



Alaska Children's Alliance

Presentation to Alaska Children's Caucus

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Child Abuse in Alaska

Alaska consistently faces some of the nation's highest rates of child abuse and neglect



~1 in 7 children born in Alaska will experience an allegation of sexual abuse before their 12th birthday.

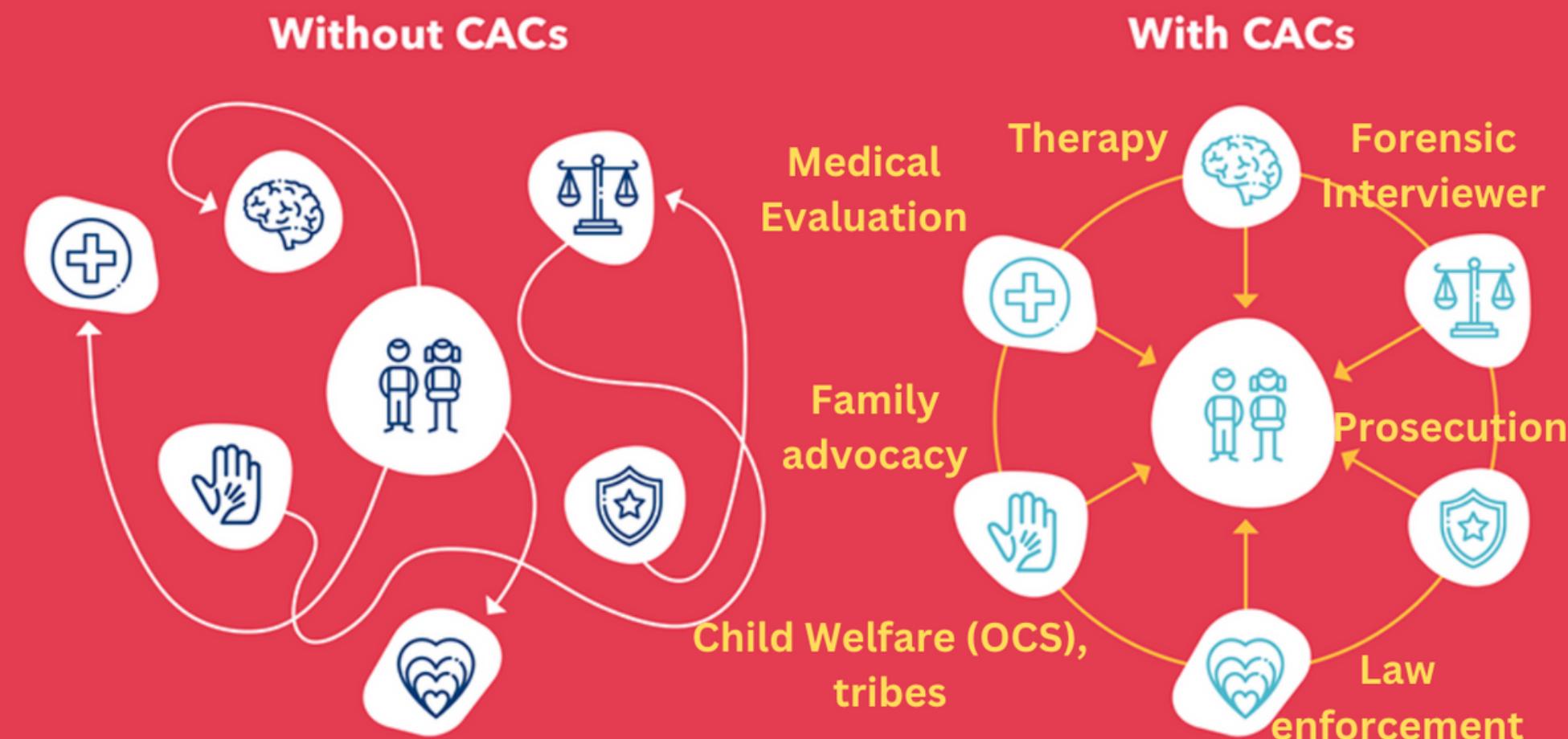
Child abuse has long-term consequences for:

- Individuals
 - Physical health, mental health, risk for future victimization, socioeconomic outcomes
- Society
 - Increased expenditures on health care, child welfare, criminal justice, education, and lost workforce productivity



