

HB

16

<TARGET><BILL>HB 16</BILL><SUBJECT>HB
16</SUBJECT><COMM>SHSS27</COMM></TARGET>

Representative Mike Hawker

Alaska State Legislature



House Bill 16 Sponsor Statement

Session:

State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
907 465-4949 direct
800 478-4950 toll free
907 465-4979 fax

Interim:

716 W 4th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
907 269-0244 office
907 269-0248 fax

Chair:

*Legislative Budget
& Audit Committee*

House District 32:

*Eagle River
Anchorage
Rainbow
Indian
Bird
Girdwood
Portage
Whittier
Sunrise
Hope*

Short Title: Extend Senior Benefits Payment Program

House Bill 16 would extend the Alaska Senior Benefits Program to June 30, 2015.

The Senior Benefits Program provides monthly cash assistance to state residents age 65 years or older whose household income does not exceed 175% of the federal poverty guidelines for Alaska. Specifically, the program pays:

- \$250 per month to individuals with income of 75% or less of FPG
- \$175 per month to individuals with income between 75% and 100% of FPG
- \$125 per month to individuals with income between 100% and 175% of FPG

The program assists approximately 10,000 Alaskan seniors, with a total cost of \$21 million projected for this fiscal year. If it is not extended, the program will sunset on June 30, 2011.

House Bill 16 Background Information Alaska Senior Benefits Program Statutes

Title 09. CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

Chapter 09.38. ALASKA EXEMPTIONS ACT

(a) An individual is entitled to exemption of the following property:

(11) [See delayed amendment note]. benefits paid or payable under AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309.

Sec. 47.45.301. Alaska senior benefits payment program. [See delayed repeal note].

(a) The Alaska senior benefits payment program is established in the Department of Health and Social Services to provide cash benefits as far as practicable under appropriations provided by law.

(b) The department shall administer the program and adopt regulations under AS 44.62 to carry out the purposes of the program.

(c) If the department estimates that appropriations for the program are insufficient to meet the demands of the program in a fiscal year, the department may reduce or eliminate the cash benefit available to recipients.

Sec. 47.45.302. Cash assistance benefit. [See delayed repeal note].

(a) An individual is eligible for a cash assistance benefit under the program if the individual

(1) is 65 years of age or older;

(2) is a resident of the state;

(3) has a household income that does not exceed 175 percent of the annual federal poverty line for Alaska, as determined by the United States Department of Health and Human Services and revised under 42 U.S.C. 9902(2);

(4) has not received a longevity bonus payment under AS 47.45.010 - 47.45.160 for the same period; and

(5) applies on a form provided by the department; the department may use an abbreviated form for an individual who received a payment under an assistance program for seniors that paid \$120 a month and was administered by the department on or before the effective date of this section.

(b) An eligible individual shall receive a monthly cash assistance payment beginning on August 1, 2007, as follows:

(1) \$250 if the individual's household income does not exceed 75 percent of the federal poverty line for Alaska;

(2) \$175 if the individual's household income does not exceed 100 percent but is above 75 percent of the federal poverty line for Alaska;

(3) \$125 if the individual's household income does not exceed 175 percent but is above 100 percent of the federal poverty line for Alaska.

(c) Cash assistance provided under this section is subject to appropriation.

Sec. 47.45.304. Continuation of benefits. [See delayed repeal note].

An eligible individual who leaves the state may not receive a cash benefit under AS 47.45.302 during the absence unless the individual's absence is temporary and is for one of the following reasons:

(1) to receive medical treatment for the individual;

(2) to accompany the individual's family member who is receiving medical treatment outside the state; or

(3) for a vacation, business trip, or other absence of less than 30 consecutive days, unless the individual has applied for and received a time extension from the department for special circumstances.

Sec. 47.45.306. Appeal rights. [See delayed repeal note].

An individual who receives a determination from the department that denies, limits, or modifies a cash benefit under AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309, other than a determination under AS 47.45.301 (c) to reduce or eliminate benefits, may request a hearing before the department under regulations adopted by the department.

Sec. 47.45.308. Ability to recover or recoup improper assistance or benefits. [See delayed repeal note].

An individual is liable to the department for the value of assistance or benefits improperly paid to the individual under AS 47.45.302 or former AS 47.45.310 or 47.45.320 if the improper payment was based on inaccurate or incomplete information provided by the individual. In a civil action brought by the state to recover from the individual the value of assistance or benefits improperly paid under AS 47.45.302 or former AS 47.45.310 or 47.45.320, the state may recover from the individual the costs of investigation and prosecution of the civil action, including attorney fees as determined under court rules.

Sec. 47.45.309. Definitions. [See delayed repeal note].

In AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309,

- (1) "department" means the Department of Health and Social Services;
- (2) "eligible individual" means an individual who meets the requirements of AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309 and regulations adopted under those statutes for eligibility for the program;
- (3) "family member" means a person who is
 - (A) legally related to an eligible individual through marriage or guardianship; or
 - (B) an eligible individual's sibling, parent, grandparent, son, daughter, grandson, granddaughter, uncle, aunt, niece, nephew, or first cousin;
- (4) "program" means the senior benefits payment program established in AS 47.45.301 - 47.45.309;
- (5) "resident" has the meaning given in AS 47.25.430 (a).

Senior BENEFITS PROGRAM



Fact Sheet
January 24, 2011

The Alaska Senior Benefits Payment Program was established on August 1, 2007 and, unless reauthorized, is set to end on June 30, 2011. It pays cash benefits to Alaskans who are age 65 or older and have low to moderate income. Cash payments are \$125, \$175, or \$250 each month depending on income.

