

# Alaska's Pharmacists: Improving People's Health



By 2032, the U.S. could see a shortage of as many as 55,200 primary care physicians. Even if nurse practitioners and physician assistants are fully utilized, patient needs will not fully be met.<sup>1</sup>

Alaska has 273 designated HPSAs and only 26% of the primary care needs in those areas are currently being met.<sup>2</sup> There are 460 highly trained pharmacists in AK who are ready to provide valuable healthcare services.<sup>3</sup>

## Meeting Patients' Needs in Alaska

**730**

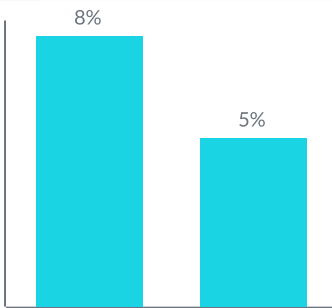
**Thousand**  
people<sup>4</sup>

**24**

more primary  
care providers  
are needed<sup>5</sup>

**460**

**Pharmacists**  
ready to help<sup>6</sup>



**Prevalence of  
chronic disease in  
Alaska**<sup>9</sup>

### Diabetes

Diabetes is a complex condition that is often managed by multiple medications. Pharmacists can optimize care and help patients understand their medications and their condition in order to improve outcomes and avoid complications.<sup>7</sup>

### Cardiovascular Disease (CVD)

For patients with uncontrolled high blood pressure, waiting even two months to optimize medications increases the risk of complications, including hospitalizations. Pharmacists are highly accessible members of the care team who significantly improve blood pressure control and can provide timely follow-up and monitoring to improve outcomes.<sup>8</sup>

**44%**

of Alaska residents  
were vaccinated  
for the flu<sup>10</sup>

Immunization rates across the U.S. have continued to increase since pharmacists began vaccinating.<sup>11</sup>

**21%**

of people in  
Alaska smoke  
cigarettes<sup>12</sup>

Smoking causes nearly 1 of every 5 deaths in the U.S. each year.<sup>13</sup> Pharmacists are qualified and capable of providing smoking cessation counseling.

**50% of people with  
chronic diseases do  
not take their  
medicines correctly.**<sup>14</sup>



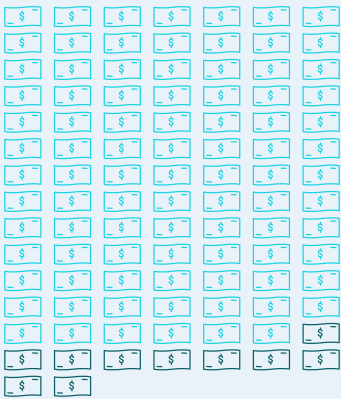
Medications are critical for the treatment of chronic conditions. Pharmacists can help patients use them safely and effectively to avoid medication related problems.



Alaska spends **\$757,206,371** annually on prescription medications.<sup>15</sup>

Investing in pharmacists' services optimizes the use of those prescription medications. Decades of research have proven the value of including pharmacists on healthcare teams. Improved health outcomes, lower costs, and increased access to care could be a reality for Alaska residents if pharmacists were fully empowered to serve as patient care providers.

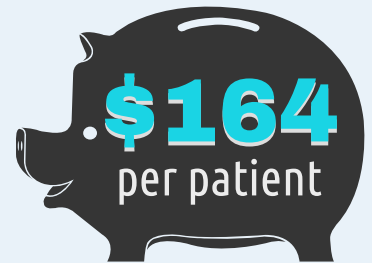
90% of the nation's \$3.5 trillion in annual health care expenditures are for people with chronic and mental health conditions.<sup>16</sup>



On average  
**\$1,000**  
per patient per year is saved

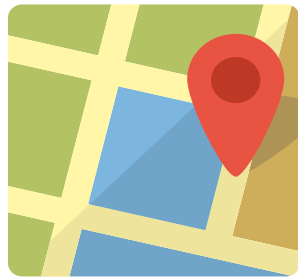
with pharmacist interventions for patients with chronic conditions.<sup>17</sup>

Pharmacists' counseling and adherence programs can save the healthcare system



in the 6 months following the start of a new prescription medication.<sup>18</sup>

Pharmacists are accessible. 93% of Americans live within 5 miles of a community pharmacy.<sup>19</sup>



Pharmacist prescribing for minor ailments can relieve pressure on Emergency Rooms.<sup>20</sup>



Oregon pharmacists wrote 10% of all birth control prescriptions since a landmark law was passed. Alaska pharmacists could do this too!

Alaska spent **\$2 billion** on Medicaid in 2018.<sup>22</sup>

Up to **30%** of Emergency Room visits are non-urgent.

**\$4.40** saved per \$1 spent on pharmacists' services<sup>21</sup>

This information was developed through a collaboration between APhA and NASPA with generous support from the Community Pharmacy Foundation.



Access our references at [tinyurl.com/factsheet2020](https://tinyurl.com/factsheet2020) Or scan this QR code with your smartphone