

# TOOLIK FIELD STATION

2022 SAFETY



# MEDICAL SUPPORT

2 alternating EMTs provided 24/7 medical support between 4/12/22 - 10/6/22

Coverage dates correlate with Spring and Fall construction campaigns

Dual role as medical provider and workplace Health & Safety support

Winter EMT staffing depending on project parameters

A minimum of one Wilderness First Responder present year-round

Physician Sponsor: Dr. Susan Dietz (Providence Medical Center)



## MEDICAL RESPONSE

The on-site EMT responded to 18 incidents over the course of the 2022 field season  
2 incidents required field rescue operations

Two incidents required ground medevac out of camp to pursue a higher level of care

An “incident” is defined as any medical concern that requires treatment above and beyond what is possible via self-treatment

## MEDICAL RESPONSE

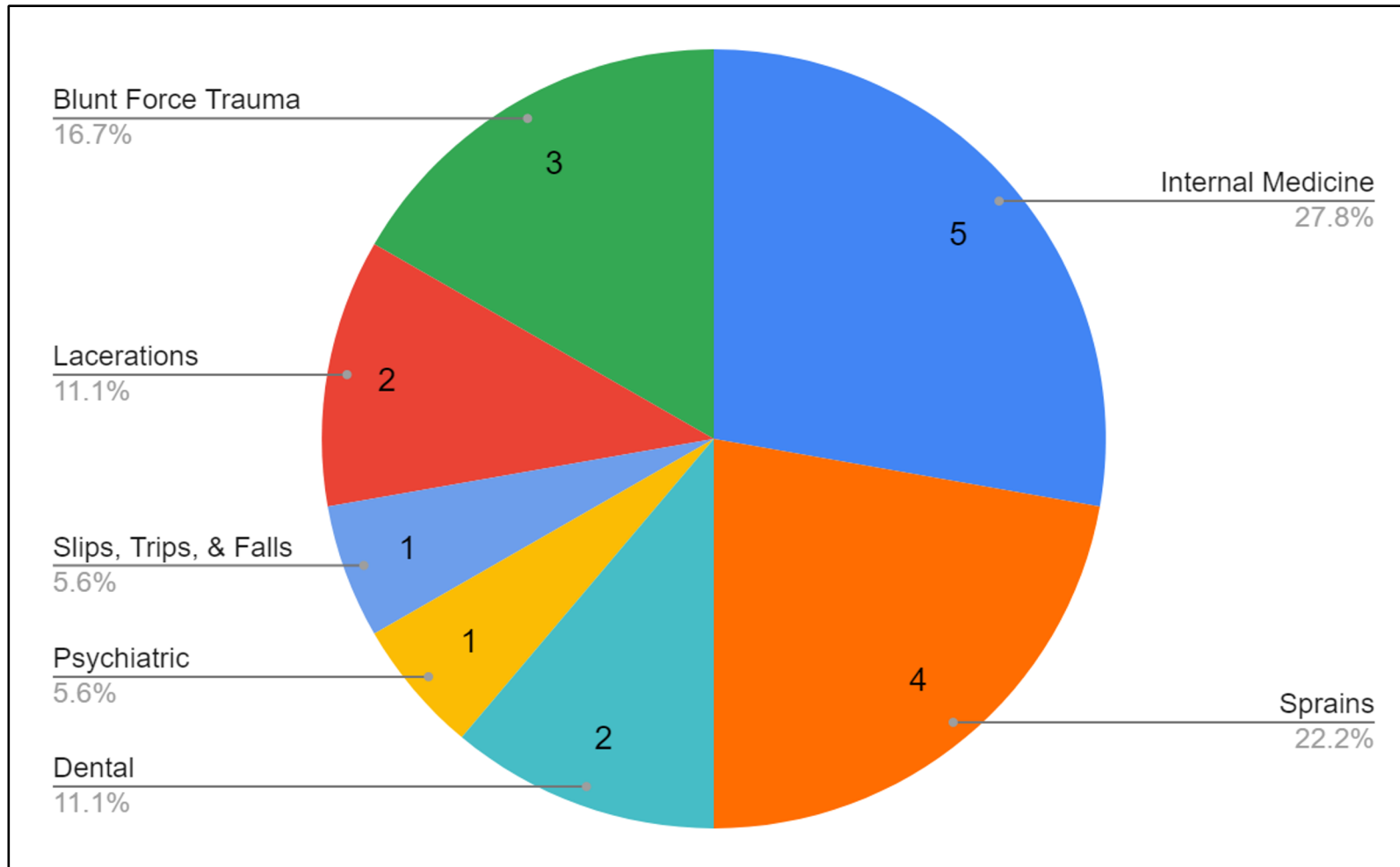
Users demanded the most attention in terms of day-to-day medical support.