Recipients

- There were 10,093 Senior Benefits recipients as of December 2010. Of these, 5,534 were also Adult Public Assistance recipients.
- Number and percent of seniors at each payment level in December 2010.
 - ✓ \$250 - 1,071 (10.6%)
 - ✓ \$175 - 3,872 (38.4%)
 - ✓ \$125 - 5,150 (51.0%)
- Average age of recipients is 75. The maximum age is 105.

Program Expenditures

- Currently, projected program benefit expenditures for FY 2011 are \$21.0 million. Projected benefit expenditures for FY 2012 are \$21.7 million.

Eligibility and Payment

- Eligibility and payment amount is based on gross annual income (before any deductions are taken for taxes, Medicare premiums, etc.).

Senior Household Size	Senior Benefits Program Gross Annual Income Limit Effective 3/1/2011		
	\$250 monthly payment	\$175 monthly payment	\$125 monthly payment
Individual	\$10,200 (\$850 per month)	\$13,600 (\$1,134 per month)	\$23,800 (\$1,984 per month)
Married Couple	\$13,785 (\$1,149 per month)	\$18,380 (\$1,532 per month)	\$32,165 (\$2,680 per month)

- Income limits may change yearly along with Alaska's federal poverty level. The \$250, \$175, and \$125 monthly payments correspond to 75 percent, 100 percent, and 175 percent of the federal poverty level for Alaska, respectively.

- Assets, such as savings, are not counted for eligibility.
- Payments are not available to seniors living in the following institutions:
 - ✓ Prison or jail,
 - ✓ nursing home,
 - ✓ Alaska Pioneers' Home or Alaska Veterans' Home, or
 - ✓ Public or private institution for mental disease

Geographic Distribution by Census Area, December 2010

Census Area	Number of Recipients
Aleutians East	23
Aleutians West	14
Anchorage	3,636
Bethel	558
Bristol Bay	7
Denali	13
Dillingham	150
Fairbanks North Star	747
Haines	83
Juneau	338
Kenai Peninsula	934
Ketchikan Gateway	251
Kodiak	220
Lake and Peninsula	39
Matanuska-Susitna	1,250
Nome	238
North Slope	38
Northwest Arctic	159
Prince of Wales	185
Southeast Fairbanks	187
Sitka	98
Skagway/Hoonah/Angoon	68
Valdez/Cordova	171
Wade Hampton	255
Wrangell/Petersburg	149
Yakutat	15
Yukon/Koyukuk	259
Unidentified	8
Grand Total	10,093

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 2
 Bill Version: HB 16
 (H) Publish Date: 1/31/11

Identifier (file name): HB016-DHSS-SBPP-01-28-2011 Dept. Affected: Health and Social Services
 Title: Extend Senior Benefits Payment Program Appropriation: Public Assistance
 Allocation: Senior Benefits Payment Program
 Sponsor: Hawker
 Requestor: House Finance OMB Component Number: 2897

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required	Information					
		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services		486.0	486.0	486.0	486.0		
Travel		9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7		
Contractual		169.7	169.7	169.7	169.7		
Supplies		43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5		
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims		1,968.1	19,776.4	22,349.3	22,970.9	23,606.5	
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING		1,968.1	20,485.3	23,058.2	23,679.8	24,315.4	0.0

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

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF		1,968.1	20,485.3	23,058.2	23,679.8	24,315.4	
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL		1,968.1	20,485.3	23,058.2	23,679.8	24,315.4	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2011) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time		6	6	6	6		
Part-time							
Temporary							

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared by: Ron Kreher, Acting Director
 Division: Public Assistance
 Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
DHSS Finance & Management Services

Phone 465-2680
 Date/Time 1/28/11 5:30 PM
 Date 1/28/2011

Analysis:Analysis:

The Senior Benefits Payment Program helps low income seniors who are age 65 or older remain independent in the community by providing a monthly income supplement to help meet their basic needs, such as food and housing. Currently the program is set to expire on June 30, 2011. This legislation continues the program through June 30, 2015. As of December 2010, the current program enrollment was 10,093. The number and percent of seniors at each payment level was:

- * \$250 - 1,071 (10.6%)
- * \$175 - 3,872 (38.4%)
- * \$125 - 5,150 (51.0%)

Assumptions:

- * Current staffing levels for the program will be maintained and will consist of one Eligibility Technician III, four Eligibility Technician I's, and one Office Assistant I.
- * Annual expenditures for Personal Services, Travel, Contractual, and Supplies will remain constant for FY 2012 through FY 2015.
- * Projected grant expenditures in FY 2011 are expected to be about \$21.0 million. A supplemental for \$1.3 million has been requested in FY 2011.
- * Annual grant expenditures are expected to increase in response to a projected caseload growth of 3% annually in the out years.
- * Grant expenditures for FY 2012 through FY 2015 are expected to increase as follows:
 - 3.55 percent in FY 2012
 - 2.78 percent in FY 2013
 - 2.78 percent in FY 2014
 - 2.77 percent in FY 2015

With the exception of the amount shown in the FY12 appropriation needed column, all of the represented costs are contained in the governor's proposed FY12 budget.

