



State of Alaska Department of Health

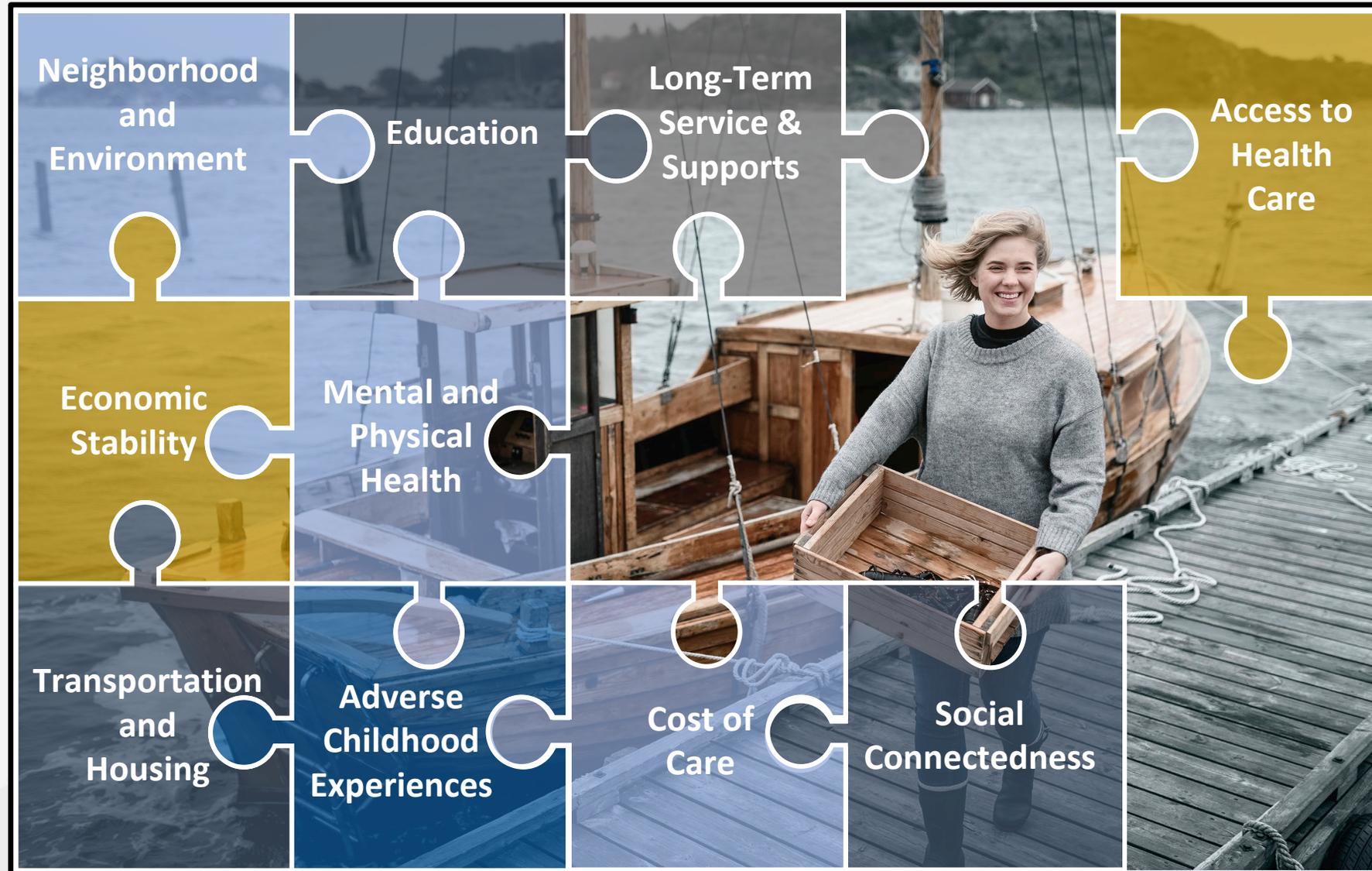
Department Overview

*Heidi Hedberg, Commissioner Designee
Emily Ricci, Deputy Commissioner
Josie Stern, Assistant Commissioner
Dr. Anne Zink, Chief Medical Officer*

