



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Health

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February 13, 2025

The Honorable Andy Josephson
House HSS Finance Subcommittee Chair
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 505
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Josephson:

The Department of Health received the following questions during the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) budget presentation to the House Health and Social Services Finance Subcommittee on February 4, 2025:

What is the cost of special education services for K-12 as it relates to cost savings for the Infant Learning Program?

Even though the Department of Health does not have information on the cost of special education services in Alaska, or data as it relates to cost savings for the Infant Learning Program, there is national data that highlights the cost savings associated with early intervention programs for infants and toddlers. According to the U.S. Office of Special Education Programs, early intervention services under Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) have been shown to reduce the need for special education services later in life. While exact figures can vary, studies have consistently demonstrated that early intervention can lead to significant savings in special education costs by addressing developmental delays and disabilities early on, thereby reducing the need for more intensive and costly services later.

What school district administers an Infant Learning Program?

The Northwest Arctic Borough School District administers an Infant Learning Program.

What is the full range of variation for acuity spending for Home and Community Based Waivers?

Prior to December 2023, acuity add-on was only available as a daily unit. There was very little variation in the acuity spend, as all individuals who qualified for acuity add-on were approved to receive the same number of units at the same cost. Under an Appendix K

amendment to multiple 1915(c) home and community-based waivers, the Department of Health began offering acuity add-ons in 8-hour increments instead of a daily unit for 24 hours. The change to 8 hour units provided flexibility and therefore increased the variation for acuity spend, since now some participants receive 8 hours, some 16 hours, and some 24 hours of acuity add-on daily. It also allowed for a new 2:1 acuity rate, allowing for two staff to care for a single waiver participant, subject to Department approval.

What is the number of people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities acuity rate that are being served? What is the average spending for an individual with acuity?

Since December 1, 2023, there have been 42 participants on the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) waiver who have claims paid for the acuity add-on.

The average acuity add-on expenditures per IDD waiver recipient was \$123,198 for the 12-month period from December 2023 to November 2024.

Are more people coming into nursing homes with long term care insurance?

The nursing home authorizations completed by SDS are for only Medicaid beds. SDS does not have awareness of whether more people are coming into nursing homes with long term care insurance, as the scope of the work is limited to Medicaid eligibility.

What is the timeliness of Adult Protective Services for an incident?

Adult Protective Services (APS) response times are based on the information contained in reports of harm. The reports are screened for priority.

- Priority I: Imminent Risk of Harm or Death: Requires immediate within 24-hour response time.
- Priority II/III: Adult not at imminent risk of harm or death, nor is urgent response necessary based on information contained in intake. Requires response within 5-10 business days
- Priority IV: Preventative Information/Referral: The vulnerable adult is not in need of protection to alleviate harm resulting from abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, undue influence or self-neglect, but requires assistance with their social, health, educational, recreational, transportation, housing, nutritional, financial, legal, or other needs to prevent or diminish the risks that the adult will suffer harm. Requires response within 10 business days.

Director Newman offered to provide a list of mandatory reporters.

Under AS 47.24.010, if the following persons who, in the performance of their professional duties, have reasonable cause to believe that a vulnerable adult suffers from undue influence, abandonment, exploitation, abuse, neglect, or self-neglect, they are required to report to the Department within 24 hours:

- (1) a physician or other licensed health care provider;
- (2) a mental health professional as defined in AS 47.30.915 and including a marital and family therapist licensed under AS 08.63;
- (3) a pharmacist;
- (4) an administrator or employee of a nursing home, residential care, or health care facility;
- (5) a guardian or conservator;
- (6) a police officer;
- (7) a village public safety officer;
- (8) a village health aide;
- (9) a social worker;
- (10) a member of the clergy;
- (11) a staff employee of a project funded by the Department of Administration for the provision of services to older Alaskans, the Department of Health, or the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault;
- (12) an employee of a personal care home or home health aide program;
- (13) an emergency medical technician or a mobile intensive care paramedic;
- (14) a caregiver of the vulnerable adult;
- (15) a certified nurse aide;
- (16) an educator or administrative staff member of a public or private educational institution.

What would it cost to eliminate the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities waiver waitlist?

According to [Alaska Department of Health Plan for Eradicating the Intellectual and Development Disabilities \(IDD\) Waitlist](#), by using the InterRAI waiver assessment instrument, the funding needed for SDS to eliminate the waitlist would require an overall increase of \$53.1 million in state funds between 2021 and 2033. The waitlist could be eliminated without implementing the InterRAI assessment tool, however the costs to do so would be considerably higher. The table below shows the estimated state funding needed to eliminate the IDD Waitlist. This estimate does not account for inflation or Medicaid rate increases. The figures in the table do not include matching federal Medicaid funds, and additional state funds are compared to the baseline year (SFY 2021).

**Summary of 2022 IDD Waitlist Eradication Funding Fiscal Impacts Estimates
(\$ in thousands)**

	SFY 2024 Year 1	SFY 2028 Year 5	SFY 2033 Year 10
Number of people served	2,250	3,374	4,167
Additional state funds for services	\$6,464.2	\$37,643.6	\$51,751.7
Additional state funds for infrastructure development	\$647.8	\$1,443.5	\$1,394.7
Total additional state funds needed with cost allocation infrastructure (InterRAI)	\$7,112.0	\$39,087.2	\$53,146.4
Total state funds needed without cost allocation infrastructure (InterRAI)	\$6,849.8	\$54,165.2	\$91,541.5

What are the updated figures to the IDD waitlist eradication report?

The report has not been updated since publication on December 20, 2022.

What are the next steps on IDD waitlist eradication?

The waitlist elimination was not funded; however, the Department is currently in the process of implementing a new assessment tool, the InterRAI, which is the necessary first step in modernizing the system.

Which of the Senior and Disabilities Services programs have waitlists?

The Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD), Individualized Support Waiver (ISW), and General Relief programs have waitlists.

General Relief Assisted Living Home program has a waitlist, but applicants typically only spend 7-14 days on the waitlist from the date of application submission to the date of approval.

Programs that are funded, at least in part, by the division through state and federal grants may have waitlists that would be maintained by the non-profit, municipalities, and Tribal health organizations that provide them.

Does the number served just include people approved or people actively receiving services (e.g. somebody might be accepted for the General Relief Assisted Living Home program but are still waiting for a bed)?

The number served reflects people actively receiving services.

Could we get a five-year lookback at Senior and Disabilities Services programs on the number of people served and waitlists?

End of each FY	Alaskans Living Independently Served	Children with Complex Medical Conditions Served	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Served	Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) Waitlist**	Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW) Served	Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW) Waitlist**	Adults with Physical and Developmental Disabilities Served	General Relief Served	General Relief Waitlist**
2024	2,492	236	2,108	443	536	158	176	474	5
2023	2,369	233	2,090	440	521	-	158	496	8
2022	2,262	225	2,057	452	495	-	144	586	13
2021	2,039	212	2,036	772	441	-	126	605	6
2020	2,032	201	2,009	765	387	-	114	539	3

** Some applicants on the waitlist for IDD and ISW are reflected on both the IDD and ISW waitlist, in the case that they indicated their interest in both waivers.

If you have additional questions, please contact me at (907) 465-1630.

Sincerely,



Pam Halloran
Assistant Commissioner

cc: Valerie Rose, Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Finance
Jordan Shilling, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor
Tim Hess, Office of Management and Budget
Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner
Robert Lawrence, Chief Medical Officer
Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner
Tony Newman, Director of Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
Raquel Solomon-Gross, Deputy Director of Finance and Management Services
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