See attached projected caseload and grant expenditures.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: 1
 Bill Version: HB 16
 (H) Publish Date: 1/26/11

Identifier (file name): HB016-DHSS-SBPP-01-21-2011 Dept. Affected: Health and Social Services
 Title: Extend Senior Benefits Payment Program Appropriation: Public Assistance
 Allocation: Senior Benefits Payment Program
 Sponsor: Hawker
 Requestor: House HSS OMB Component Number: 2897

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

	Appropriation Required	Information					
		FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
OPERATING EXPENDITURES							
Personal Services		486.0	486.0	486.0	486.0		
Travel		9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7		
Contractual		169.7	169.7	169.7	169.7		
Supplies		43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5		
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims	1,968.1	19,776.4	22,349.3	22,970.9	23,606.5		
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	1,968.1	20,485.3	23,058.2	23,679.8	24,315.4	0.0	0.0

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

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF	1,968.1	20,485.3	22,848.1	23,164.4	23,488.3		
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL	1,968.1	20,485.3	22,848.1	23,164.4	23,488.3	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2011) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time		6	6	6	6		
Part-time							
Temporary							

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared by: Ron Kreher, Acting Director
 Division: Public Assistance
 Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
DHSS Finance & Management Services

Phone 465-2680
 Date/Time 1/21/11 5:00 PM
 Date 1/21/2011

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- * \$175 - 3,872 (38.4%)
- * \$125 - 5,150 (51.0%)

Assumptions:

- * Current staffing levels for the program will be maintained and will consist of one Eligibility Technician III, four Eligibility Technician I's, and one Office Assistant I.
- * Annual expenditures for Personal Services, Travel, Contractual, and Supplies will remain constant for FY 2012 through FY 2015.
- * Projected grant expenditures in FY 2011 are expected to be about \$21.0 million.
- * Annual grant expenditures are expected to increase in response to a projected caseload growth of 3% annually in the out years.
- * Grant expenditures for FY 2012 through FY 2015 are expected to increase as follows:
 - 3.55 percent in FY 2012
 - 2.78 percent in FY 2013
 - 2.78 percent in FY 2014
 - 2.80 percent in FY 2015

With the exception of the amount shown in the FY12 appropriation needed column, all of the represented costs are contained in the governor's proposed FY12 budget.

Senior Benefit CASELOAD Summary (progra

	CY/PY	FY10	CY/PY	FY11	CY/PY	FY12	CY/PY	FY13	CY/PY	FY14	CY/PY	FY15	CY/PY	FY16	
	Caseload	Cases	Caseload	Cases	Caseload	Cases	Caseload	Cases	Caseload	Cases	Caseload	Cases	Caseload	Cases	
	Change	Projection	Change	Projection	Change	Projection	Change	Projection	Change	Projection	Change	Projection	Change	Projection	
July	840	9,973	166	10,139	302	10,441	253	10,694	380	11,074	280	11,354	345	11,700	July
Aug	665	9,974	184	10,158	303	10,461	265	10,726	370	11,096	292	11,388	335	11,723	Aug
Sep	613	9,973	193	10,166	316	10,482	276	10,758	360	11,119	304	11,423	324	11,746	Sep
Oct	685	10,006	167	10,173	330	10,503	287	10,790	350	11,141	316	11,457	325	11,782	Oct
Nov	678	9,987	122	10,109	415	10,524	298	10,823	340	11,163	328	11,491	326	11,817	Nov
Dec	672	9,959	134	10,093	452	10,545	310	10,855	330	11,185	340	11,526	327	11,853	Dec
Jan	673	9,982	283	10,265	302	10,566	321	10,888	320	11,208	352	11,560	328	11,888	Jan
Feb	605	9,946	350	10,296	292	10,588	333	10,921	310	11,230	353	11,583	340	11,924	Feb
Mar	545	10,038	289	10,327	282	10,609	344	10,953	299	11,253	354	11,607	353	11,960	Mar
Apr	402	10,075	282	10,357	273	10,630	356	10,986	289	11,275	355	11,630	366	11,995	Apr
May	286	10,108	281	10,389	263	10,651	368	11,019	279	11,298	355	11,653	378	12,031	May
Jun	200	10,086	334	10,420	253	10,673	380	11,052	268	11,320	356	11,676	391	12,067	Jun
Monthly Average	572	10,009	232	10,241	315	10,556	316	10,872	325	11,197	332	11,529	345	11,874	
Percent C	6.1%		2.3%		3.1%		3.0%		3.0%		3.0%		3.0%		

