Alaska Native Population and Regional Corporations

Population

–15% of Alaska's population Alaska Native

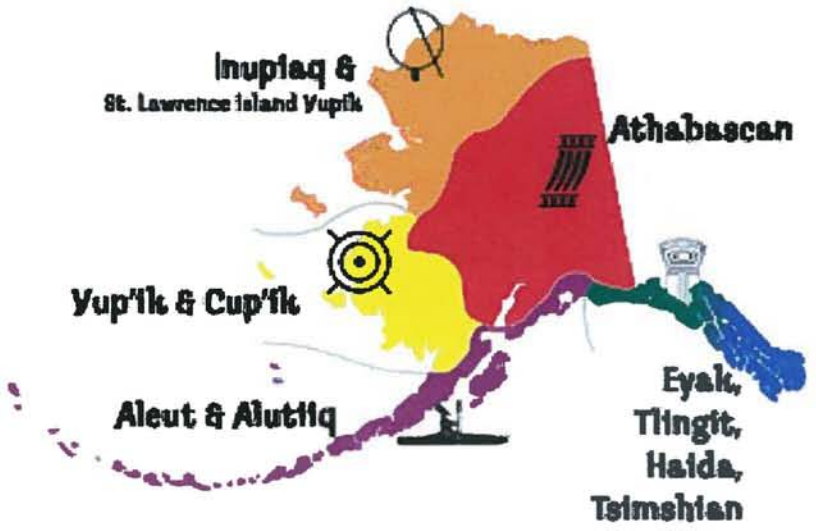
–Alaska Native populations comprise majority in many rural communities (e.g., 93% of Wade Hampton Census Area, 84% of Bethel Census Area, 74% of Nome Census Area)

–Significant Alaska Native populations even in urban areas.

Regional and Village Corporations

–Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act settled Alaska Native land claims in exchange for funds and title to 44 million acres of land.

–Generally, these assets are managed by village corporations and 13 "regional corporations" (12 together covering the entirety of the state, plus 13th for non-resident Alaska Natives).

