

The Alaska Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Program is a Medicaid program which allows a qualifying person (consumer) with a functional disability to receive in-home hands on care to maintain their health and safety. There are two models of PCA services in Alaska. In the Agency Model the agency is responsible for the oversight of the services, training, and management of the Personal Care Assistant. In the Consumer Directed model the consumer is responsible to recruit, hire, train, and manage a Personal Care Assistant of their choice with the agencies oversight and assistance. Both models have strong regulatory oversight.

Who is eligible for the PCA program?

- Individuals eligible for Alaska Medicaid that require physical hands on assistance with their Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs) as determined by assessment.

What are ADLs and IADLs?

- These are the activities that an individual needs to do on a regular basis to maintain health, safety and welfare.
- Bathing, dressing, eating, preparing meals, medication reminders, and attending medical appointments are just a few examples of these activities.

How is eligibility determined?

- An application is submitted to the Alaska Division of Senior and Disability Services (SDS). This application includes demographic information and a Verification of Diagnosis from an approved medical professional.
- SDS assigns and schedules state assessment personnel (usually an RN) to come to an individual's home and conduct an extensive functional assessment.
- This assessment is reviewed by SDS staff for regulatory compliance.

What are the benefits to the individual receiving PCA Services?

- Individuals with functional disabilities who utilize PCA Services overwhelmingly report that these services have reduced or prevented falls, infections, and poor nutrition.
- Services very often delay or prevent hospitalization and admission into more restrictive care environments such as Assisted Living Homes and Nursing Homes.
- Individuals being discharged from hospitals and Nursing Homes have better success remaining in their homes and communities when supported by PCA Services.

What are the benefits to the State of Alaska's Medicaid budget?

- At the time of the report titled "Potential Impact on Expenditures from Terminating the Personal Care Program" developed for the 2004 Legislature, there were 730 Nursing Homes Beds in the State of Alaska. The estimates in that report were that, absent Home and Community Based PCA Services, by 2018 our growing senior population would require an additional 1,118 beds. And that the demand for Assisted Living Home beds would increase to 5,100 beds. Yet, despite the evidence that the aging population projections were on target, according to the "Health Care Alaska" report in 2014 Alaska was supporting just 674 Nursing Home Beds and 3,644 Assisted Living Home beds.
- Delay and prevention of more costly and restrictive services.