Senior

	FY10		FY11		FY12		FY13		FY14		FY15		FY16		
	Difference	Expend Actual	Difference	Expend Projection	Difference	Expend Projection	Difference	Expend Projection	Difference	Expend Projection	Difference	Expend Projection	Difference	Expend Projection	
July	990.0	3,145.9	39.2	3,185.1	20.2	3,205.3	40.4	3,245.7	60.7	3,306.3	44.7	3,351.0	55.1	3,406.1	July
Aug	-40.9	1,595.6	25.1	1,620.7	47.9	1,668.6	42.2	1,710.8	59.1	1,769.9	46.6	1,816.4	53.4	1,869.8	Aug
Sep	89.4	1,598.9	17.0	1,615.9	56.0	1,671.9	44.0	1,715.9	57.5	1,773.4	48.5	1,821.9	51.7	1,873.6	Sep
Oct	98.6	1,598.4	14.5	1,612.9	62.4	1,675.3	45.8	1,721.1	55.9	1,777.0	50.4	1,827.4	51.8	1,879.2	Oct
Nov	96.4	1,586.0	4.1	1,590.1	88.5	1,678.6	47.6	1,726.2	54.3	1,780.5	52.3	1,832.8	52.0	1,884.8	Nov
Dec	96.8	1,583.2	17.2	1,600.4	81.6	1,682.0	49.4	1,731.4	52.7	1,784.1	54.3	1,838.3	52.1	1,890.5	Dec
Jan	80.5	1,573.8	42.9	1,616.7	68.6	1,685.4	51.3	1,736.6	51.0	1,787.6	56.2	1,843.9	52.3	1,896.1	Jan
Feb	96.9	1,587.2	34.4	1,621.6	67.2	1,688.7	53.1	1,741.8	49.4	1,791.2	56.3	1,847.5	54.3	1,901.8	Feb
Mar	78.4	1,612.4	14.0	1,626.4	65.7	1,692.1	54.9	1,747.0	47.8	1,794.8	56.4	1,851.2	56.3	1,907.5	Mar
Apr	-531.1	1,041.6	589.7	1,631.3	64.2	1,695.5	56.8	1,752.3	46.1	1,798.4	56.5	1,854.9	58.3	1,913.3	Apr
May	-439.5	1,165.8	470.4	1,636.2	62.7	1,698.9	58.7	1,757.5	44.4	1,802.0	56.7	1,858.7	60.4	1,919.0	May
Jun	291.8	1,051.3	589.8	1,641.1	61.2	1,702.3	60.5	1,762.8	42.8	1,805.6	56.8	1,862.4	62.4	1,924.8	Jun
Total		19,147.9		20,998.4	746.1	21,744.5	604.7	22,349.3	621.6	22,970.9	635.6	23,606.5	660.0	24,266.5	
		* see note													
Monthly Average	75.6	1,595.0	154.9	1,749.9	62.2	1,812.0	50.4	1,862.4	51.8	1,914.2	53.0	1,967.2	55.0	2,022.2	
Change	5.0%		9.7%		3.6%		2.8%		2.8%		2.8%		2.8%		

	FY10	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
With Supplemental							
	18,926.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4
	256.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	19,182.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4
	19,147.9	20,998.4	21,744.5	22,349.3	22,970.9	23,606.5	24,266.5
	34.5	(1,222.0)	(1,968.1)	(2,572.9)	(3,194.5)	(3,830.1)	(4,490.1)

Revised projections to accurately reflect the percentage breakdown between the three pmt amounts. Instead of 11% for \$250 it is 10%, instead of 43% \$175 it is 40% and instead of 46% for \$125 it is 50%. mds 110310

RP needs to be requested for FY11 to cover projected shortage based on 10% increase in FY11 compared to FY10 mds 120610

Requested FY11 Supplemental for \$1,300.0 of additional GF.122310 mds

3.55%

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Alaska Commission on Aging

SEAN PARNELL, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110693
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0693
PHONE: (907) 465-3250
FAX: (907) 465-1398

January 15, 2011

Representative Mike Hawker
Alaska State Capitol, Room 502
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Support for HB 16

Dear Representative Hawker:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our enthusiastic support of HB 16, a bill sponsored by you to reauthorize the Senior Benefits program which is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2011. Because this program provides a critical financial safety net for Alaska seniors, the Alaska Commission on Aging supports the extension of the sunset date to 2015 or beyond.

The Senior Benefits program, originally initiated by you and enacted by the Legislature in 2007, has been an invaluable program for modest-income seniors who are on small fixed incomes to assist them to live with dignity and independence in their home communities. Alaskans age 65 and over with incomes up to 175% of poverty are eligible for a calibrated monthly cash benefit based on income through the Senior Benefits program. Although the monthly payments are not large amounts, they can make a significant difference in whether or not an older Alaskan is able to afford food, rent, fuel, medication, and other necessities. Many low-income seniors do not have cash reserves that allow for emergencies or the increasing cost of living.

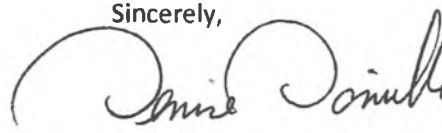
In fiscal year 2010, the average monthly enrollment in the Senior Benefits Program was 10,009. Among the Department of Health and Social Services' nine regions, there is wide variation in the percentage of seniors age 65 and over who receive Senior Benefits. Statewide, less than one in five seniors (19.1%) participates in the Senior Benefits program. Region 1 (the Bethel/Wade Hampton area), long recognized as a very low income region of the state, has over 50 percent of seniors participate in the program. The Aleutian Islands, Region VIII, also has a high rate of participation – more than twice as high as the state's average rate.

The Alaska Commission on Aging strongly recommends that the 2011 Legislature vote to extend the sunset date for the Senior Benefits Program, enabling the program to continue to support those seniors most vulnerable to economic stresses. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director (465-4879 or denise.daniello@alaska.gov) should you require additional information. Thank you so much for your support of this important program for older Alaskans.

Sincerely,


Sharon Howerton-Clark
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,


Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

January 24, 2011

The Honorable Mike Hawker
Member of the House of Representatives
Alaska Capitol, Room 502
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 16 (Hawker) – Support

Dear Representative Hawker:

The Alaska Food Coalition is pleased to express our support for HB 16 which will extend the Senior Benefits Program for another four years. At least 1/3 of the Alaska Food Coalition membership serves the senior population. Our members identify hunger, or food insecurity, as a growing problem among the senior population in Alaska.

