

Jon Oyvind Odland (1954 – 2025)



We lost a stalwart leader of the circumpolar movement in April. Dr. Jon Oyvind Odland will be greatly missed, not just in the circumpolar countries, but also across Africa and elsewhere due to his many collaborations. Dr. Odland was President of the International Union for Circumpolar Health from 2012-2015 after being very active in the Nordic Society for Circumpolar Health plus in Arctic Russia for over 30 years. In Russia, Dr. Odland collaborated in birth registries to document birth defects and perinatal mortality after the introduction of ultrasound, as well as a cancer registry to document the effect of screening to prevent cervical cancer.

He was also a Key National Expert on the Arctic Council Sustainable Development Working Group from 2010 until his death. He was the Chair of the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme from 2009-2019. He was a prolific researcher and publisher plus he was committed to mentoring students at all levels.

Here are a few comments from his colleague and friend, Anders Koch, Professor, PhD, MPH, STATENS SERUM INSTITUT Copenhagen

“....he was one of the driving forces in the IUCH Board for many years and also played a pivotal role in the Nordic Society. He had a true international mindset being a professor of global health and working not only in the Arctic but also in Africa besides Norway, of course. I consider Jon Oyvind as one of the key persons in Circumpolar health for a number of decades, a person with a drive and interest in the area that not many others have. Also, he was a really nice and sensible person who was easy to get along with. He will be missed a lot! “

We all will greatly miss Jon Oyvind Odland, Ph.D.



American Society for Circumpolar Health

June 2025 Newsletter

In this issue

- President's Message
- Jon Oyvind Odland
- ICCH19 Update
- ICCH19 Planning Committee
- ASCH Website Update
- Membership Renewal
- Annual Meeting
- Arctic Health Science Seminar
- Arctic Health Emerging Professional Award
- Arctic Health High School Award

President's Corner

The 2025 ASCH Annual Meeting was a great success. With over 50 participants between 'in person' and online attendance, the group explored many different topics and trends for the future. One advantage of the networking available through the American Society for Circumpolar Health and the Union for Circumpolar Health, which we are an adhering member of, is that we get to see circumpolar life in full circle.

While the 2025 Emerging Professional Award was bestowed on Megan McIlmail, a recent May 2025 graduate of the UAA Master of Social Work Program, we also lost one of pillars of circumpolar health when Jon Oyvind Odland from Norway passed away recently.

We even had a high school student acknowledged for her presentation on "Seasonal Affective Disorder in Youth". As we prepare for the upcoming ICCH19 in 2027 we look forward to re-kindling those old relationships which fell by the wayside during the pandemic.

Neil Murphy, President ASCH

ICCH 19 Update

The 19th International Congress for Circumpolar Health (ICCH19) will be held in Anchorage, Alaska, USA, Summer 2027.

The Congress is the world's premier circumpolar health event co-hosted every three years by a national society and the International Union for Circumpolar Health (IUCH). Its main purpose is to facilitate vital knowledge exchange among community and health sector leaders, decision-makers, researchers, service providers, and communities dedicated to improving health in Circumpolar regions.



Exciting things are underway!

American Society for Circumpolar Health website:

Our website is being redesigned, so be on the lookout for our new and improved website Fall 2025!

Join our ICCH19 Planning Committee!

For more information, please email us at asch.circumpolar.usa@gmail.com

Join Our Team

ASCH Membership for 2025 is underway. Founded in 1980, ASCH is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting research, exchanging knowledge and fostering greater awareness and responsiveness to the health of circumpolar people. Networking and collaborative research opportunities have enabled many members to form lasting research partnerships. Membership renewal can be completed on the ASCH website at americancircumpolar.org/membership/

If you have any questions, please email us at asch.circumpolar.usa@gmail.com

Annual Meeting / Arctic Health Science Seminar

The ASCH Annual Meeting and Scientific Symposium was held Friday, March 21, 2025 on campus at UAA from noon to 4:30pm. The theme this year was "Climate and Health". We had a great line-up of professional and student presentations, including a keynote presentation by Jackie Qatalina Schaeffer titled, "A Season in Time: Helping Alaska Tribal Communities Thrive in the Face of Rapid, Immense Environmental Change." There were ten-minute presentations as well as a new section this year of rapid presentations that were five minutes in length. This structure allowed time for deeper questions and discussions compared to the previous annual meeting. There were two researchers that won an Arctic Health Emerging Professional Award.

For a full list of speakers and abstracts, please email us at asch.circumpolar.usa@gmail.com

2025 Arctic Health Emerging Professional Award Winner



Megan McIlmail

Megan McIlmail is a recent graduate of the UAA Master of Social Work (MSW) program. Her presentation was titled, "Themes and lessons from the Alaska Lactation and Perinatal Nutrition (ALPeN) Project". She has served as a graduate service/research assistant on two community-based projects, completed two assignments as a Community Engaged Student Assistant (CESA), and conducted a year-long research practicum with the Institute for Circumpolar Health Studies. Her areas of practice and research focus on maternal population health and community engagement. Currently she is working towards her LCSW credential and hoping to continue community health advocacy.

2025 Arctic Health Emerging Professional Award Winner: High School Category

Seasonal Affective Disorder in Youth

Newly Established vs. Lifelong Residents
of the Circumpolar Region

Sarah J. Kim, West Anchorage High School
Gabriel M. Garcia, PhD, MA, MPH, University of Alaska Anchorage



Sarah J. Kim is the first high school student to present at our Symposium, so we made a new Award Category! To the left is the first slide of her presentation, titled "Seasonal Affective Disorder in Youth: Newly Established versus Lifelong Residents of the Circumpolar Region". She conducted her research at West High School, with guidance from Dr. Gabriel Garcia.

American Society for Circumpolar Health
PO Box 242822 Anchorage, AK 99524
asch.circumpolar.usa@gmail.com
americancircumpolar.org