Tuesday, January 24, 2022

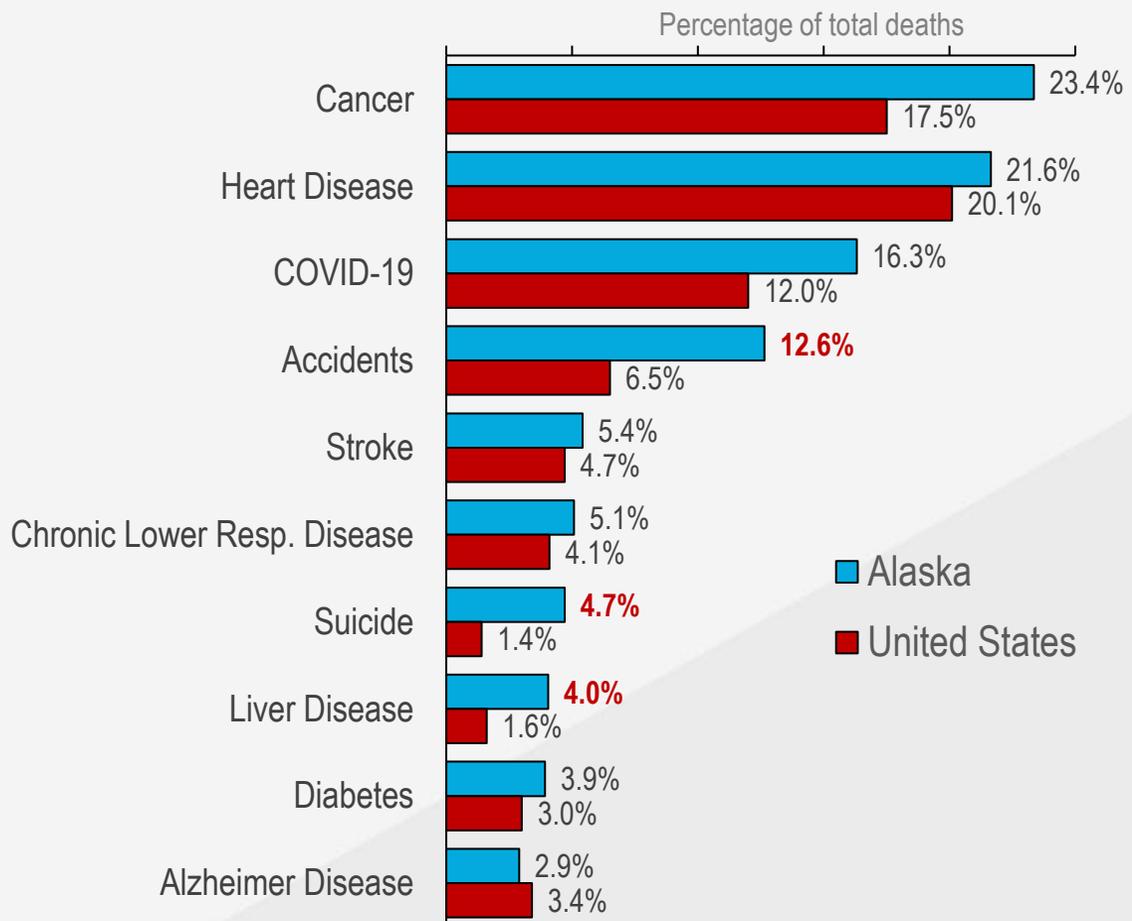


State of Health

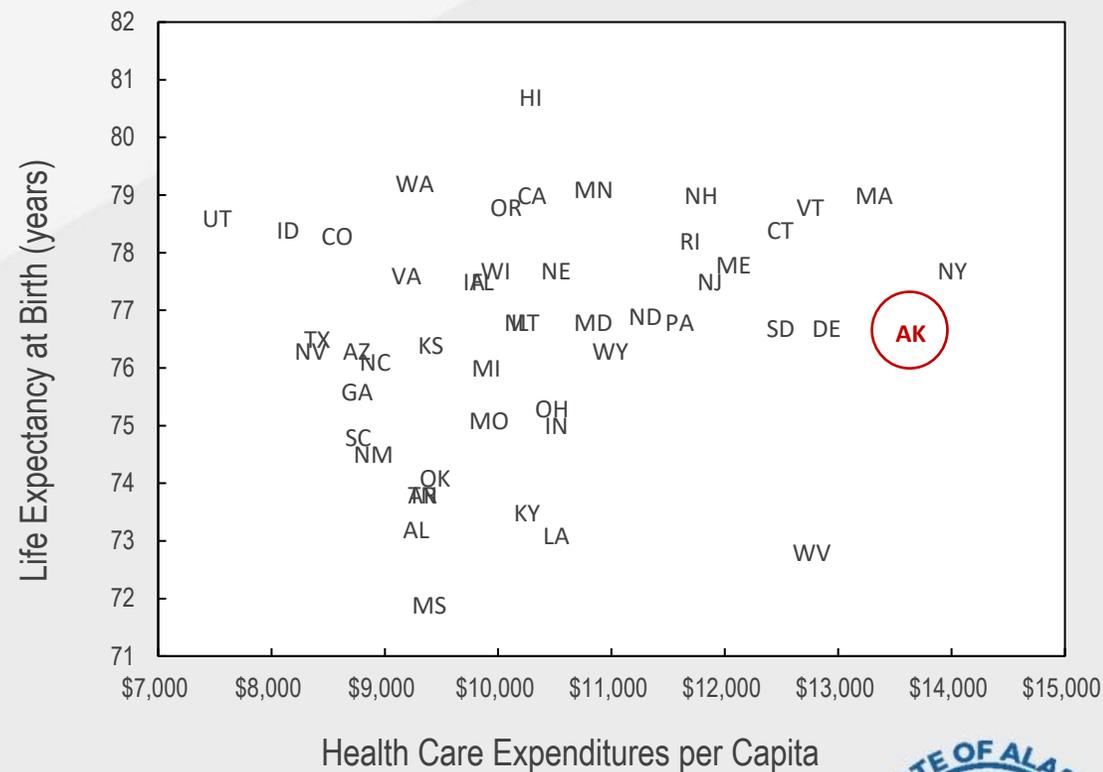


State of Health

Leading Causes of Death in Alaska vs. US (2021)



Life Expectancy at Birth vs. Health Care Expenditures per Capita: Comparison Across States (2020)



State of Health: Alaska's Health Improvement Plan



- ✓ Thirty health objectives with **specific targets** to reach by **2030** provide a common framework with **strategies and actions** to achieve each target
- ✓ **Partnering** with Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC)
- ✓ Serves as **roadmap** for stakeholders to work together on upstream health improvements
- ✓ Annual **progress** report on each target

HealthyAlaskans.org



Healthy Families Initiative

Strong families are the foundation of a healthy society and a vibrant economy.



- 4-year statewide investments in the health and wellbeing of Alaskan families
- Governor Dunleavy proposed \$9.9M (UGF) in his FY2024 operating budget for Healthy Families activities within DOH:
 - ✓ Postpartum Medicaid extension
 - ✓ Office of Health Savings
 - ✓ TB and congenital syphilis mitigation
 - ✓ Fresh Start Campaign