The Hunger in America 2010 study found 42% of adult pantry and soup kitchen clients in Alaska were 50 and older. Of those pantry visitors 65 and older, 57.8% told us they experienced low or very low food security; they worry about or don't know if they will have enough food. The study also found, of all pantry clients in Alaska:

- 43% had to choose between buying food and paying for utilities
- 45% had to choose between buying food and paying for rent or mortgage
- 35% had to choose between buying food and medicine

Among households with 1 senior member age 65 or older, 21.8% participate in a home delivered meal program. Agencies who deliver home meals have reported a 20% increase in requests for services. The Salvation Army Older Alaskans Program in Anchorage estimates there are twice as many seniors in Anchorage in need of their services. The Yakutat Senior Center serves an average of 42 meals a day; double what they served the previous year. According to data from the Alaska Department of Public Assistance, food stamp recipients age 60 and over increased by 22% in 2009. The need is clear; our low-income seniors need help paying for basic needs.

We want all Alaskans to be hunger free, food secure. There is no question the Senior Benefits Program has helped Alaskan seniors put food on their tables, and will continue to do so with continued funding. We appreciate your leadership on this issue and wish to express our sincere thanks to you for helping Alaska Seniors live full and productive lives.

We were also thankful to Representatives Millet, Lynn, Gara and Tuck for signing up to co-sponsor HB16.

Please do not hesitate to contact Vanessa Salinas, Alaska Food Coalition Manager if you have any questions, 907-222-3103 afc@foodbankofalaska.org

Thank you for all that you do for Alaska.

Sincerely,

Heather Harris
Alaska Food Coalition President

CC: Representative Charisse Millet
Representative Les Gara

Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Chris Tuck



AARP Alaska
3601 C Street
Suite 1420
Anchorage, AK 99503

T 1-866-227-7447
F 907-341-2270
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/ak

January 19, 2011

The Honorable Mike Hawker
Member of the House of Representatives
Alaska Capitol, Room 502
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 16 (Hawker)—Support

Dear Representative Hawker:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we are pleased to indicate our very strong support for HB 16 which will extend the Senior Benefits program for another four years.

There is no doubt that the Senior Benefits program has proven to be an invaluable help to many older Alaskans who might not be able to afford to stay here without it.

We all recognize that Alaska's seniors face high health care costs as well as high energy costs.

The Senior Benefits program has allowed over 10,000 older Alaskans to deal with these costs and to remain citizens of our state.

We want Alaskans to be able to stay here after retirement. The Senior Benefits program is essential to achieve that goal.

On behalf of all those older Alaskans who may not be aware of your continued leadership on this issue, please accept our thanks for all that you have done, continue to do, and will do in the future.

We are pleased to thank Representatives Millet, Lynn, Gara and Tuck for signing up to co-sponsor HB 16.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Representative Charisse Millet
Representative Les Gara

Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Chris Tuck

Matson Legislative Information
- Office -
600 E. Railroad Ave.
Wasilla, AK. 99654-8135

January 12, 2011

Barbara A. Schumacher
P.O. Box 873505
Wasilla, AK, 99687

To Whom it may concern,
Please think very carefully about the Senior Benefits Program, here in Alaska. It has been a great source of comfort & financial stability to me for the last 3 years. I shudder to think what it would mean to your Senior Constituents, who benefit so greatly from this program if it were to be discontinued.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Schumacher - age 75
BARBARA A. SCHUMACHER
Wasilla, AK.

Date: January 12, 2011

To: MatSu Legislative Office

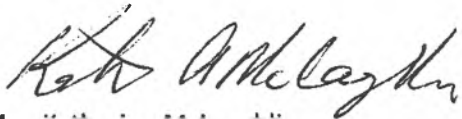
To whom it may concern;

I am the daughter of a Wasilla area resident senior citizen. It has come to my attention that the State needs to seek renewal for the Alaska Senior Citizen Benefits Program. I strongly support this program and urge the State to petition for renewal of this very important service to our Seniors. The Senior Care benefits that my mother receives allow her that tiny bit of extra wiggle room on her fixed retirement income, without which, her standard of living will become negatively affected.

Many Alaskan Seniors are in similar, or worse, situations. Without these benefits the State would surely see a rise in emergency medical care resulting from senior's not getting the medications, doctor visits, appropriate food, etc. they need because of less income.

Please support the continued funding for the Alaska Senior Citizen Benefits Program.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Katherine McLaughlin
PO Box 8043
Chenega Bay, Alaska 99574

SENATE BILL NO. 21

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR WIELECHOWSKI

Introduced: 1/7/11

Referred: Prefiled

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act extending senior benefits."**

2 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 *** Section 1.** Section 4, ch. 1, FSSLA 2007, is amended to read:

4 Sec. 4. AS 09.38.015(a)(11); AS 47.45.301, 47.45.302, 47.45.304, 47.45.306,
5 47.45.308, and 47.45.309 are repealed June 30, 2015 [2011].

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session
State Capitol, Rm. 101
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-2435
Fax: (907) 465-6615

Interim
716 W. 4th Ave, Ste. 540
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Senator_Bill_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us



Chair
State Affairs Committee

Co-chair
Joint Armed Services Committee

Vice Chair
Resources Committee
Judiciary Committee

Member
Admin Reg Review

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 21 – Extending The Senior Benefit Program

"An Act extending senior benefits."

Senate Bill 21 would extend the Alaska Senior Benefits Program for another four years to June 30, 2015.

The Senior Benefits Program provides a monthly cash assistance to Alaskan seniors who are age 65 or older and have an income less than 175% of the federal poverty guidelines for the state of Alaska.