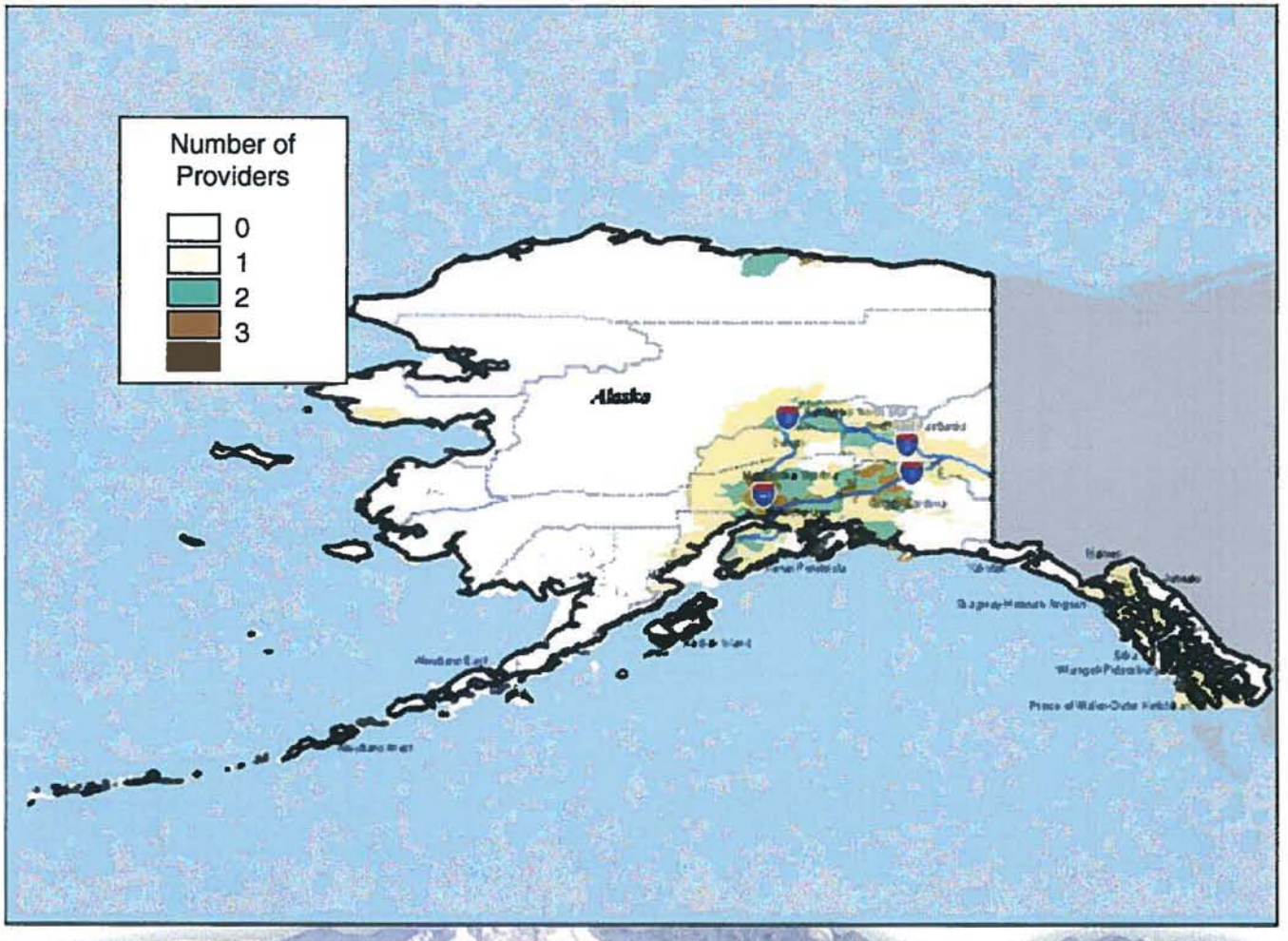


Alaska is Unique

- **Enormous**
  - 586,412 Square Miles
  - largest state in the Union and roughly 1/5 the size of the lower 48
- **Sparse Population**
  - 698,473 residents
  - Approximately 1.2 persons per square mile vs. 103.8 persons per square mile in the lower 48
- **Rough Terrain and Climate**
  - Mountains, islands, rivers, lack of roads
  - Short construction season (May to October)
- **Limited road system**

