



Department of Health and Social Services
Joel Gilbertson, Commissioner

Division of Public Health
Richard Mandsager, MD, Director

Section of Epidemiology
John Middaugh, MD, Editor

3601 C Street, Suite 540, PO Box 240249, Anchorage, Alaska 99524-0249 (907) 269-8000
24-Hour Emergency Number 1-800-478-0084

<http://www.epi.Alaska.gov>

Bulletin No. 17 July 28, 2004

Farewell and a new beginning

When I was assigned by the National Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as a Commissioned Officer in the US Public Health Service, Epidemic Intelligence Service, to the Alaska Division of Public Health to serve as the Acting State Epidemiologist in July 1975, little did I guess that my scheduled two-year assignment would turn into a 29-year labor of love with Alaska. I have had the great privilege of serving as the Alaska State Epidemiologist since 1980 and as Chief of the Section of Epidemiology since it was created in 1986. During all of those years, the most rewarding part of my job was being able to work with wonderful, talented, and dedicated colleagues.

I have resigned my position as Section Chief, effective July 31, 2004. After a month of retirement, after which I will try to demonstrate that you can teach an old dog new tricks, I will rejoin the Section of Epidemiology on September 1, 2004 as a medical epidemiologist with the environmental public health program. Dr. Mandsager, Director, Alaska Division of Public Health, will be naming an Acting Chief of the Section and will be conducting a national recruitment to hire a permanent new Section Chief. And, after 29 years of editing the Epidemiology *Bulletin*, I will be turning this important duty over to others.

It amazes me to reflect on the years gone by. In 1980, the Office of Epidemiology had two positions and a total budget of \$85,000. The office was located in the MacKay Building downtown, we used typewriters and carbon paper, there were no computers, graphs were done by hand, and we communicated with the villages by short-wave radio. Since 1980, the Section has employed a total of 394 people. In 2004, we had 149 employees and a \$25,158,900 budget. The Section's State Fiscal Year '05 management plan has been approved, and all of the Section's programs have stable funding through at least June 30, 2005.

Public Health's contributions to the health of the residents of Alaska are so great that they are difficult to comprehend and impossible to count. None of these contributions could have happened without the successful team effort that has been the hallmark and great strength of Alaska's medical and public health community. Thank you for your support and your excellent work. I am honored to have been a member of our team, and I look forward to rejoining the team in a new role in September.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John P. Middaugh, M.D.".

John P. Middaugh, M.D.