The program pays a monthly assistance of:

- \$250 to seniors with a monthly income limit of \$846 (75% FPG)
- \$175 to seniors with a monthly income limit of \$13,530 (100% FPG)
- \$125 to seniors with a monthly income limit of \$1,972 (175% FPG)

The program assists approximately 10,000 Alaskan seniors and costs an estimated \$20 million a year. Without action, this benefit will sunset on June 30, 2011.

This bill is supported by many senior groups, including the Alaska Commission on Aging, the Older Persons Action Group and the AARP.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB021
 () Publish Date: _____

Identifier (file name): SB021-DHSS-SBPP-01-27-11
 Title: Extend Senior Benefits Payment Program
 Sponsor: Wielechowski, Kookesh, Meyer, Paskvan, McGuire
 Requestor: Senate HSS
 Dept. Affected: Health and Social Services
 Appropriation: Public Assistance
 Allocation: Senior Benefits Payment Program
 OMB Component Number: 2897

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

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

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	Appropriation Required	Information					
	FY 2012	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017
Personal Services		486.0	486.0	486.0	486.0		
Travel		9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7		
Contractual		169.7	169.7	169.7	169.7		
Supplies		43.5	43.5	43.5	43.5		
Equipment							
Land & Structures							
Grants & Claims		1,968.1	19,776.4	22,349.3	22,970.9	23,606.5	
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING		1,968.1	20,485.3	23,058.2	23,679.8	24,315.4	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES							
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES							
---------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts							
1003 GF Match							
1004 GF		1,968.1	20,485.3	23,058.2	23,679.8	24,315.4	
1005 GF/Program Receipts							
1037 GF/Mental Health							
Other Interagency Receipts							
TOTAL		1,968.1	20,485.3	23,058.2	23,679.8	24,315.4	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2011) cost: 0.0

POSITIONS

Full-time		6.00	6.00	6.00	6.00		
Part-time							
Temporary							

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version:

Not applicable, initial version.

Prepared by: Ron Kreher, Acting Director
 Division: Public Assistance
 Approved by: Alison Elgee, Assistant Commissioner
DHSS Finance & Management Services

Phone 465-2680
 Date/Time 1/28/11 5:45 PM
 Date 1/28/2011

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2011 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. SB021

Analysis:

Analysis:

The Senior Benefits Payment Program helps low income seniors who are age 65 or older remain independent in the community by providing a monthly income supplement to help meet their basic needs, such as food and housing. Currently the program is set to expire on June 30, 2011. This legislation continues the program through June 30, 2015. As of December 2010, the current program enrollment was 10,093. The number and percent of seniors at each payment level was:

- * \$250 - 1,071 (10.6%)
- * \$175 - 3,872 (38.4%)
- * \$125 - 5,150 (51.0%)

Assumptions:

- * Current staffing levels for the program will be maintained and will consist of one Eligibility Technician III, four Eligibility Technician I's, and one Office Assistant I.
- * Annual expenditures for Personal Services, Travel, Contractual, and Supplies will remain constant for FY 2012 through FY 2015.
- * Projected grant expenditures in FY 2011 are expected to be about \$21.0 million. A supplemental for \$1.3 million has been requested in FY 2011.
- * Annual grant expenditures are expected to increase in response to a projected caseload growth of 3% annually in the out years.
- * Grant expenditures for FY 2012 through FY 2015 are expected to increase as follows:
 - 3.55 percent in FY 2012
 - 2.78 percent in FY 2013
 - 2.78 percent in FY 2014
 - 2.77 percent in FY 2015

With the exception of the amount shown in the FY 2012 appropriation needed column, all of the represented costs are contained in the governor's proposed FY 2012 budget.

See attached projected caseload and grant expenditures.

Senior Benefit CASELOAD Summary (progra

	CY/PY Caseload Change	FY10 Cases Projection	CY/PY Caseload Change	FY11 Cases Projection	CY/PY Caseload Change	FY12 Cases Projection	CY/PY Caseload Change	FY13 Cases Projection	CY/PY Caseload Change	FY14 Cases Projection	CY/PY Caseload Change	FY15 Cases Projection	CY/PY Caseload Change	FY16 Cases Projection	
July	840	9,973	166	10,139	302	10,441	253	10,694	380	11,074	280	11,354	345	11,700	July
Aug	665	9,974	184	10,158	303	10,461	265	10,726	370	11,096	292	11,388	335	11,723	Aug
Sep	613	9,973	193	10,166	316	10,482	276	10,758	360	11,119	304	11,423	324	11,746	Sep
Oct	685	10,006	167	10,173	330	10,503	287	10,790	350	11,141	316	11,457	325	11,782	Oct
Nov	678	9,987	122	10,109	415	10,524	298	10,823	340	11,163	328	11,491	326	11,817	Nov
Dec	672	9,959	134	10,093	452	10,545	310	10,855	330	11,185	340	11,526	327	11,853	Dec
Jan	673	9,982	283	10,265	302	10,566	321	10,888	320	11,208	352	11,560	328	11,888	Jan
Feb	605	9,946	350	10,296	292	10,588	333	10,921	310	11,230	353	11,583	340	11,924	Feb
Mar	545	10,038	289	10,327	282	10,609	344	10,953	299	11,253	354	11,607	353	11,960	Mar
Apr	402	10,075	282	10,357	273	10,630	356	10,986	289	11,275	355	11,630	366	11,995	Apr
May	286	10,108	281	10,389	263	10,651	368	11,019	279	11,298	355	11,653	378	12,031	May
Jun	200	10,086	334	10,420	253	10,673	380	11,052	268	11,320	356	11,676	391	12,067	Jun
Monthly Average	572	10,009	232	10,241	315	10,556	316	10,872	325	11,197	332	11,529	345	11,874	
Percent C	6.1%		2.3%		3.1%		3.0%		3.0%		3.0%		3.0%		