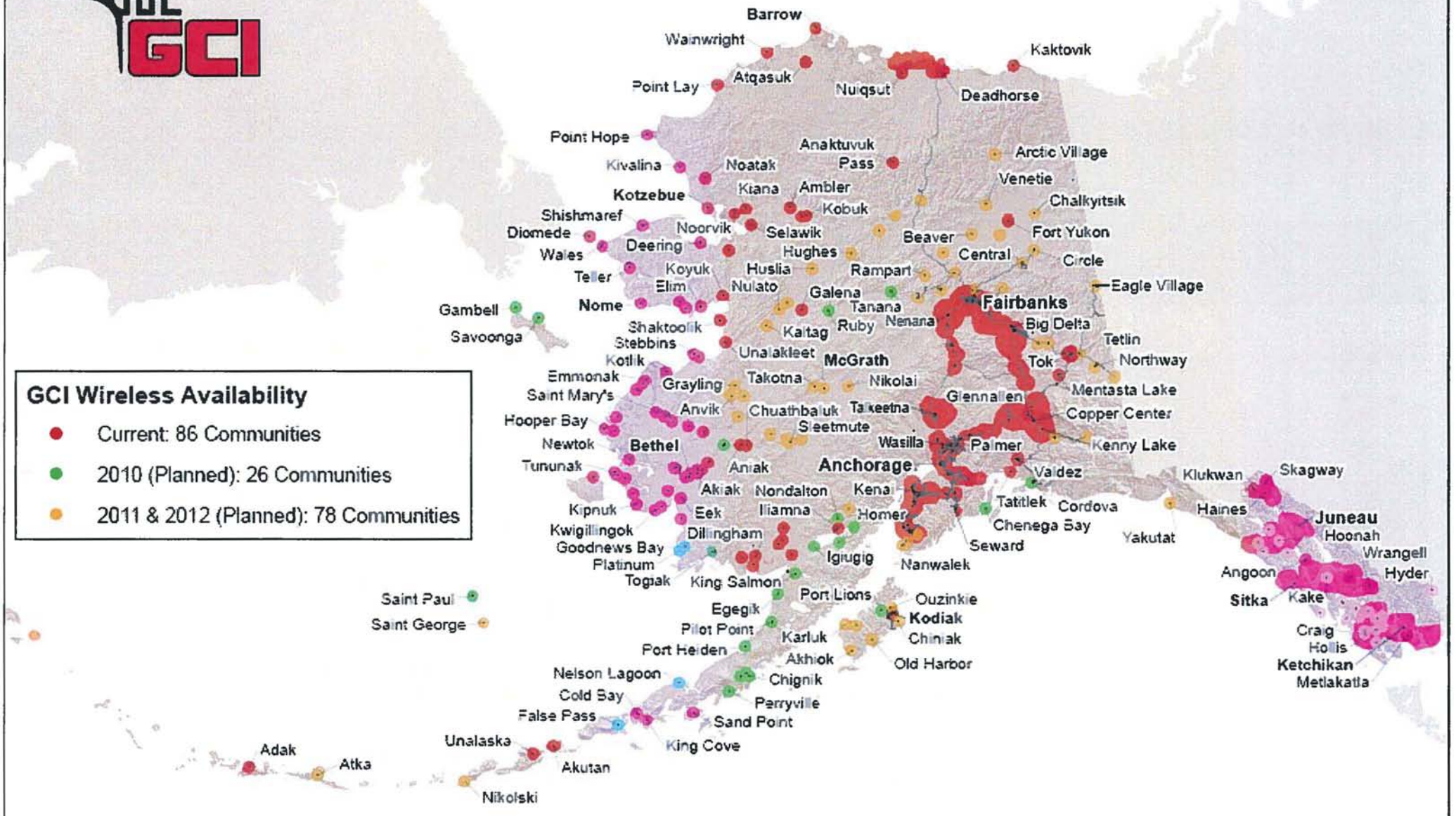
Year-round Road System

Mobile Wireless Coverage by Number of Providers: 2009 CMRS Report

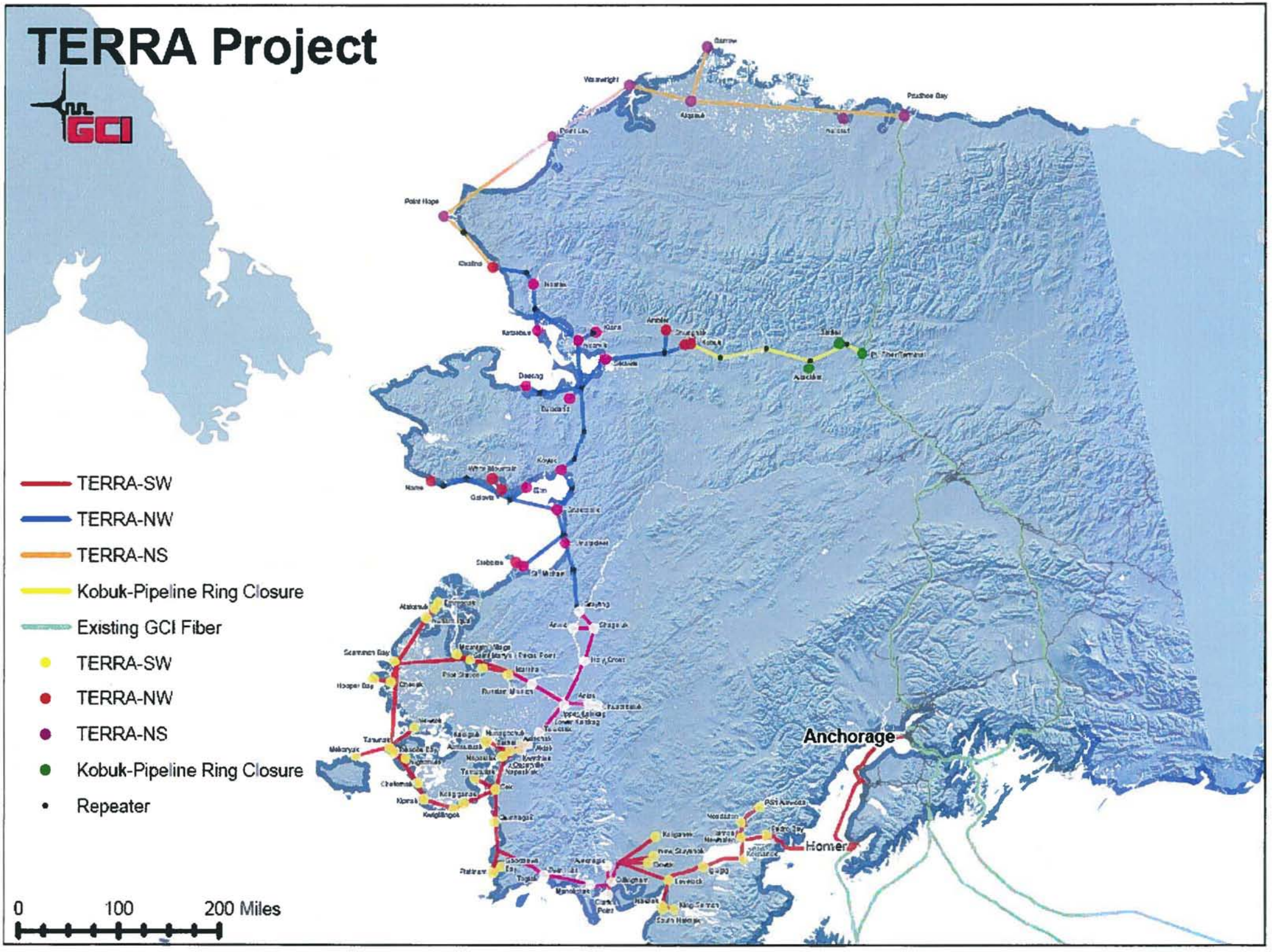


Source: *Implementation of Section 6002(b) of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993; Annual Report and Analysis of Competitive Market Conditions With Respect to commercial Mobile Services*, Thirteenth Report, 24 FCC Rcd 6185, 6328 Map B-6 (2009).

GCI: Deploying Wireless to Rural Alaska With USF Support (2007-2012)



TERRA Project



Benefits to Alaska Native Health Care

- **Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) manages comprehensive health care system on behalf of 58 federally recognized tribal councils for 50 rural communities in southwest Alaska.**
  - Includes community clinics, subregional clinics, a regional hospital, dental, optical, mental health, and environmental health services, substance abuse counseling and treatment, and health promotion and disease prevention programs.
  - Advanced high-definition video services for telepsychiatry and ophthalmology
  - Remote radiology services
  - Broadband video teleconferencing network allows medical consults with specialists, family "visits" from the village to in-patients, and professional development for staff
    - Dramatically reduces YKHC travel costs
    - Frees scarce budget dollars for other uses.

Benefits to Alaska Native Education

- **Northwest Arctic Borough School District**
  - Headquartered in Kotzebue, Alaska
  - Serves approximately 37,000 sq. miles of territory where Alaska Native villages are accessible only by small aircraft or boat.
  - E-Rate support has enabled the school district to provide high-speed Internet access and distance-learning capabilities to all schools in the district.
  - Many schools in small villages in extremely remote locations where it is infeasible for each community to maintain even a small library with current publications and up-to-date research materials.

GCI and Alaska: Delivering Universal Service

- USF support to new and innovative networks has allowed GCI to improve and expand services to previously unserved areas.
- GCI relies on all universal service programs – High Cost, Rural Healthcare, E-Rate, and Lifeline – to serve Alaska.
- Through USF support, anchor tenants such as rural healthcare facilities and schools not only bring services to rural areas, but justify infrastructure deployment that benefits rural residents.

USF and Tribal Lands

- **FCC has recognized that Tribal Lands are difficult to serve and that CETCs are essential to deploying comparable service.**
  - Excluded CETCs serving Tribal Lands from the interim cap
- **Tribal Lands exclusion provided the stability necessary for GCI to embark on its rural wireless deployment.**
  - It remains essential for current and future network investments.
  - Tribal Lands CETC support should track existing ILEC support.
  - Consistent with treatment of Tribal Lands under the CETC interim cap, the FCC should not phase down or eliminate USF support to Tribal Lands CETCs like GCI, which are still at the forefront of bringing comparable voice services to Tribal Lands.