Minor injuries from fieldwork and recreational activities

2022 saw a large number of bacterial infections that required administration of antibiotics in conjunction with orders from off-site medical direction

Most minor musculoskeletal injuries (sprains and strains) could be self-treated using the public common-use medical supply cabinet

# 2022 INJURIES BY MECHANISM



# COVID-19

**No suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases in TFS during 2022**

16 confirmed COVID cases were caught during pre-travel quarantine testing

Reduction to 8-day quarantine model  
| PCR test on day 5 of quarantine

Tests and quarantines for NSF-funded projects were coordinated locally by Polar Field Services with TFS overseeing testing for staff and non-ARO supported projects

# COVID-19

Testing services were contracted with Beacon Occupational Health & Safety

Online telecollection allowed TFS travelers to undergo COVID testing without a breach of quarantine

PFS and TFS staff delivered and mailed test kits for individuals in quarantine

“Quarantine hotels” established at the Wedgewood, Sohpie’s Station, and the Extended Stay hotels in Fairbanks allowed for consolidation of travelers to simplify logistical demands.

~460 tests were processed between October 2020 to 2021



# COVID-19

TFS required all travellers entering camp to present proof of vaccination status, in accordance with current CDC guidelines

Exceptions were made for those with medical or religious exemptions

TFS Safety conducted vaccine record checks via teleconference with each individual travelling to Toolik over the course of 2022

These records have since been deleted to ensure the privacy of individuals' medical records



# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Full chemical inventory of all facilities completed in Fall

Hazardous waste disposal conducted in September  
2,300 L of liquid waste; 60 kg of solid waste

Chemical storage in laboratories continues to present a challenge  
Materials are left between seasons  
Chemicals that are abandoned by non-returning projects become waste that is difficult to dispose.  
TFS is working with UAF Environmental Health & Safety to establish a chemical inventory tracking and storage system for 2023





# HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Radioactive material transport is performed in conjunction with the responsible project(s) and UAF Environmental Health, Safety, & Risk Management (EHSRM)

UAF EHSRM conducted an on-site inspection of all above-ground fuel tanks and laboratory facilities on TFS property in May 2022

No reportable spills occurred between October 2021 - October 2022



## ROAD AND BOAT SAFETY

Dalton Highway travel continues to present the most danger for serious injury of any activity at TFS

North and southbound trucks receive a road safety orientation by either TFS Logistics or Safety

All vehicles are equipped with GPS tracking as well as sat phones for emergency communications

TFS had one road-based near-miss during 2022 involving a wheel that became dislodged from a vehicle following a roadside tire change. Involved parties sustained no injuries.

# ROAD AND BOAT SAFETY

All TFS residents who plan to venture onto Toolik Lake undergo a water safety orientation that covers general boat safety and Toolik Lake topographical features

No water safety incidents during 2022



# MENTAL HEALTH

Continues to be a major discussion item for users and staff

TFS Safety can refer to emergency services but does not have the capacity to provide long-term maintenance care

COVID-19 has amplified an already major issue at remote field camps

Small group sizes means that the few who can travel up to TFS have to spend a larger amount of time performing more work → Faster, more severe burnout

Ultimately, groups must factor the mental health of their researchers into their project plan before they make reservations

Avoid long shifts

Spread work over more people. Can't send more people? Adjust workload.

Identify resources your home institution can provide

SEE YOU IN 2023!

