

SB

259

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: SB 259
 (S) Publish Date: 1/12/04
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 Title: ESTABLISHING THE SENIORCARE PROGRAM RDU Alaskan Pioneer Homes
 Component: Alaska Pioneer Homes Management

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Sponsor: RULES COMMITTEE

Requester: _____

Component No. 2731

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services	94.6	5.2				
Travel						
Contractual	74.0	4.0				
Supplies	15.7	0.9				
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	184.3	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	184.3	10.1				
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	184.3	10.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 46.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time	2	2				
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes will process enrollment and determine program eligibility for the SeniorCare program. The division will also issue and mail checks for the cash benefit segment of the program. The SeniorCare program will operate for the last quarter of FY 04, the entirety of FY 05, and six months of FY 06.

Due to increasing costs, a 10% inflation factor was applied to FY 05 costs to determine FY 06 contractual services and supply costs.

Continued next page.

Prepared by: Virginia Smiley
 Division: Alaskan Pioneer Homes
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone 465-4422
 Date/Time 01/06/2004
 Date 01/07/2004

FISCAL NOTE
FN #1

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB 259

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION

The eligibility Tech I (range 13, step A) will provide or supervise the provision of accurate eligibility determinations and benefit authorizations for new and ongoing SeniorCare cash benefit or pharmacy benefit applicants/recipients. In accordance with regulations the position's work includes interviews, data collection, data review and analysis and investigations. The position will enroll pharmacy benefit recipients in the public assistance EIS system.

The Admin Clerk III, (range 10, step A) position will perform specialized clerical functions requiring knowledge of SeniorCare policies. The position will need to understand laws and regulations and vary procedures depending on different situations, and be able to explain the requirements to others. The position will need to recognize errors and discrepancies in information and take appropriate action. The Admin Clerk III will be the back up position for the ET I and will process "month-end" cash benefit checks in the absence of the ET I.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
 Bill Version: SB 259
 (S) Publish Date: 1/12/04

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services

Title: ESTABLISHING THE SENIORCARE PROGRAM RDU Public Assistance

Component: SeniorCare

Sponsor: RULES COMMITTEE

Requester: _____ Component No. 2760

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	14,649.6	7,690.9				
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	14,649.6	7,690.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts	12,000.0					
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	2,649.6	7,690.9				
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	14,649.6	7,690.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 554.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The proposed SeniorCare program provides a cash or drug benefit to eligible seniors age 65 or older. Program benefits will be disbursed through the SeniorCare program in the Division of Public Assistance budget. The program is proposed to operate during the last quarter of FY 04, the entire FY 05 and the first half of FY 06.

See assumptions, next page.

Prepared by: Angela Salerno
 Division: Public Assistance
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone: 465-6300
 Date/Time: 01/09/2004
 Date: 01/09/2004

ANALYSIS CONTINUATION
SeniorCare benefit levels

Cash benefit: \$360/yr. in FY04; \$1,440/yr. in FY05; \$720 in FY06
Drug benefit, below 135% poverty: \$400/yr. in FY04; \$1,600/yr. in FY05; \$800/yr. in FY06
Drug benefit between 135% and 150% poverty: \$250/yr. in FY04; \$1,000/yr. in FY05; \$500/yr. in FY06

SeniorCare Caseload Projections

FY 04

Cash benefit: 7,550
Drug benefit below 135% poverty: 600
Drug benefit between 135% and 150% poverty: 2,120

FY 05

Cash benefit: 7,928
Drug benefit, below 135% poverty: 630
Drug benefit between 135% and 150% poverty: 2,226

FY 06

Cash benefit: 8,323
Drug benefit, below 135% poverty: 662
Drug benefit between 135% and 150% poverty: 2,337

Cost Projections:

FY 04 (4th Qtr. only)

Cash benefit: $7,550 \times \$360 = \$2,718,000$
Drug benefit, below 135% poverty: $600 \times \$400 = \$240,000$
Drug benefit between 135% and 150% poverty: $2,120 \times \$250 = \$530,000$

TOTAL FY04 COST: $\$2,718,000 + \$240,000 + \$530,000 = \$3,488,000 - \$2,934,000$ (FY 04 appropriation for Alaska Senior Assistance Program) = **\$554,000**

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ANALYSIS CONTINUATION
SeniorCare Caseload Projections, continued

EY 05

Cash benefit: $7,928 \times \$1,440 = \$11,415,600$

Drug benefit, below 135% poverty: $630 \times \$1,600 = \$1,008,000$

Drug benefit between 135% and 150% poverty: $2,226 \times \$1,000 = \$2,226,000$

TOTAL FY 05 COST: $\$11,415,600 + \$1,008,000 + \$2,226,000 = \$14,649,600$

EY 06

Cash benefit: $8,323 \times \$720 = \$5,992,830$

Drug benefit, below 135% poverty: $662 \times \$800 = \$529,600$

Drug benefit between 135% and 150% poverty: $2,337 \times \$500 = \$1,168,500$

TOTAL FY 06 COST:

$\$5,992,830 + \$529,600 + \$1,168,500 = \$7,690,930$

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 3
 Bill Version: SB 259
 (S) Publish Date: 1/12/04
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 Component Public Assistance Admin

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Title ESTABLISHING THE SENIORCARE PROGRAM RDU

Sponsor RULES COMMITTEE

Requester _____

Component No. 233

Expenditures/Revenues

(Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services	40.0	20.0				
Travel	7.0	3.0				
Contractual	12.0	4.0				
Supplies	2.0	1.5				
Equipment	0.5					
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	61.5	28.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)						

FUND SOURCE

(Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	61.5	28.5				
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	61.5	28.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 25.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

Outreach for the proposed SeniorCare program will include the staffing and operation of a SeniorCare Information Office to provide full-time, telephone-based information on programs and services, advertising about the SeniorCare program and travel to provide information to seniors throughout the state.

