

Alaska Department of Health & Social Services



2011 PRIORITIES

Vision: All individuals and families are healthy, safe & productive. • **Mission:** To promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans.



Substance Abuse & Mental Health

Substance abuse and mental illness affect every family and community in Alaska. They are a contributing factor in suicides, crime, unemployment, domestic violence, child abuse, school dropouts, juvenile delinquency, emergency room visits, physical health, etc. We need to prevent, intervene early, treat and help people recover from substance abuse and mental illness through public/private partnerships and long-term strategies.

Major strategies include:

- ◆ **Prevention and Health Promotion:** Implement strategies to change common influences among children, youth, adults and communities to develop healthy attitudes, beliefs and behaviors. Target areas include underage drinking, binge drinking, heavy drinking, suicide, and domestic and sexual violence.
- ◆ **Early Intervention:** Integrate primary care with behavioral health (mental health and substance abuse); screen all youth in the juvenile justice system for substance abuse; universal screening for behavioral health conditions; implementation of general mental health services.
- ◆ **Treatment:** Develop and implement family-based treatment services; increase access to substance abuse services; implement involuntary treatment and secure detoxification services; ensure adequate response to behavioral health emergencies; increase use of tele-behavioral health; promote integration of behavioral health and primary care.
- ◆ **Recovery:** Support array of recovery services using performance-based standards and funding. Continue to integrate mental health and substance abuse services into a behavioral health system.



Health and Wellness

Many Alaskans lead less happy and less productive lives, and many die prematurely each year, because of disability and death caused by obesity, tobacco, alcohol abuse, injuries, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, and vaccine-preventable diseases. The economic impact of chronic disease alone in Alaska is staggering: an estimated \$600 million is spent annually on direct medical services and \$1.9 billion in lost productivity. Most of this is attributable to personal choice involving diet, physical activity and tobacco use — and is preventable. We can do a better job of screening, diagnosing and treating these conditions.

Major strategies include:

- ◆ **Prevention and Health Promotion:** Implement evidence-based, population-based health promotion efforts to reduce obesity, chronic disease, and injuries. Increase primary prevention approaches, including those targeting increased self responsibility. Educate about and improve methods for screening, diagnosis, and early treatment of conditions and behaviors most detrimental to the physical and mental health of Alaskans.
- ◆ **Disease Control:** Detect epidemics and control the spread of infectious diseases, in particular influenza, tuberculosis, hepatitis C, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, through screening, testing, diagnosis and treatment. Immunize children and adults against vaccine-preventable diseases.
- ◆ **Access:** Use Public Health nurses to ensure all possible resources are made available in Alaska communities. Expand medical examiner services statewide. Increase community partnerships to improve local capacity for primary care and preventive health services.
- ◆ **Emergency Response and Preparedness:** Build capacity in Alaska's statewide trauma system. Work with communities to prevent health emergencies and prepare for pandemics and natural disasters.
- ◆ **Environmental Health Impacts:** Provide medical, toxicological, and public health expertise to individuals and communities to enable them to reduce hazards from environmental exposures. Develop credible, science-based, Alaska-specific information about environmental exposure levels and potential impact to human health.



Health Care Access and Delivery

Through the state-run Medicaid program, health insurance coverage is provided to approximately 18 percent of Alaska's population. Similar to other states, Alaska's Medicaid program is being challenged to meet increasing demands for costs and services. However, Alaska's rate of growth of the more medically needy in the Medicaid population is out-pacing most other states. A compounding factor unique to Alaska is the fragmentation of the health care delivery system that exists related to geography, active Tribal and Veterans Affairs health care systems, and other factors. By utilizing technology tools, strengthening statewide policies and embracing state priorities for action with partners such as the Health Care Commission, and supporting health care workforce development, the health care delivery system and access to care will align with increasing demand.

Major strategies include:

◆ Technology for Sustainable and Effective Health Care Delivery:

- ◆ Implement a new Medicaid Management Information System for enhanced, effective program management through timely, data-driven decisions that improve health care utilization analysis and promote decisions that support sustainability of the program.
- ◆ Reduce erroneous payments, and monitor payment trends for more accurate projections in an environment of rapidly increasing costs.
- ◆ Create a health information exchange that will facilitate the communication of health information sharing, improve continuity of care and potentially reduce costs related to duplicate testing and referrals.
- ◆ Convert providers throughout the state to electronic health records to make records more accessible for health care service delivery, to more effectively and efficiently monitor health care use and quality of care.