Senior

	FY10 Expend Actual	FY11 Expend Projection	FY12 Expend Projection	FY13 Expend Projection	FY14 Expend Projection	FY15 Expend Projection	FY16 Expend Projection								
July	990.0	3,145.9	39.2	3,185.1	20.2	3,205.3	40.4	3,245.7	60.7	3,306.3	44.7	3,351.0	55.1	3,406.1	July
Aug	-40.9	1,595.6	25.1	1,620.7	47.9	1,668.6	42.2	1,710.8	59.1	1,769.9	46.6	1,816.4	53.4	1,869.8	Aug
Sep	89.4	1,598.9	17.0	1,615.9	56.0	1,671.9	44.0	1,715.9	57.5	1,773.4	48.5	1,821.9	51.7	1,873.6	Sep
Oct	98.6	1,598.4	14.5	1,612.9	62.4	1,675.3	45.8	1,721.1	55.9	1,777.0	50.4	1,827.4	51.8	1,879.2	Oct
Nov	96.4	1,586.0	4.1	1,590.1	88.5	1,678.6	47.6	1,726.2	54.3	1,780.5	52.3	1,832.8	52.0	1,884.8	Nov
Dec	96.8	1,583.2	17.2	1,600.4	81.6	1,682.0	49.4	1,731.4	52.7	1,784.1	54.3	1,838.3	52.1	1,890.5	Dec
Jan	80.5	1,573.8	42.9	1,616.7	68.6	1,685.4	51.3	1,736.6	51.0	1,787.6	56.2	1,843.9	52.3	1,896.1	Jan
Feb	96.9	1,587.2	34.4	1,621.6	67.2	1,688.7	53.1	1,741.8	49.4	1,791.2	56.3	1,847.5	54.3	1,901.8	Feb
Mar	78.4	1,612.4	14.0	1,626.4	65.7	1,692.1	54.9	1,747.0	47.8	1,794.8	56.4	1,851.2	56.3	1,907.5	Mar
Apr	-531.1	1,041.6	589.7	1,631.3	64.2	1,695.5	56.8	1,752.3	46.1	1,798.4	56.5	1,854.9	58.3	1,913.3	Apr
May	-439.5	1,165.8	470.4	1,636.2	62.7	1,698.9	58.7	1,757.5	44.4	1,802.0	56.7	1,858.7	60.4	1,919.0	May
Jun	291.8	1,051.3	589.8	1,641.1	61.2	1,702.3	60.5	1,762.8	42.8	1,805.6	56.8	1,862.4	62.4	1,924.8	Jun
Total		19,147.9		20,998.4	746.1	21,744.5	604.7	22,349.3	621.6	22,970.9	635.6	23,606.5	660.0	24,266.5	
		* see note													
Monthly Average	75.6	1,595.0	154.9	1,749.9	62.2	1,812.0	50.4	1,862.4	51.8	1,914.2	53.0	1,967.2	55.0	2,022.2	
Percent Change	5.0%		9.7%		3.6%		2.8%		2.8%		2.8%		2.8%		

	FY10 With Supplemental	FY11	FY12	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16
	18,926.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4
	256.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	19,182.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4	19,776.4
	19,147.9	20,998.4	21,744.5	22,349.3	22,970.9	23,606.5	24,266.5
	34.5	(1,222.0)	(1,968.1)	(2,572.9)	(3,194.5)	(3,830.1)	(4,490.1)
				2.78%	2.78%	2.77%	2.80%
Revised projections to accurately reflect the percentage breakdown between the three pmt amounts. Instead of 11% for \$250 it is 10%, instead of 43% \$175 it is 40% and instead of 46% for \$125 it is 50%. mds 110310							
RP needs to be requested for FY11 to cover projected shortage based on 10% increase in FY11 compared to FY10 mds 120610							
Requested FY11 Supplemental for \$1,300.0 of additional GF.122310mds							

3.55%

Preliminary Testimony List for SB21 An Act To Extend The Senior Benefit

Denise Daniello, Alaska Commission on Aging

Marie Darlin, Alaska Commission on Aging and AARP volunteer.

Mary Sullivan, Manager of the Seniors Behavioral Health Coalition

Sandy Camery, Executive Director of Mabel T. Caverly Senior Center

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session

State Capitol, Rm. 101
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-2435
Fax: (907) 465-6615

Interim

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Chair

State Affairs Committee

Co-chair

Joint Armed Services Committee

Vice Chair

Resources Committee
Judiciary Committee

Member

Administrative Regulation Review

Senator_Bill_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us

SENATOR BILL WIELECHOWSKI

SENIOR BENEFIT FACT SHEET 1

How It Works

Low-income seniors are eligible for monthly benefit amounts of \$125, \$175 or \$250 a month **based on gross annual income.**

	\$250 monthly payment (75% Federal Poverty Guideline)	\$175 monthly payment (100% FPG)	\$125 monthly payment (175% FPG)
Individual [1]	\$10,148 (\$846 a month)	\$13,530 (\$1,128 a month)	\$23,678 (\$1,972 a month)
Married Couple [2]	\$13,658 (\$1,139 a month)	\$18,210 (\$1,518 a month)	\$31,868 (\$2,646 a month)

Eligibility is based on **gross annual income**, before deductions are taken for taxes, Medicare premiums, etc. Assets such as savings accounts are not considered.