Prepared by: Angela Salerno
 Division Public Assistance
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner
 Agency Department of Health and Social Services

Phone 465-3200
 Date/Time 01/06/2004
 Date 01/07/2004

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 4
 Bill Version: SB 259
 (S) Publish Date: 1/12/04
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 RDU Departmental Support Services
 Component Information Technology Services

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Title ESTABLISHING THE SENIORCARE PROGRAM
 Sponsor RULES COMMITTEE

Requester _____

Component No. 2754

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies	7.1	7.5				
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	7.1	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)						
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FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	7.1	7.5				
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	7.1	7.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 6.8

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The Public Assistance Systems Operations unit, under the departmental Information Technology Services component, will issue and mail SeniorCare drug benefit cards to approximately 2,720 recipients in FY 04, 2,856 recipients in FY 05, and 2,999 recipients in FY 06.

Prepared by: Janet Clarke, Director
 Division: Administrative Services
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner
 Agency: Department of Health and Social Services

Phone 465-1630
 Date/Time 01/07/2004
 Date 01/07/2004

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2004 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 5
 Bill Version: SB 259
 (S) Publish Date: 1/12/04
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services
 RDU Health Care Services
 Component Health Purchasing Group

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction):

Title ESTABLISHING THE SENIORCARE PROGRAM

Sponsor RULES COMMITTEE

Requester _____

Component No. 243

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2005	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual		50.0				
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE						
CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)						

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF		50.0				
1005 GF/Program Receipts	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2004) cost: 85.0
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2004 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The Department of Health and Social Services Division of Health Care Services anticipates required FY04 start-up costs of \$85.0 in general funds for the development of MMIS claims processing capability for payment of the state program's drug benefit plan.

There are no additional anticipated costs during the course of FY05.

The department anticipates general fund costs of \$50.0 for MMIS system changes and documentation with the sunset of the program in FY06.

Prepared by: Nancy Burns Phone 465-3356
 Division Health Care Services Date/Time _____
 Approved by: Joel S. Gilbertson, Commissioner Date 01/07/2004
 Agency Department of Health and Social Services

A New Direction

Alaska's Benefits to Seniors Rank Among the Nation's Best

"We know Alaska's richest resource is our people."

- Governor Frank H. Murkowski

Governor Murkowski has charged Alaska's Department of Health and Social Services with setting new and higher standards for meeting the health care and social services needs of Alaskans. In the past year the department has made some of the most sweeping and innovative changes in Alaska's state government. DHSS Commissioner Joel Gilbertson undertook a major reorganization to better serve all Alaskans in need.

The Governor met with seniors
at the State Fair

Self-Sufficiency, Safety Net and Access to Care

The work of the Department of Health and Social Services is guided by three core values: protecting each individual's right to live as self-sufficiently as possible; providing a safety net of services to those in the greatest need; and providing the broadest possible access to care. It is those core values that guide the department's work in serving seniors and in serving all Alaskans.



Division of Senior and Disabilities Services

One of the department's major initiatives in 2003 was to establish a new Division of Senior and Disabilities Services to care for seniors and the disabled in one agency. This division helps provide better access to a wide range of the services that seniors and people with disabilities need and deserve.

Making Hard Choices: Taking Care Of Those In Need

Governor Murkowski has said that one of the hardest decisions he had to make in 2003 was ending the Longevity Bonus program in order to redirect available financial resources to those seniors with the most serious needs. The Governor's commitment was to make sure seniors with the greatest need receive services. More than 1,100 elderly Alaskans who had been excluded from the Longevity Bonus program are among the 7,200 seniors now receiving needed assistance under the new Alaska Senior Assistance Program. The old program provided 18,000 of Alaska's 44,000 citizens over the age of 65 with monthly bonus checks, but deprived the other 26,000 of any such payment at all. And with eligibility for the old program based solely on date of birth – not on actual need – some of Alaska's most wealthy seniors got monthly checks, while others with significant needs got nothing. The new program provides funding for Alaskans in need who were not receiving any bonus payments. Of the 7,211 applicants qualifying for the new program, 6,072 had received the Longevity Bonus and 1,139 had not.

How We Compare To Other States

Alaska ranks near the top of the list of states in terms of services we provide to older residents. Alaska not only offers an array of services through the Department of Health and Social Services, but many other senior benefit programs as well. Property tax exemptions, sales tax exemptions, community service training and employment programs, hunting and fishing license exemptions, discounted ferry and Alaska Railroad

fares and driver's license discounts are all among the many ways the state shows respect and gratitude to older Alaskans who have helped make Alaska what it is today.

Introducing "SeniorCare" – A New Program For Alaska Seniors

Governor Murkowski believes that Alaskans should be provided the opportunity to direct and have access to necessary medical care as close to home and community as possible. The governor is committed to protecting access to prescription drugs for seniors, as well as providing better access to senior services. This commitment brought about some new services to help Alaska seniors in a program called "SeniorCare," which will provide help with prescription drugs, access to healthcare, and information about senior benefits, senior resources and referrals.



NEW! "SeniorCare"

The Senior Assistance Program has been brought under a new program called "SeniorCare." Eligible seniors will soon be provided an option to receive a prescription drug benefit in lieu of cash assistance as provided under the Senior Assistance Program. A prescription drug benefit will be offered to an additional group of eligible seniors needing assistance. The "SeniorCare" prescription drug benefit is anticipated to be offered April 2004, pending legislative approval.

NEW! "SeniorCare" Prescription Drug Benefit: Anticipated to start in April, this program will provide a bridge for seniors needing assistance until the new federal Medicare prescription drug program goes into effect in 2006. Seniors

who qualify for the Senior Assistance Program (135 percent of the poverty level), and who do not receive Medicaid prescription drug coverage, will be provided a choice between the new "SeniorCare" prescription drug subsidy of \$1,600 a year (prorated) or to continue with cash assistance. Together with the \$600 Medicare subsidy to begin this spring, these eligible seniors opting for the "SeniorCare" prescription drug benefit will have a combined benefit of \$2200 a year. Additionally, seniors between 135 percent and 150 percent of poverty level will receive a prescription drug benefit of \$1000 a year.