◆ Workforce development:

- ◆ Partner with the University of Alaska and others to create new training opportunities for health professionals throughout the state.
- ◆ Create professional residency programs for "hard to attract" health care fields such as psychiatry.
- ◆ Develop alternative approaches to health care delivery in rural Alaska.

◆ Enhanced Management of High Health Needs

- ◆ Improve coordination of care for individuals with the highest needs and chronic health conditions.
- ◆ Analyze care management options and implement the Health Care Commission's recommendations for managing care, cost containment and improving health outcomes and quality.



Sustainable Long-Term Care Delivery System

Medicaid is the primary payer for long-term care services for the elderly and disabled. In Alaska, those services are delivered in a fragmented fee-for-service environment. Alaska has been very successful in making services available in homes and communities, thereby delaying or avoiding the higher cost and more restrictive institutional care for many individuals. Challenges remain, however, in the availability of home and community-based services in rural areas; long-term institutional care for the individuals with very high needs that cannot be met in the community; standardization of the quality of care delivered; and comprehensive oversight of the health and welfare of these participants.

Major strategies include:

◆ Identification and Coordination of Health and Welfare Needs

- ◆ Implement quality assurance strategies that set forth standards of performance for home and community-based care providers and remediation responses for failure to meet those standards.
- ◆ Integrate automated solutions that provide for real-time care plan development and amendment to meet change in condition of the participant and to conduct risk assessments.
- ◆ Align cross-division efforts to manage provider enrollment, certification, compliance and performance oversight.
- ◆ Train and oversee the performance of care coordinators who have the role of continuous monitoring of health and welfare needs of waiver program participants.
- ◆ Integrate recipient feedback on analysis of the efficacy of home and community based programs.

- ◆ Develop integrated pro-active and reactive programs of safety related to complaints and reports of harm received by Adult Protective Services, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Licensing and Certification and Senior and Disabilities Services.
- ◆ Increase utilization of Aging and Disability Resource Centers as referral sources to meet the needs of those receiving services in their home and community settings.
- ◆ **Promote a service array that meets the needs of underserved who require long term care services**
 - ◆ Collaborate with providers to develop sustainable options for institutional care that meets the needs of those very complex individuals whose needs may not be safely met in the community setting;
 - ◆ Improved coordination of services to individuals utilizing the general relief program to promote greater self-responsibility and self-reliance where appropriate;
 - ◆ Provide continued support to individuals who do not qualify for waiver services but need supports through continued grant opportunities;
 - ◆ Create sustainable solutions through partnerships with the Pioneer Homes, Senior and Disabilities Services, Medicaid and Behavioral Health to address the needs of individuals with long-term needs related to complex behavioral issues and cognitive deficits such as Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.
- ◆ **Develop Integrated and Comprehensive Model of Care**
 - ◆ Evaluate opportunities provided by the federal government to manage the benefits of dually eligible individuals.
 - ◆ Design a risk-based long-term care management program to improve care coordination and incorporate disease management strategies.



Vulnerable Alaskans

We need to ensure that both kids and communities are safe, that developmentally disabled kids and adults have access to quality services and supports, and that individuals and families get the kind of financial and vocational supports they need to be contributing members of society. By focusing on family-centered services and through the use of performance-based standards and funding, we can better meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens and their families.

Major Strategies Include:

- ◆ **Families First Initiative:** Expand this project which is designed to help families leave the public assistance rolls and find employment through coordination of services between state agencies to assure that services are designed to meet family needs vs. individual program requirements.
- ◆ **Bring the Kids Home Initiative:** Continue efforts to develop the infrastructure within the state to support the needs of children who have previously been sent out of state to receive services and to keep youth in state.
- ◆ **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Initiative:** Strengthen behavioral health programs to address family violence prevention and to provide treatment for alcohol and substance abuse treatment, often an underlying cause of DVSA.
- ◆ **Protective Services:** Provide effective and timely protective services to vulnerable children and adults experiencing or at risk for neglect, abuse and exploitation in an environment where more timely and effective reporting by providers and community members is occurring. Forge relationships with community partners to develop proactive measures to reduce and eliminate risks to the health and welfare of vulnerable children and adults.