Healthy Beginnings



Health Care Access



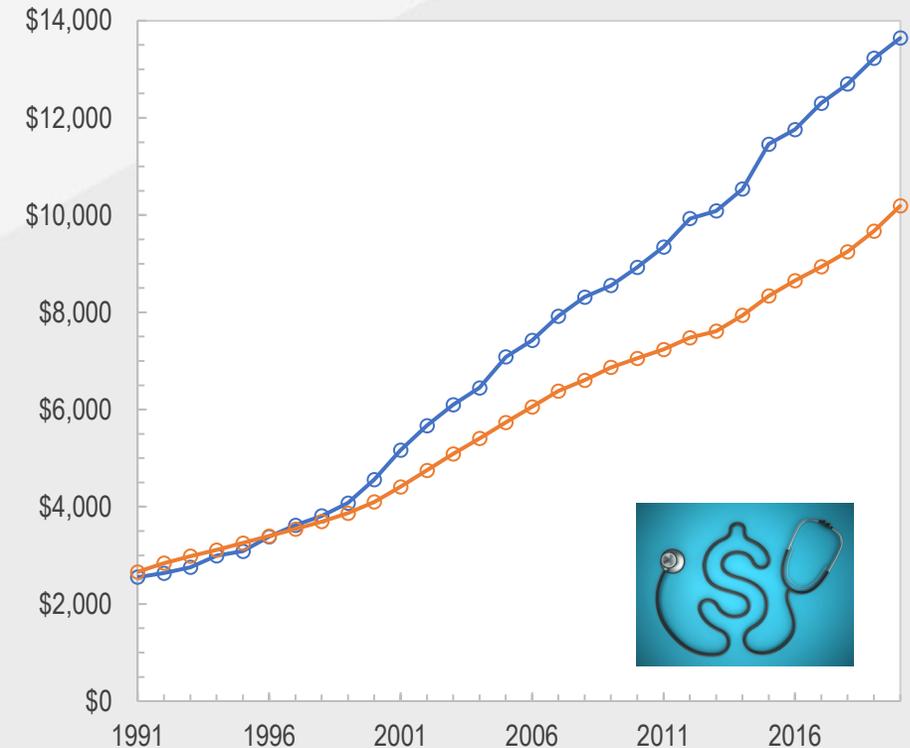
Healthy Communities



Healthy Families Initiative: Office of Health Savings

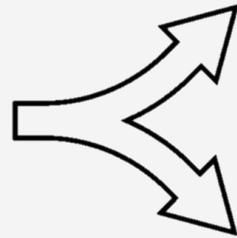
- Reducing health care costs while improving the health of Alaskans
- Positioned within DOH Commissioner's Office
 - ✓ Initial savings focused on Medicaid program
 - ✓ Innovative payment models
 - ✓ Pharmacy costs and improved access to critical medications

Health Care Expenditures per Capita,
Alaska vs. United States (1991-2020)



Healthy Families Initiative

Reorganization of DHSS



AK | DFCS
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES

- ✓ Commissioner's Office
- ✓ Finance & Management Services
- ✓ Health Care Services
- ✓ Behavioral Health
- ✓ Senior & Disabilities Services
- ✓ Public Assistance
- ✓ Public Health

- ✓ Commissioner's Office
- ✓ Finance & Management Services
- ✓ Alaska Psychiatric Institute
- ✓ Juvenile Justice
- ✓ Alaska Pioneer Homes
- ✓ Office of Children's Services

Update on Department Split

- **Shared IT Resources**
 - ✓ Developing a roadmap to separating resources
- **Information Technology Debt**
 - ✓ Seeking contractors and modernizing systems to improve efficiency and quality of service
- **Improving the Continuum of Care**
 - ✓ Establishing a coordinated system across DOH and DFCS to ensure person-centered care
- **Complex Care**
 - ✓ Identifying solutions to address systemic gaps in access to care for patients with complex needs



AK | DFCS
ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES



Finance and Management Services

FMS provides financial, administrative, facilities, and technology services to the department.

- Budget
- Revenue & Finance
- Information Technology Services
 - ✓ HIPAA Compliant
- Human Resources
- Grants and Contracts
 - ✓ \$173+ million distributed in grants
 - ✓ 500+ operating grantees
- Program Integrity
- Medicaid, Allocations, and Audit Services



Division of Senior and Disabilities Services

SDS promotes health, well-being and safety for individuals with disabilities, seniors and vulnerable adults by facilitating access to quality services and supports that foster independence, personal choice and dignity.

Programs

- ✓ Home and Community Based Services (HCBS)
- ✓ Adult Protective Services (APS)
- ✓ Infant Learning program
- ✓ General Relief program

Highlights from FY22

- ✓ 10% Medicaid rate increase for HCBS providers
- ✓ \$8 million in American Rescue Plan Act funds for HCBS providers
- ✓ Full funding allocated to improvements to HCBS for seniors and people with disabilities
- ✓ Stakeholder engagement