"SeniorCare" Senior Assistance Program: Currently, Alaskans 65 and older at 135 percent of poverty level can receive cash assistance of \$120 per month. By April, the seniors who qualify for this program will be offered a new option of receiving the "SeniorCare" prescription drug benefit in lieu of the cash benefit, for a total drug subsidy of \$2,200. With a higher income eligibility level than Adult Public Assistance, the Senior Assistance Program now helps over 7,600 seniors – about 15 percent of whom had never received the Longevity Bonus. Alaska will spend more than \$9 million on this program in the current fiscal year.

Total Medicaid Program Assistance: Prescriptions, medical care, hospitalization and other services are provided to more than 7,000 elderly eligible Alaskans at a cost of \$119.6 million a year. Alaska spends almost \$100 million on prescription drugs annually through Medicaid, with 25 percent annual cost increases expected in the future.

NEW! Medicaid Preferred Drug List: The Preferred Drug List, scheduled to be in place by early 2004, will contain costs for prescription drugs provided to those receiving Medicaid. The Preferred Drug List will protect Alaska low-income seniors' access to prescription drugs, and will provide a valuable resource for all seniors to compare prescription drug costs. Once approved, the list will be made available through the Alaska Senior Information Office, allowing seniors to work with their physicians to identify cost effective drugs that are right for them.

NEW! Senior Information Office: Find a one-stop resource and referral for benefits and services for seniors in the State of Alaska. Scheduled to be in place by mid-January, the Alaska Senior Information Office will provide a statewide toll-free telephone number for information on services available to seniors,

including: an up-to-date directory of local physicians who accept Medicaid and Medicare clients, available programs and services including "SeniorCare," prescription drug information and assistance for seniors.

Assistance with Medicare Costs for Low-Income Seniors: Premium, co-pay and deductible coverage is provided to those who qualify.

330 Clinics/Denali Commission: Federally funded clinics are being constructed in rural communities with assistance from the Denali Commission, to provide greater access for Medicaid and Medicare patients.

Other Programs for Alaska's Seniors

Please take a moment to learn about some of the other current programs that support Alaska's seniors.

Promoting self sufficiency and healthy behaviors

People should be provided the opportunity to be as independent and healthy as possible.

Long-Term Care Financial Assistance and Services

Home and Community-Based Programs: Seniors with dementia, those in rural areas, and other seniors in need are eligible for home- and community-based assistance programs. This program totals about \$4.6 million annually in state funding.

IMPROVED! Assisted Living Development Investment: We are working with the Denali Commission to develop community-based assisted living services in rural communities.

Older Alaskans Waiver Services: More than 1,350 seniors who are eligible for nursing home care chose to receive care at home instead. This program provides assistance to seniors who meet income criteria at a cost of about \$25.5 million each year.

Personal Care Attendant Program: People with functional impairments and who meet income eligibility requirements are served by this program, at a cost of \$21.8 million for seniors.

IMPROVED! Alaska Pioneers Homes: Alaska's licensed assisted living facilities in Fairbanks, Palmer, Anchorage, Juneau, Sitka and Ketchikan provide more than 600 beds for Alaska's seniors. A person age 65 with one year Alaska residency can qualify for the Pioneers Homes. Rates are subsidized for low-income seniors. Alaska provides these services at a cost of about \$35.7 million a year. Additionally, the state is proposing to invest more than \$3 million to upgrade the Alaska Pioneers Homes in the next fiscal year.

Assisted Living Licensing: More than 1,700 assisted living beds are available in approximately 150 homes. There is no income criterion for this program.

Nursing Homes: The state of Alaska provides assistance to almost 950 people, largely seniors, in need of nursing home or home- and community-based waiver services. The state spent about \$61.3 million in fiscal year ending June 30, 2003, on Medicaid nursing home services.

Transportation

Transportation services: Seniors and disabled residents get help in getting around town through local transportation services in communities statewide, such as AnchorRide in Anchorage, and Care-A-Van in Juneau. Alaska provides about \$1.3 million annually for this program.

Employment Services

Senior Community Service Training and Employment: This program offers vocational training and job placement services to low-income Alaskans age 55. The state provides \$1.6 million a year to support this effort.

Providing a safety net

Basic human needs should be met through a safety net of services in a safe and healthy community environment

Financial Assistance

Adult Public Assistance: This program can provide Alaskans age 65 and older with Medicaid coverage, and, for those meeting income eligibility guidelines, with monthly cash assistance to supplement SSI. The state pays about \$18.6 million annually for this program.

Food Stamps: This program helps ensure that those Alaskans meeting certain eligibility guidelines receive adequate nutrition. Almost 1,100 Alaska seniors receive \$2.4 million in food stamps each year.

Photo by Hall Anderson/Ketchikan Daily News



DHSS Commissioner Joel Gilbertson with seniors

Other financial assistance

Housing Assistance: The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation offers senior housing with rent limits for qualifying seniors.

Heating Assistance Program: This federally funded program helps low-income families, whether home owners or renters, meet the high costs of keeping their homes warm.

Assurance of Safety

IMPROVED! Adult Protective Services: This program provides vulnerable adults with assistance and targets seniors in need. The demand for this service continues to grow, and the department is reviewing ways to have other departments, such as Public Safety, work collaboratively in this effort. Alaska provides this service for about \$2 million a year.

Guardianships and Conservatorships: More than 850 adults take part in this program offered by the Office of Public Advocacy at a cost of \$1.6 million per year to the state.

Long Term Care Ombudsman: This office investigates reports concerning the well being and rights of seniors who live in long-term care facilities. The office also works to resolve concerns that those over age 60 may have with other services. The state spent \$208,000 on this service in the last fiscal year.

