the most pivotal agreement ever reached between the U.S. federal government and Alaska Native peoples. Out of this history, our health care delivery system (including the state network of tribal health facilities) was born. Alaska’s health care delivery system, as well as the flow of money, food, supplies, and people, all move (unevenly) through this rural-urban network between cities, hub towns, and smaller villages and hamlets. The health challenges and successes of Alaska are anchored to this unique social and physical geography, and are shaped by this history, while also being tempered by global forces. Anthropologists are particularly suited for investigating and making sense out of the multiple factors and flows shaping human health as it is experienced, embodied, and imbued with different meanings by people in their daily lives.

We invite scholars to submit papers on health anthropology/medical anthropology research conducted in Alaska for a special issue of the *Alaska Journal of Anthropology* presently titled “Current Directions in the Anthropology of Health in Alaska.” We want to call attention to the anthropological health research of today, by generating a holistic and ethnographic context for health and illness, health care beliefs and practices, and health care delivery and policy. Submissions from all anthropological subfields are welcome. The goals of this special issue are to:

1. Provide an overview of current major areas of medical anthropological scholarship in Alaska
2. Communicate anthropological perspectives on health in Alaska – including anthropological perspectives on major health crises, inequities, and successes of Alaska in the early 21st century
3. Reflect on how medical anthropology in Alaska today has developed, where this is possibly headed in the future
4. Use this special issue as a spring board to get different medical anthropologists who work in Alaska introduced to, or more familiarized with, each other’s works

Potential areas of interest include (but are not limited to) papers on:

- Medical anthropological research with and for Alaska Native communities, regions, or Tribal corporations
- Applied/practicing anthropological research and community-based and/or participatory health research in Alaska

- Medical anthropology education in Alaskan universities
- Anthropological research on past health and disease in Alaska
 - Archival, demography, or bioarchaeological or paleopathological research
 - Oral histories or Indigenous perspectives on health the past
- Human health and climate change research in Alaska
- Nutrition, food security, subsistence and health, and related issues in Alaska
- Research in areas of major health inequities and epidemics in Alaska, such as:
 - Suicide
 - Sexual and domestic violence and violence against women
 - Homelessness in urban and/or rural Alaska
 - Drug and alcohol use and related issues
 - Cancer
 - Environmental health, and pollution
- Research on cultural perspectives toward health, illness, death and dying, healing, and risk within Alaska
- Research in Alaska Native ways of healing and healing practices
 - Ethnobotany, ethnomedicine
 - Human health and its connection to the health of the land, animals, place, and culture
 - Indigenous ways of knowing health, Indigenous healing practices, or the integration of Indigenous and Western health practices and knowledge
 - Indigenizing health care delivery
- Research on specific health issues or topics within Alaska’s diverse sub-populations:
 - Refugee health
 - Immigrant health
 - Diaspora populations in Alaska and their health
 - Elders and aging adults
 - Youth
 - LGBTQA++ health
- Research on Alaska’s public and private health care systems, Tribal health system, and health policy in Alaska
- Research that compares health in Alaska with other northern populations or nations, or other world regions is potentially of interest as well

It is likely many of us have work that would fall under multiple of the above bullets. We also welcome submissions on topics not listed here, so long as this work is relevant to human health or medical anthropological practice in Alaska.

We also realize that Alaska and the whole world are dealing with the covid-19 pandemic at the time of this call for papers. We know we will still be feeling the effects of the pandemic and our socio-economic and cultural responses to it for a long while. If anyone is doing research on the pandemic or pandemic-related issues in Alaska, and has something ready by the submission deadline, we welcome these submissions as well, either as full length articles, or as “research notes” per the journal’s guidelines. Research notes are brief (1,000 word maximum) and may report on research in progress.

Submission instructions:

- Please send a 150-200 word abstract to Sally Carraher at sfcarraher@alaska.edu by **August 1, 2020**. In it, include your full name, institution affiliation, and a running title for your paper (which can be changed later). Please also tell us if this is a **full paper** or a **research note**.
- The editors will provide accepted authors with instructions for final submission and journal style requirements.
- Final submissions should be sent by **December 31, 2020**.