

# Department of Health and Social Services

## *Introduction to the Department*

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) was originally established in 1919 as the Alaska Territorial Health Department. With the formal proclamation of statehood on January 3, 1959, the department's responsibilities were expanded to include the protection and promotion of public health and welfare. These core duties are reflected in the mission of the department – to promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans – and are outlined in Article 7, Sections 4 and 5 of the Constitution of the State of Alaska.

### *Mission*

To promote and protect the health and well-being of all for a strong Alaska.

### *Core Services*

- Provide elderly pioneers and veterans quality assisted living in a safe home environment.
- Provide an integrated behavioral health system.
- Promote safer children, stronger families.
- Manage health care coverage for Alaskans in need.
- Address juvenile crime by promoting accountability, public safety and skill development.
- Provide self-sufficiency and basic living expenses to Alaskans in need.
- Protect and promote the health of Alaskans.
- Promote independence of Alaska Seniors and people with physical and developmental disabilities.
- Provide quality administrative services in support of the department's mission.

### *Core Values*

The Department of Health and Social Services has five adopted core values as guiding principles in the delivery of services:

- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Respect
- Empowerment
- Safety

### *Department Priorities*

**Vulnerable Populations:** Increase the percentage of at risk individuals who are able to live safely in their homes in Alaska.

**Substance Abuse:** Decrease the negative impacts of alcohol and substance abuse in Alaska.

**Long-Term Care:** Increase the percentage of adults 65 and older living independently in Alaska.

**Health and Wellness:** Improve the health status of Alaskans.

**Health Care Reform:** Improve access to quality health care in Alaska.