Services through Senior Centers

Senior Centers: State and federal grants help support 31 senior centers in Alaska.

Meal Transportation and Support: More than 100 Alaska communities receive help in providing nutritional services to those over age 60 at senior centers or similar centers, and through programs delivering meals to seniors' homes. Nutrition and health education is also provided. Alaska spends about \$5.8 million a year on these programs through the Alaska Commission on Aging.

FOR INFORMATION CALL: ALASKA SENIOR INFORMATION OFFICE

Statewide: 1-800-478-6065

Anchorage: 907-269-3680

Alaska Department of Health & Social Services Division of Senior and Disabilities Services



Comparison of Qualifications and Benefits

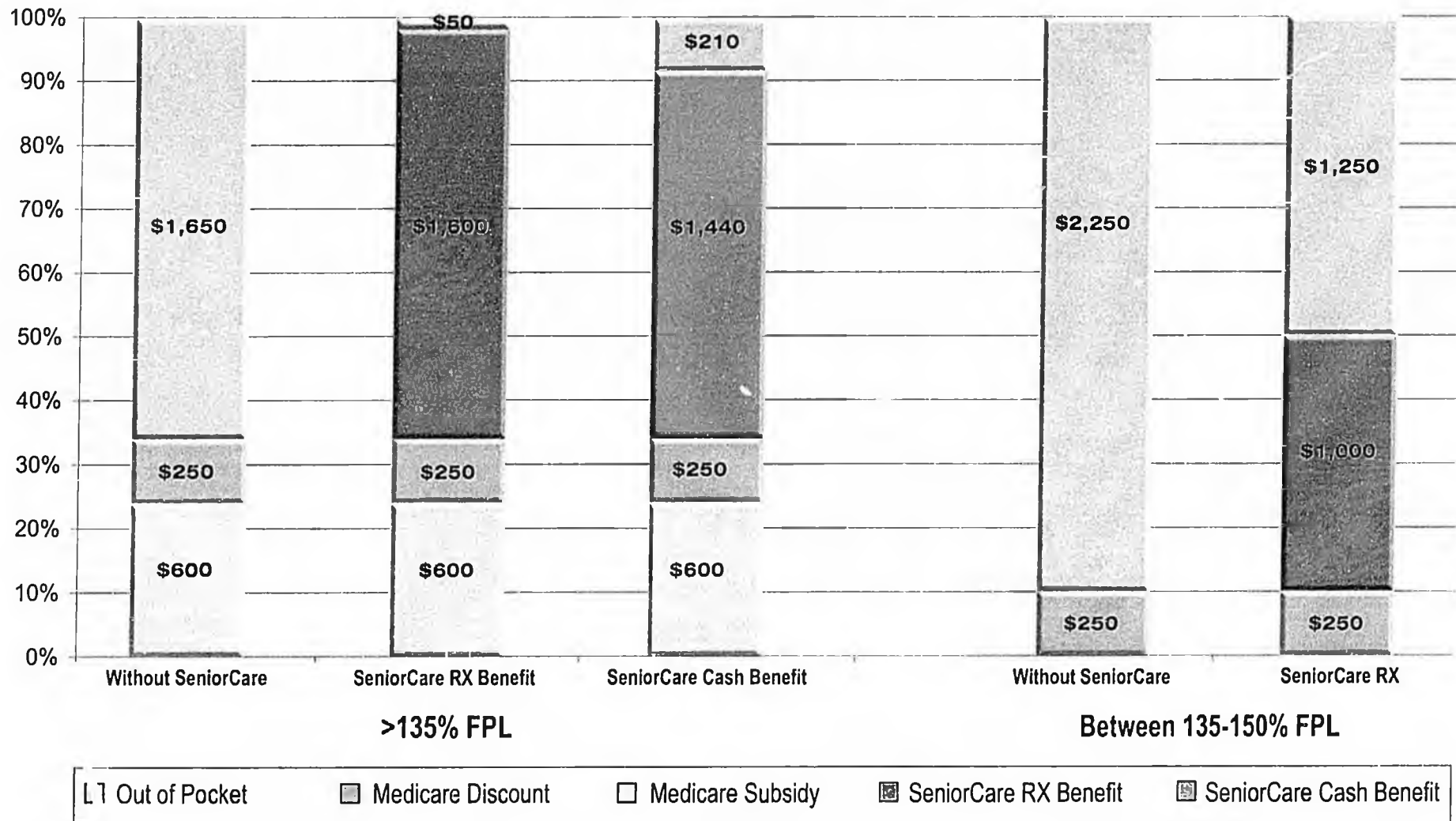
	SeniorCare Prescription Drug Subsidy	SeniorCare Cash Assistance Subsidy	SeniorCare Prescription Drug Subsidy
Qualifications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 135% of Poverty Level ➤ Annual Income below \$15,135 Single \$20,439 Couple ➤ Liquid Assets below \$4,000 Single \$6,000 Couple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 135% of Poverty Level ➤ Annual Income below \$15,135 Single \$20,439 Couple ➤ Liquid Assets below \$4,000 Single \$6,000 Couple 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 135% to 150% of Poverty Level ➤ Annual Income below \$16,815 Single \$22,710 Couple ➤ Liquid Assets below \$4,000 Single \$6,000 Couple
SeniorCare Benefit April 2004 - December 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ \$1,600 Annual Prescription Drug Subsidy (prorated) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ \$120 a month cash assistance (up to \$1,440 annual) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ \$1,000 Annual Prescription Drug Subsidy (prorated)
Medicare Benefit May 2004 - December 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual Medicare Subsidy \$600 ➤ Medicare drug discount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Annual Medicare Subsidy \$600 ➤ Medicare drug discount 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Medicare drug discount



Bridging the Gap

Comparison of Benefits

\$2,500 Annual Rx Cost



LT Out of Pocket
 Medicare Discount
 Medicare Subsidy
 SeniorCare RX Benefit
 SeniorCare Cash Benefit

State of Alaska
Department of Health & Social Services

Frank H. Murkowski
Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001
NEWS RELEASE



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Dec. 17, 2003

**Governor announces SeniorCare, a new array
of services for Alaska seniors**

Prescription drug benefit, new services, better access to health care, information & resources to be offered

Juneau, Alaska – Governor Frank H. Murkowski today announced SeniorCare, a new proposed program to make prescription drugs more affordable for Alaska seniors. “SeniorCare will provide qualified seniors with a prescription drug benefit to assist in the purchase of needed medications,” Governor Murkowski said. SeniorCare will also include a new Senior Information Office and a Preferred Drug List to make prescription drugs more affordable. Seniors receiving the Alaska Senior Assistance Program can choose to continue receiving the cash assistance of \$120 a month instead of the drug coverage.