Division of Health Care Services

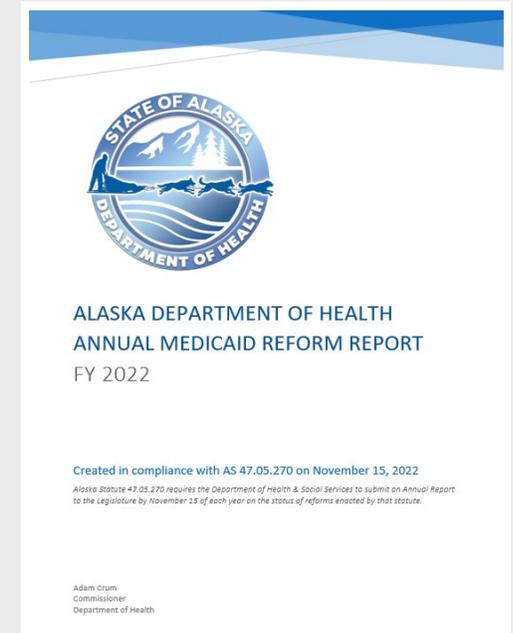
HCS's mission is to provide to all eligible Alaskans access and oversight to the full range of appropriate Medicaid services. We also protect Alaska's most vulnerable populations through our certification and licensing sections.

Programs

- ✓ Administering Medicaid services – \$45-50 million weekly check write
- ✓ Background Check Unit (BCU)
- ✓ Licensing (Residential & Facilities)
- ✓ Transportation
- ✓ Tribal reclaiming

Highlights from FY22

- ✓ Fiscal agent transition
- ✓ \$155 million in claims recovery
- ✓ \$45 million in pharmacy savings
- ✓ \$74 million in tribal reclaiming
- ✓ 22K+ determinations issued on background check applications



Division of Behavioral Health

DBH has a commitment to improving the quality of life of Alaskans through the right service to the right person at the right time.



Programs

- ✓ Behavioral health Medicaid Services (State Plan & 1115 Waiver)
- ✓ Tobacco enforcement
- ✓ Alcohol Safety Action Program
- ✓ Treatment and Recovery Team
- ✓ Suicide prevention

Highlights from FY22

- ✓ 988 Implementation and the Zero Suicide Initiative
- ✓ 180 grant awards
- ✓ Expanded services
- ✓ \$190 Million claims paid through 1115 Waiver



Division of Public Health

DPH is committed to protecting and promoting the health of Alaskans.

Programs



Highlights

- ✓ Healthy Alaskans 2030
- ✓ Eliminated age restrictions for services at Public Health Centers
- ✓ Expanded work on addressing the opioid epidemic including distribution of ~20K naloxone kits
- ✓ Fresh Start Campaign



Division of Public Assistance

DPA promotes self sufficiency and provides basic living expenses to Alaskans in need.

Programs

- ✓ 18 Public Assistance programs
- ✓ Child Care Assistance & Licensing

Highlights

- ✓ Provided public assistance to ~300K Alaskans per month
- ✓ \$95.5 million in COVID-19 relief for childcare



Public Assistance Backlog: Causes

1. IT systems – 40-year legacy system

- ✓ Eligibility Information System (EIS) was never fully migrated to ARIES
- ✓ Fiscal crisis delayed efforts to modernize systems

2. Pandemic – Manual Processing of benefits

- ✓ DPA was unable to automate the SNAP Emergency Allotments (EA), resulted in manually issued benefits processed by staff for over 2+ years
- ✓ The Pandemic Electronic Benefit Transfer (P-EBT) benefits issued by DPA on behalf DEED
- ✓ When the state public health emergency ended and Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) clarified policy, recertifications restarted for SNAP

3. Cyber Attack in May 2021

- ✓ Pivoted existing IT staff to protection of personal health information, forensic analysis, and recovery efforts
- ✓ The majority of DPA systems were taken down requiring substantial manual processing
- ✓ Planned system changes that would have brought online forms and other improvements were further delayed



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000131  
000132      01  WS-RPT-HEADER-3.  
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000146
000147 PROCEDURE DIVISION.
000148

