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Once again working as a JrCOSTEP with the U.S. Public Health Service has proved to be nothing but wonderful! After completing an awesome COSTEP with the Indian Health Service in Minot, North Dakota last summer I knew I would be reapplying as soon as I returned home.

My preceptor in Minot, CDR Molly Curry, had such great things to say about her time as an Environmental Health Officer in Alaska that I could not help but want the opportunity to experience similar work. I eagerly sent out my application and made contact with LT Jennifer Dobson, who proved to be a great help throughout the selection process. Over the following months I received additional help from and owe much thanks to LCDR Troy Ritter and LTJG Katie Burbage.

From my first few days of working with the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), I knew that my time in Alaska was going to be life changing. I landed in Anchorage bright and early on a Sunday morning and by Tuesday I was traveling to the Copper River Valley area to attend a Brownfields workshop and to start training on village health clinic (VHC) surveys. My travels to Kodiak Island provided me with additional training on conducting VHC surveys and also allowed me to learn about community solid waste disposal, sewer system, and water system surveys. I quickly learned about the art of survey writing in Alaska and spent much of my summer assisting my coworkers with a variety of surveys for their communities.



Throughout my time at ANTHC, I continued to travel all over Alaska, helping out with some of the special projects being conducted in the office. These projects sent me to locations far outside of the Anchorage Service Unit. While working with LT Chris Fish on air quality issues, I had the opportunity to travel to Dillingham, Nome, and villages in their surrounding areas. Getting to travel outside of the Anchorage Service Unit provided me with exposure to other areas of Alaska and the environmental health concerns of those regions. While in Nome I also had the opportunity to shadow two of the institutional environmental health officers from ANTHC during their environmental tour of the hospital. All of my coworkers proved to be extremely helpful and

knowledgeable about the variety of work being conducted by the Division of Environmental Health and Engineering (DEHE) at ANTHC.

While working with ANTHC I also had the chance to travel to Tok and a many of the villages in the surrounding area. This travel was very unique, as I had a chance to work with the EPA and their healthy schools initiative. It's amazing how much work is done in conjunction with multiple federal agencies. In addition to all of the exciting work I got to do in Alaska I also enjoyed traveling throughout the state. Alaska is absolutely spectacular and I loved spending as much of my free time as possible exploring the parks, fishing communities, and places for adventure!

Reflecting on the places I have been and work that I have done in the past four months leaves me incredibly appreciative. There is no doubt that my internship with ANTHC as a commissioned officer in the United States Public Health Service has provided me with skills and confidence that will transcend far beyond my time as student and well into my career in environmental health. I owe special thanks to my preceptor, LTJG Katie Burbage, for making this COSTEP such a great experience. She went through every effort to make sure that my



work was as diverse as possible in both the type and the locations in which the work was being done. In addition to Katie, I must thank everyone that I worked with at DEHE for all of the help, knowledge and friendship I received. You all made this internship a life-changing experience. Thank you.

In the following months I look forward to completing my education at Ohio University and pursuing a position as a commissioned environmental health officer with the U.S. Public Health Service.