“SeniorCare will provide a bridge for those seniors most in need of assistance until the full Medicare prescription drug benefit begins in January 2006,” Governor Murkowski noted. “I will ask legislators to pass this legislation in January so that this benefit can begin in April 2004.” The Senior Assistance Program cash benefit was only budgeted in the current fiscal year and would end June 30 if the legislature takes no action, but will continue as an option until January 2006 if passed.

“SeniorCare will help low income seniors who do not otherwise qualify for public assistance – the people with greatest needs,” said Department of Health and Social Services Commissioner Joel Gilbertson. “However, we will provide a broader program that will help all seniors,” Gilbertson said. The new SeniorCare program will provide a one-stop senior resource and referral service, help with prescription drugs and access to healthcare, and work to lower the cost of prescription drugs.

Seniors who qualify for the Senior Assistance Program (65 and older and 135 percent of the poverty level), and who are not receiving comprehensive Medicaid prescription drug coverage will be provided a choice – between the new SeniorCare prescription drug subsidy of \$1,600 a year or to continue to receive the Senior Assistance Program cash assistance of \$1,440 a year. Together with the \$600 Medicare subsidy to begin this spring, these eligible seniors opting for the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit will have a combined drug subsidy of \$2,200 a year.

-more-

Currently those seniors who qualify for the Senior Assistance Program earn less than \$15,134 annually, or if living with a spouse, earn less than \$20,439. To qualify, some assets are considered in the overall needs test.

Additionally, seniors between 135 percent and 150 percent of poverty level will receive a prescription drug benefit of \$1,000 a year. The qualifying income level for these seniors would be those making below \$16,815 for an individual or \$22,710 for a couple. New federal poverty guidelines will be released early in 2004 and income level guidelines may change.

Other new offerings under the SeniorCare program include completion of a Preferred Drug List and opening a Senior Information Office.

"My commitment to Alaska seniors is to protect their access to prescription drugs, and to provide them better access to senior services," Governor Murkowski said. "Alaska seniors want to get necessary medical care as close to home and community as possible, and they want the opportunity to direct that care to the maximum extent. These are important because they promote independent living at the highest level possible, and that's what SeniorCare is all about."

The Medicaid Preferred Drug List, scheduled to be in place by early 2004, will contain costs for prescription drugs provided to those receiving Medicaid. The list will contain recommendations, selected by Alaska physicians and pharmacists, on drugs that are proven to be the most efficacious, cost-effective and safe. "The Preferred Drug List will also provide a valuable resource for all seniors to compare prescription drug costs, and will enable seniors to work with their physicians to identify cost-effective drugs that are right for them," Gilbertson said. Once implemented next spring, seniors can get the list from the new Alaska Senior Information Office.

"By mid January, our new Senior Information Office is going to be the single stop Alaska seniors will have to make for all resources and referrals they need," Governor Murkowski said. "This is an essential thing we can do to give Alaska seniors better customer service." The Alaska Senior Information Office will provide a statewide toll-free telephone number and Web site for information on services available to seniors, including an up-to-date directory of local physicians who accept Medicaid and Medicare clients, available programs and services including SeniorCare, and prescription drug information and assistance for seniors. The Senior Information Office and the Preferred Drug List will not need legislative approval to be implemented.

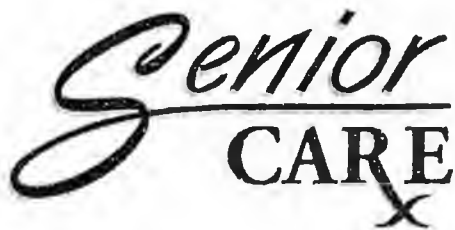
The toll-free telephone number for the SeniorCare Senior Information Office is 1-800-478-6065 (Anchorage 907-269-3680) and the Web address is: <http://www.seniorcare.alaska.gov>

Current programs for seniors which will fall under SeniorCare include comprehensive Medicaid health insurance coverage and Medicare cost-sharing assistance for low-income seniors. About 7,000 eligible seniors receive prescription drugs, medical care, hospitalization and other services from the state at a cost of \$119.6 million a year. In addition, DHSS will continue to work with the Denali Commission and others to ensure greater access to healthcare for Medicaid and Medicare patients.

For more information, please contact

Sherry Hill
Special Assistant to the Commissioner
Department of Health and Social Services
Juneau Office: 907-465-1618
Anchorage: 907-269-7800
Cell: 907-321-2838

Ross Soboleff
Public Information Officer III
Department of Health and Social Services
(907) 465-1611



Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is SeniorCare?

SeniorCare is a proposed array of services for Alaska seniors. SeniorCare bridges a gap for low-income seniors until the full Medicare prescription drug coverage begins in January 2006, and provides a statewide senior information, resource and referral service available for all Alaska seniors.

In the current Senior Assistance Program, eligible seniors receive a cash benefit of \$120 per month to help with basic needs such as food, housing and medication. Starting in April 2004, a prescription drug subsidy will be available to these same Alaska seniors, if approved by the Alaska Legislature. In the program, certain eligible seniors will have the option of selecting either the prescription drug subsidy or the cash benefit. A prescription drug benefit will also be offered to an additional group of eligible seniors needing assistance.