PF 1=HELP 2=SPLIT 3=END 4=RETURN 5=RFIND 6=RCHANGE
PF 7=UP 8=DOWN 9=SWAP 10=LEFT 11=RIGHT 12=RETRIEVE

Public Assistance Backlog: IT Systems

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000100  IDENTIFICATION DIVISION
000200  PROGRAM-ID. HELLO1.
000300  ENVIRONMENT DIVISION.
000800  CONFIGURATION SECTION.
000900  SPECIAL-NAMES.  SYSIN IS
001000  INPUT-OUTPUT SECTION.
001100  DATA DIVISION.
001200  FILE SECTION.
001300  WORKING-STORAGE SECTION
001400  01  WORK-FIELDS.
001500     05  HELLO-WORLD-SWI
001600  PROCEDURE DIVISION.
001700  ** THIS PROGRAM WILL PUT
F1=Help      F2=Split      F3=Ex
F7=Up        F8=Down      F9=S
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- ✓ Most eligibility staff will need to access up to 9 systems: Eligibility Information System (EIS), Alaska's Resource for Integrated Eligibility Services (ARIES), Energy Community Online System (ECOS), ILINX Document Management System, current™ Workload Management Tool, WinStar, SAM (DOL interface), Instant Eligibility Verification System (IEVS), Genesys Virtual Call Center
- ✓ The Department needs more programmers capable of coding in the Public Assistance mainframe which requires various outdated programming languages such as COBOL, Natural, and ADABAS.
- ✓ DOH has one IT programmer who can code in COBOL, one of the languages required to update EIS where SNAP applications are worked.

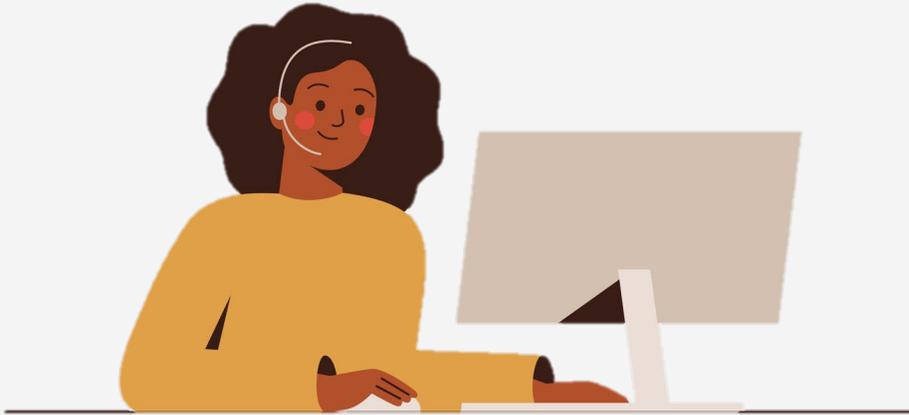


Public Assistance Backlog: **SNAP & Medicaid Backlog**

- ✓ Team focused on oldest SNAP recertifications and applications first .
- ✓ All September recertification benefits were issued for SNAP.
- ✓ Certain Medicaid applications and recertifications are impacted by the backlog. These include new applications submitted without a SNAP application and those stored in the legacy system.
- ✓ Open enrollment period for the Federally Facilitated Marketplace from October 2022 – January 2023 also created a recent influx of applications.
- ✓ Estimate difficult to determine due to lack of definition in system. Duplicate applications or those transferred in error all appear as outstanding.



Public Assistance Backlog: **Virtual Call Center**



VCC went live April 2021

- ✓ VCC allows DPA to serve the entire state equitably, including communities that do not have in-person lobbies available.
- ✓ VCC allows a client to wait anywhere to talk to an eligibility technician instead of only having the option to wait in person in a lobby and perhaps not be seen that day.
- ✓ Incoming phone calls are recorded, which allow for training and ability to review calls if calls come in from Governor's Constituent Relations or Legislative offices.
- ✓ Lobbies have historically been over crowded and at times hostile, creating difficult situations for vulnerable Alaskans and our DPA staff members.



Public Assistance Backlog: Virtual Call Center Challenges

- ✓ High call volume – 1,000 to 1,500 calls a day.
- ✓ The VCC is temporarily dedicated to gathering information from each client. They are not processing applications in real time as of 10/25/2022. This allows more callers to talk to a live person each day.
- ✓ Each Wednesday, the division reassigns staff from the VCC to process applications. VCC is still available for emergency access on those days.
- ✓ The VCC automatic menu options vary depending on the amount of staff available to answer the phone, which can be frustrating to callers.
- ✓ We welcome input and suggestions on further improvements we can make.