Child Advocacy Centers: Frontline Coordinated Response to Child Abuse

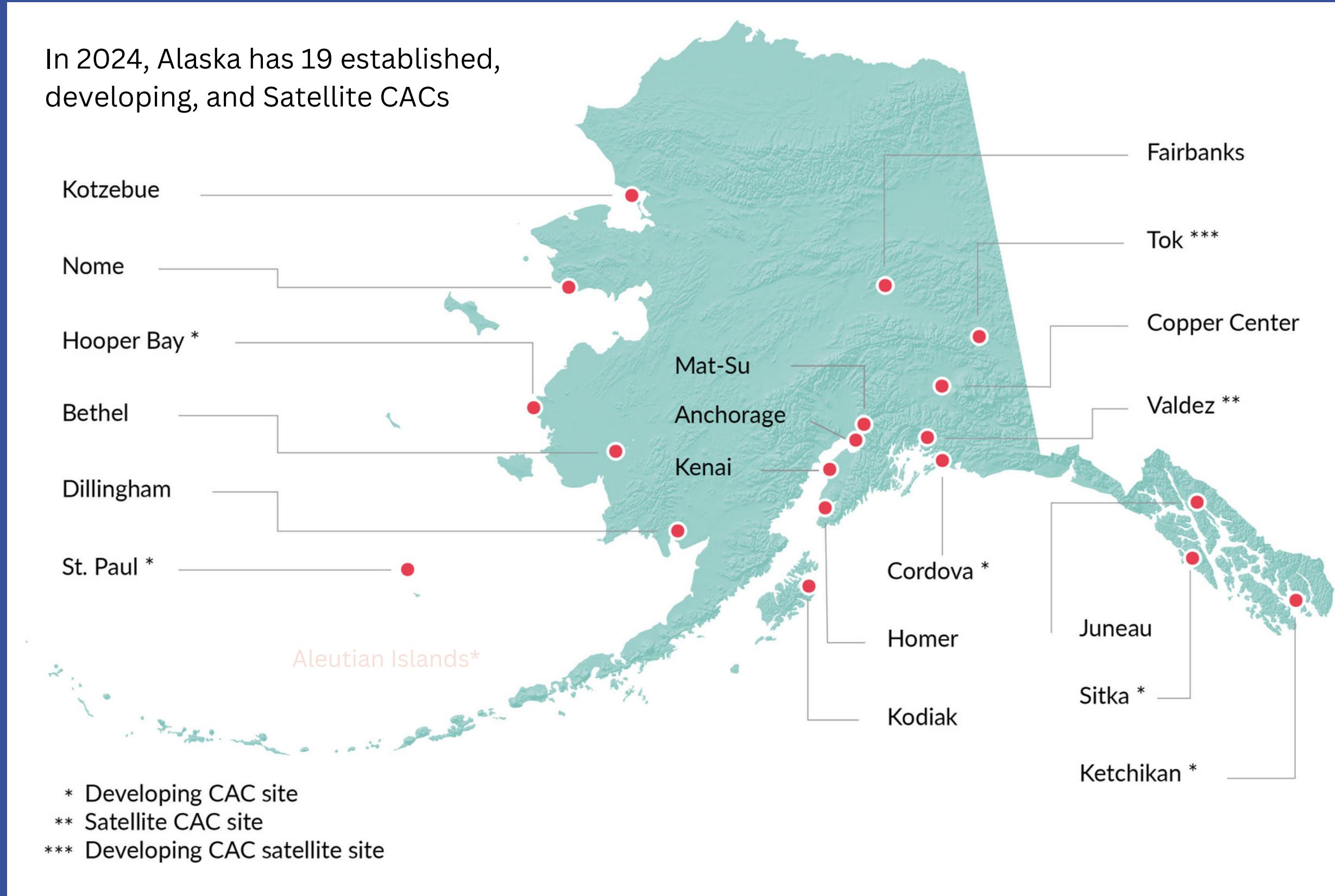
A Child Advocacy Center (CAC) is a neutral, safe place where a child and non-offending caregiver can receive comprehensive services following a concern of abuse such as: sexual abuse (including commercial sexual exploitation, trafficking and child sexual abuse materials), physical abuse, witness to violence (including domestic violence and homicide), and extreme neglect



With CACs:
Everyone works together
around the best interests of
the child and family.



Child Advocacy Centers in Alaska



Every child victim of abuse deserves access to high quality support services... No matter where they live in Alaska.

In FY23, Alaska's CACs served 2,388 children statewide.



Why Child Advocacy Centers?

CACs benefit...

Children & Families

- CACs are trauma informed & developmentally appropriate
- CACs are centered on the best interests of the child & family
- CAC Advocates provide 1:1 support throughout the duration of the case
- CACs help children have access to justice for crimes committed against them
- CACs result in higher satisfaction (based on surveys)
- CACs promote healing and healthier trajectories through evidence based mental health therapy

Professionals

- CACs coordinate the disciplines that respond to child abuse: Partners including child welfare, law enforcement, and prosecution say CACs make their jobs easier
- CACs support their partners in following minimal best practices based on 10 national accreditation standards
- CACs assist with specialized training and technical support
- CACs are in state statute: OCS is obligated to refer child sex abuse cases to a CAC if available per AS 47.17.033 - .300

Alaska

- Strong system response is especially critical in Alaska, which consistently struggles with some of the nation's highest rates of child abuse
- CACs help us hold offenders accountable by supporting successful prosecutions, making our communities safer
- CACs are effective, efficient, and cost effective: For every \$1 spent on a Multi-Disciplinary Team, there is a \$663 return on investment



Recommendations

1

Support funding for
Alaska Children's Alliance &
Child Advocacy Centers

Alaska is in the minority of states that does not provide General Funds for CACs. In FY26 we are requesting an operating line item in the State budget: \$5M or equivalent. This will help us to maintain services in light of an impending budget cliff due to anticipated loss of funding sources.

2

Help us address the issue of Youth
With Problematic Sexual Behavior

Support section 22 of HB67/SB65 to authorize CACs to assist with cases of youth under the age of 13 who have engaged in sexualized behavior with other youth under the age of 13.



Thank You!



Alaska Children's Alliance

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