Seniors who qualify for this year's Senior Assistance Program (65 and older and 135 percent of the poverty level), and who are not receiving comprehensive Medicaid prescription drug coverage, will be provided a choice this spring. They will choose between receiving the new SeniorCare prescription drug subsidy of \$1,600 a year or to continue to receive the Senior Assistance Program cash assistance of \$1,440 a year. Together with the \$600 Medicare subsidy to begin this spring, these eligible seniors opting for the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit will have a combined benefit of \$2,200 a year.

Additionally, seniors between 135 percent and 150 percent of poverty level will receive a prescription drug benefit of \$1,000 a year. The qualifying income level for these seniors would be those making below \$16,815 for an individual or \$22,710 for a couple.

Other services offered through SeniorCare include a new Senior Information Office through the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. This office will be a one-stop resource for information seniors need. The Alaska Senior Information Office will provide a statewide toll-free telephone number and Web site for information on services available to seniors, including an up-to-date directory of local physicians who accept Medicaid and Medicare clients, available programs and services including SeniorCare, and prescription drug information and assistance for seniors.

The Medicaid Preferred Drug List, scheduled to be in place by early 2004, will contain costs for prescription drugs provided to those receiving Medicaid. The list will contain recommendations, selected by Alaska physicians and pharmacists, on drugs that are proven to be the most

efficacious, cost-effective and safe. The Preferred Drug List will also provide a valuable resource for all seniors to compare prescription drug costs, and will enable seniors to work with their physicians to identify cost-effective drugs that are right for them. Once implemented next spring, seniors can get the list from the new Alaska Senior Information Office.

The Senior Information Office and the Preferred Drug List will not need legislative approval to be implemented.

Current programs for seniors which will fall under SeniorCare includes comprehensive Medicaid health insurance coverage and Medicare cost-sharing assistance for low-income seniors. In addition, DHSS will continue to work with the Denali Commission and others to ensure greater access to healthcare for Medicaid and Medicare patients.

Q: When will the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit be made available?

It is anticipated that the prescription drug subsidy will begin April 1, pending legislative approval, and it will be available until the full Medicare prescription drug benefits begin in January 2006.

Q: Who is eligible for the SeniorCare prescription drug subsidy or cash benefit?

The individual must be age 65, a US citizen or legal alien, a resident of Alaska, and must plan to remain in Alaska for the duration of the program. Those seniors opting for the prescription drug subsidy must also have the Medicare Drug card, once it is available, about May 2004.

Seniors with income below 135 percent of the federal poverty level (annual income less than \$15,134), and liquid assets of no more than \$4,000 will qualify for the program. Couples living together who are married may have an annual income of no more than \$20,439 and assets of no more than \$6,000. Seniors who qualify for the SeniorCare program and who do not receive Medicaid prescription drug coverage, will be able to choose cash assistance or the new SeniorCare prescription drug subsidy of \$1,600 a year (prorated).

Seniors with income between 135 percent and 150 percent of poverty level will also qualify for a prescription drug subsidy. The qualifying income level for these seniors would be those making below \$16,815 for an individual or \$22,710 for a couple. New federal poverty guidelines will be released early in 2004 and income level guidelines may change.

Q: Are all my income and assets counted for purposes of eligibility?

No. Permanent Fund Dividend income is not counted. Also, only liquid assets are counted. Liquid assets are cash or other resources that can easily be converted to cash. Liquid assets include cash, bank accounts, stocks, bonds, individual retirement accounts, money market certificates, cash value of life insurance, etc. A home, automobiles and other real property are not counted for purposes of eligibility.

Q: My spouse is over 65, but I'm not. Do we have to count my income and assets as well?

Yes. Eligibility is based on the combined income and assets of couples who are married and living together regardless of whether one or both is eligible to receive the benefit.

Q: I live in an assisted living home. Am I eligible for the Alaska SeniorCare Program?

Yes. Seniors living independently or in assisted living homes are eligible. You are not eligible if you are living in a nursing home or other institutional setting.

Q: Will SeniorCare prescription drug benefit cover all drugs?

No. The benefit will not cover over-the-counter drugs, vitamins, or any medical supplies currently not covered under Medicaid. This benefit will follow the current Medicaid formulary for seniors, so drugs normally not dispensed to seniors will not be covered under this program.

Q: How will SeniorCare prescription drug benefit work with Medicare and other insurance coverage?

SeniorCare will be the payer of last resort. Medicare and other insurance will be the first payer for prescription drugs, and the SeniorCare benefit will follow after the first benefits have been exhausted.

Q: Will I need to pay to sign up for the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit?

No. SeniorCare does not require an enrollment fee, co-payments for prescriptions or premium payments.

Q: Can I leave the state and still receive the benefit?

It depends. If you are only leaving temporarily and plan to remain an Alaska resident, you will remain eligible, though you may not be able to use your benefit while out of state.

However, if you intend to change your state of residence, the benefit will end. Other states are not offering the SeniorCare program.

Q: I receive Adult Public Assistance. Will I be eligible for the Alaska SeniorCare Program?

You are eligible for the cash assistance benefit, but if you are receiving Medicaid prescription drug coverage, you will not be eligible for the SeniorCare prescription drug subsidy.

Q: How can I apply for SeniorCare prescription drug or cash assistance?

Applications for the cash assistance Senior Assistance Program are currently available at Division of Public Assistance offices, at senior centers around the state, and at a variety of other community service agencies. Seniors who meet the eligibility criteria need apply only once by mail or online. The application asks for information about income and assets, and requires a signature to confirm the truthfulness of the statement given. No additional proof of income or assets will be required.

Application forms for the new prescription drug benefit will be available spring 2004 at the same outlets mentioned above and available on-line through the DHSS Web site.

Q: I am currently receiving the Senior Assistance Program cash benefit. How can I choose to receive the Alaska SeniorCare prescription drug benefit?