Public Assistance Backlog: Efforts to Address Backlog

- ✓ Pursuing contractors to program EIS
- ✓ Pursuing contracting to support the VCC
- ✓ Crisis Communication
- ✓ Security evaluations and security guards for DPA lobbies
- ✓ Recruiting and onboarding both permanent eligibility technicians and long term non-permanent positions



Suggestions From Partners

1. Lengthen certification periods
2. Waive unnecessary interviews
3. Streamline the review of housing, utilities, and dependent care costs
4. Implement broad-based categorical eligibility
5. Extend one month of SNAP benefits for all who are delayed because of agency fault
6. Establish a cost effectiveness threshold and compromise overpayment claims
7. Recruit and train more fee agents
8. Improve website capacity



Unwinding of Continuous Enrollment for Medicaid

✓ Beginning March 2020, states were required to maintain eligibility status for Medicaid beneficiaries

✓ Starting April 1, Alaska will begin Medicaid eligibility redeterminations

✓ Alaska has 12 months to complete redeterminations for all active Medicaid cases

✓ Redetermination Plans are submitted to CMS by February 15th

✓ DOH will work with stakeholders to maximize public communication starting in February



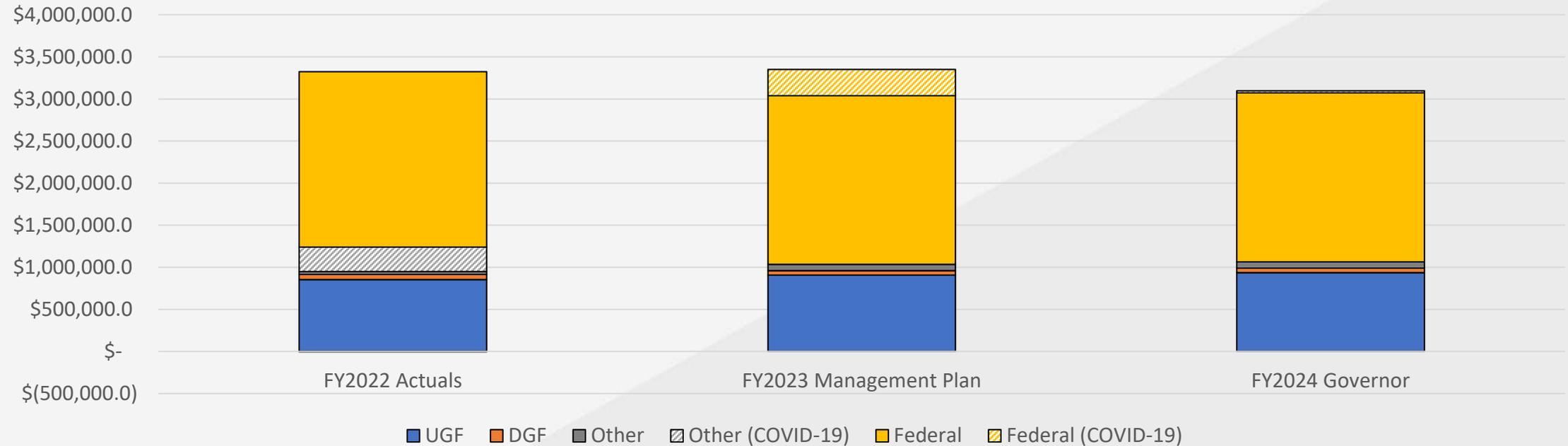
Phase Down of FFCRA Temporary FMAP Increase

Jan 1, 2023 - March 31, 2023:	6.2%
April 1, 2023 – June 30, 2023:	5.0%
July 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023:	2.5%
October 1 – December 31, 2023:	1.5%



Operating Budget

FY2022-FY2024 (in thousands)



	FY2022 Actuals	FY2023 Management Plan	FY2024 Governor
UGF	\$ 853,200.4	\$ 906,446.1	\$ 935,486.2
DGF	\$ 61,756.6	\$ 53,549.4	\$ 53,665.0
Other	\$ 35,337.6	\$ 73,932.2	\$ 75,499.4
Other (COVID-19)	\$ 290,198.7	\$ -	\$ -
Federal	\$ 2,083,507.4	\$ 2,005,460.3	\$ 2,008,144.5
Federal (COVID-19)	\$ (3,822.5)	\$ 310,345.0	\$ 25,000.0
Total	\$ 3,320,178.2	\$ 3,349,733.0	\$ 3,097,795.1

* Excludes Departmental Support Services, Human Services Community Matching Grant, and Community Initiative Matching Grants