You will receive information on the new prescription drug option before the benefit is set to begin in April 2004. You will receive a form asking your preference. You will simply need to indicate your choice to switch to the new option and send it in.

Q: I have not yet applied for the Senior Assistance cash benefit. When I apply, how will I know if I've been found eligible for the program?

You will receive a written "notice of award" informing you that you are eligible, and when your benefit will begin.

Q: Once I begin receiving the Alaska SeniorCare prescription drug or cash benefit, is there anything I must do to maintain my eligibility for the benefit period?

You are required to report changes in mailing or residence address, the death of an individual receiving assistance, or admission or discharge from a nursing home or other institutional setting. We may periodically review eligibility.

Q: How long will SeniorCare benefits be offered?

Anticipated to begin in April 2004 pending approval by the Alaska Legislature, SeniorCare will bridge a gap for low-income seniors until the full Medicare prescription drug coverage begins in January 2006. The SeniorCare prescription drug and cash benefit will end when the full Medicare prescription drug begins in January 2006.

Q: How many seniors does the state anticipate to participate in the SeniorCare prescription drug benefits?

Of the more than 47,000 seniors in Alaska, about 7,200 seniors are now receiving cash assistance under the Senior Assistance Program. A number of these seniors now receive prescription drugs, medical care, hospitalization and other services from the state. Seniors receiving Medicaid prescription drug coverage would not be able to receive SeniorCare prescription drug coverage, but would continue to qualify for the SeniorCare Senior Assistance Program cash assistance.

About 2,000 seniors who are enrolled in the Senior Assistance Program do not currently qualify for Medicaid services and would be able to choose to switch to the prescription drug benefit from the cash assistance. It is estimated that about 630 eligible seniors will choose to receive the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit.

Additionally, it is estimated that about 2200 seniors would fall within the 135 percent to 150 percent of the federal poverty level to qualify for the SeniorCare \$1,000 prescription drug benefit. It is estimated that all if not most of these eligible seniors will choose to receive the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit.

Q: How do I contact the SeniorCare Senior Information Office?

The toll-free telephone number for the SeniorCare Senior Information Office is 1-800-478-6065 (Anchorage 907-269-3680) and the Web address is: <http://www.seniorcare.alaska.gov>

**Alaska Department of Health & Social Services
Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
SeniorCare Senior Information Office
Statewide: 1-800-478-6065
Anchorage (907) 269-3680
www.seniorcare.alaska.gov**

Senior CARE

Fact Sheet

SeniorCare is a proposed array of services for Alaska seniors. SeniorCare bridges a gap for low-income seniors until the full Medicare prescription drug coverage begins in January 2006, and provides a statewide senior information, resource and referral service for all Alaska seniors.

Seniors who qualify for this year's Senior Assistance Program (65 and older and 135 percent of the poverty level), and who are not receiving comprehensive Medicaid prescription drug coverage, will be provided a choice starting in April 2004 pending legislative approval. They will choose between receiving the new SeniorCare prescription drug subsidy of \$1,600 a year or to continue to receive the Senior Assistance Program cash assistance of \$120 a month, which totals \$1,440 a year. Together with the \$600 Medicare subsidy to begin this spring, these eligible seniors opting for the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit will have a combined benefit of \$2,200 a year.

Additionally, seniors between 135 percent and 150 percent of poverty level will receive a prescription drug benefit of \$1,000 a year.

Other services offered through SeniorCare include a new Senior Information Office through the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. This office will be a one-stop resource for information seniors need. The Alaska Senior Information Office will provide a statewide toll-free telephone number and Web site for information on services available to seniors, including an up-to-date directory of local physicians who accept Medicaid and Medicare clients, available programs and services including SeniorCare, and prescription drug information and assistance.

The Medicaid Preferred Drug List, scheduled to be in place by early 2004, will contain costs for prescription drugs provided to those receiving Medicaid. The list will contain recommendations, selected by Alaska physicians and pharmacists, on drugs that are proven to be the most efficacious, cost-effective and safe. The Preferred Drug List will also provide a valuable resource for all seniors to compare prescription drug costs, and will enable seniors to work with their physicians to identify cost-effective drugs that are right for them. Once implemented next spring, seniors can get the list from the new Alaska Senior Information Office. The Senior Information Office and the Preferred Drug List will not need legislative approval to be implemented.

Current programs for seniors which will fall under SeniorCare include comprehensive Medicaid health insurance coverage and Medicare cost-sharing assistance for low-income seniors. About 7,000 eligible seniors receive prescription drugs, medical care, hospitalization and other services from the state at a cost of \$119.6 million a year. In addition, DHSS will continue to work with the Denali Commission and others to ensure greater access to healthcare for Medicaid and Medicare patients.

To be eligible for the two levels of SeniorCare benefits, a senior age 65 or older must meet the following eligibility criteria:

First Level: Seniors eligible to receive the \$1,600 Senior Care Prescription Drug Subsidy or \$1,440 Senior Assistance Program cash assistance:

- Individuals may have an annual gross income of up to \$15,134, couples a combined annual gross income of up to \$20,439 (below 135 percent of the federal poverty level). Permanent Fund Dividend income is not counted.
- Participants receiving Medicaid prescription drug coverage are only eligible for cash assistance, and are not eligible for the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit.

Second Level: Seniors eligible to receive the \$1,000 Senior Care Prescription Drug Subsidy only:

- Individuals may have an annual gross income of up to \$16,815, couples a combined annual gross income of up to \$22,710 (between 135 percent and 150 percent of the federal poverty level). Permanent Fund Dividend income is not counted.

Assets allowed:

- Individuals may have assets up to \$4,000, couples combined assets up to \$6000.
 - Assets not counted include a home, funds set aside for burial, automobiles, real estate and other real property.
 - Only liquid assets are counted such as cash and those assets easily converted to cash (e.g., stocks, bonds, IRAs, etc.).

For individuals, eligibility is based solely on their own income and assets. For married couples that are living together, eligibility is based on their combined income and assets regardless of whether one or both are 65 or older.

Other eligibility criteria:

- The senior must be a US citizen or legal alien, a resident of Alaska, and must intend to remain a resident of Alaska throughout the duration of the program.
- Only those seniors living independently (outside an institution such as a nursing home, Pioneer Home, API) are eligible.

Once they receive the benefit, recipients must report changes in residence, mailing address or the death of a spouse within 10 days.

The Benefit:

Seniors who qualify for this year's Senior Assistance Program, and who are not receiving Medicaid prescription drug coverage, will be provided a choice. They will choose between receiving the new SeniorCare prescription drug subsidy of \$1,600 a year or to continue to receive the Senior Assistance Program cash assistance of \$1,440 a year. Together with the \$600 Medicare subsidy to begin this spring, these eligible seniors opting for the SeniorCare prescription drug benefit will have a combined benefit of \$2,200 a year.

Additionally, seniors between 135 percent and 150 percent of poverty level will receive a prescription drug benefit of \$1,000 a year.

How to Apply

Seniors who meet the eligibility criteria need apply only once by mail. The application asks for information about income and assets, and requires a signature to confirm the truthfulness of the statement given. No additional proof of income or assets is required.

If found eligible, the individual will receive written notice, and begin receiving the benefit following the month of application.

Applications for the current Senior Assistance Program are available at senior centers, libraries, offices of the Division of Public Assistance and at variety of other community agencies and at <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/>. Application forms for the new prescription drug benefit will be available spring 2004 at the same outlets.

The toll-free telephone number for the SeniorCare Senior Information Office is 1-800-478-6065 (Anchorage 907-269-3680) and the Web address is: <http://www.seniorcare.alaska.gov>

Alaska Department of Health & Social Services
Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
SeniorCare Senior Information Office
Statewide: 1-800-478-6065
Anchorage (907) 269-3680
www.seniorcare.alaska.gov

SA 259

1-14-04

Many of our seniors has been hurt
badly by the loss of the Promised
Longevity Bonus, it was a large part
of our Prescription medicine and other
essentials. Reinstate the Program
as it was when the Promise was broken,
Consider also this money was spent right
here at home & circulates in ALASKA.

Fern Chamberlin

Box 109

Ph-907-262-4193

Sterling, AK

SB 259

1-14-04

Many of our seniors has been hurt
badly by the loss of the Promised
Longevity Bonus, I was a large part
of our Prescription medicine and other
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Sam E. McDowell

SB 259

1-14-04

Many of our seniors has been hurt badly by the loss of the Promised Longevity Bonus. It was a large part of our prescription medicine and other essentials. Reinstatement the Program as it was when the Promise was broken. Consider also this money was spent right here at home & circulates in ALASKA.

Mary K. Nelson Carl W. Mallick

262-2869

Box 797

Sterling, AK

SB 259

1-14-04

To Whom it may Concern

Yes I would like to see the
longevity fund back as it was
since that was a big part of my
income. I hope to have it
back soon

Lance B. Steyer
Po Box 467
Sterling AK 99682

50251

To the Legislature and Governor,

Jan 13, 2004

There are several reasons to reinstate the Longevity Bonus - First many seniors are in danger of losing their homes as they pay their mortgages of rent and perhaps forcing them to move. Perhaps, to live with relatives or cheaper places. They will take their retirement out of the state completely and that money helps the economy.

Secondly, many seniors are dying off a fast rate, thus reducing the annual payout -

Third many healthy and experienced seniors volunteer for activities that help their community, with schools etc -

Fourth, the state had a contract with the seniors to pay this out throughout our remaining years.

Many seniors helped settle the state and paid taxes, and contributing to the economy for many years.

I have lived here since 1961 and am now an 83 year old widow one among many women living on greatly reduced income.

Hopefully, some of us will stay out of state subsidized nursing homes getting a big strain on medical funds -

I among many love Alaska and wish to remain here the rest of my days. I do hope you will help me achieve this goal.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dorothy M. Herapel
POB 288
Sterling AK
99672

(907) 262-6061

SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT First Committee of Referral

DATE: 1/12/04

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: _____
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: 1.14.04

Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered

SENATE BILL NO. 259

SB 259 SENIORCARE

"An Act establishing the SeniorCare program and relating to that program; and providing for an effective date."

and recommends:

- be replaced with _____ CS _____ (_____)
- adopt previous _____ CS _____ (_____)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt Letter of Intent by _____ Committee
- further referral to _____ Committee

Senate Bill:
 Same Title
 New Title

House Bill:
 Same Title
 Technical Title Change
 New Title w/ SCR # _____

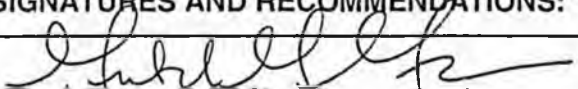

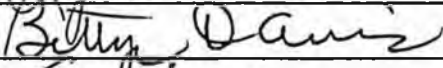
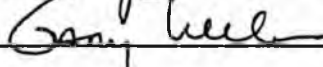
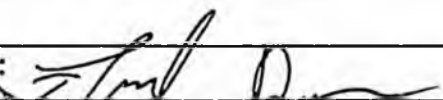
NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#
HSS	1/12/04	X			1
HSS	1/12/04	X			2
HSS	1/12/04	X			3
HSS	1/12/04	X			4
HSS	1/12/04	X			5

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN#

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
			✓	
	✓			
	✓			
	✓			
CHAIR: 	✓			



JAZON

State Of Alaska
Legislative Affairs Agency
Kenai LIO
145 Main St Lp Ste 217
Kenai, AK 99611
907-283-2030

Date: 1-14-04

Please accept the enclosed original(s) of written testimony for
the SHES teleconference hearing that was
scheduled on 1-14-04.

A copy of this testimony was transmitted to your committee via
fax on 1-14-04.

Thank you,

Kathleen Curran