Income limits are tied to the **Federal Poverty Guideline for Alaska** and are updated annually.

Percentage of Seniors at each payment level:

\$250 - 10.6%

\$175 - 38.5%

\$125 - 50.9%

The program cost **\$19.6 million last year**, with \$460,600 (2.3%) going to administrative costs. It's projected cost for the **upcoming year is \$2.1 million.** [\[LINK\]](#)

SENIOR BENEFIT FACT SHEET 2: Who Benefits

The average age of a recipient is **75 years**.

There were **10,109 senior Alaskans** who received a monthly Senior Benefit in 2010. [HHS]

Alaskans are not eligible for the senior benefits if they are in **prison/jail, live in an institution for mental disease, live in a nursing home or currently reside in an Alaska Veterans' Home or Alaska Pioneers Home.**

Senior Benefit recipients by region Alaska Committee On Aging

# of Senior Benefits Recipients	Nov. 2010:	% of Seniors Age 65+:
<i>Statewide</i>	<i>10,109</i>	<i>19.3%</i>
I. Bethel Area	812	57.4%
II. Interior	1,214	17.0%
III. North Slope	38	10.7%
IV. Anchorage	3,642	17.7%
V. Southcentral	2,353	18.0%
VI. Aleutians	35	16.3%
VII. Southwest	421	28.8%
VIII. Northwest	401	39.4%
IX. Southeast	1,188	17.0%

SENIOR BENEFIT FACT SHEET 3: The Need

In 2010, the financial advisory organization "MoneyRates" ranked Alaska as **the third-worst state in the nation in which to retire**, citing in part the high cost of living. [MoneyRates]

In Alaska, **14% of seniors** live below the poverty level. An estimated **4,000 Alaska seniors** rely on food stamps. [Kaiser Family]

Health care costs have skyrocketed in Alaska over the past decade, **growing by 53.9% versus the 29.1% rise in the overall price index**. [Alaska Economic Trends 2010]

The average cost of food in Alaska is at least 20% higher than the national average. Based on the "Thrifty Plan," the cheapest USDA food plan with all meals cooked at home, the average Alaska senior spends **\$2,171.99 - \$2,085.36** on food a year. [USDA]

How much more expensive things are in Alaska than in the Lower 48 [AK Econ Trends]

	Groceries	Housing	Utilities	Transportation	Health Care
Anchorage	29.3%	37.0%	1.9%	18.2%	27.6%
Fairbanks	23.9	50.2	59.4	26.5	44.3
Juneau	30.4	34.8	30.8	25.7	42.2
Kodiak	45.0	21.9	27.5	40.5	28.7

Energy Costs In Alaskan Cities, Rural Towns [AK Econ Trends]

	One Gallon Heating Oil	One Gallon Gasoline	One Gallon Propane
Anchorage	\$3.26	\$3.33	\$4.60
Bethel	\$4.62	\$5.37	\$7.84
Fairbanks	\$3.07	\$3.29	\$3.75
Juneau	\$3.08	\$3.11	\$3.68
Kenai-Soldotna	\$2.75	\$3.65	\$4.35
King Salmon	\$3.87	\$4.45	\$6.23
Nome	\$4.38	\$4.49	\$5.70
Sitka	\$2.69	\$3.15	\$3.50

10 worst states for retirement

by Richard Barrington | Money-Rates Columnist

What makes a place the ideal spot for retirement -- and what makes other places a potential disaster for retirees?

There are several personal choices that make some places more attractive than others -- where your children and grandchildren live is probably at the top. But there are some more objective and measurable factors that determine whether a state is a good or a bad place for retirees. The following are the factors MoneyRates.com used to determine the 10 best and worst states for retirement:

- **Economic factors.** Using a combination of cost of living in major metropolitan areas, unemployment and tax burden, MoneyRates.com rated the 50 states from best to worst according to economic conditions.
- **Climate.** Americans tend to set the thermostat at around 68 degrees. So, MoneyRates.com used this as the standard, and rated states according to how far their monthly temperatures varied from 68 degrees.
- **Crime rate.** Security is a particular concern for senior citizens, so violent and property crime rates were used to rank the safety of the state.
- **Life expectancy.** States conducive to long lives are naturally well-suited for retirees.

For frequently updated data, such as unemployment, the most recently available monthly figures were used, whereas for other criteria that reflect longer-term trends, such as climate, more historical information was used.

Data sources: ACCRA Cost of Living Index, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Tax Foundation, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, MSNBC, the U.S. Census Bureau, Bloomberg Business Week.

No. 5: Maryland

- *Economic factors:* Cost of living is 126 percent of the national average, unemployment is at 7.1 percent, and the average state and local tax burden is 10.8 percent.
- *Climate:* Average monthly temperatures range from 32.24 degrees in January to 75.44 degrees in July.
- *Crime rate:* 9th in the nation in violent crime, and 21st in property crime.
- *Life expectancy:* 76.3 years.
- *Reason for low rank:* Between the cost of living and the tax burden, Maryland is

expensive, and the high rate of violent crime is also troubling.

No. 4: South Carolina

- *Economic factors:* Cost of living is 97 percent of the national average, unemployment is at 10.8 percent, and the average state and local tax burden is 8.8 percent.
- *Climate:* Average monthly temperatures range from 44.12 degrees in January to 80.08 degrees in July.
- *Crime rate:* 1st in the nation in violent crime, and 2nd in property crime.
- *Life expectancy:* 74.8 years.
- *Reason for low rank:* You can find things to like in South Carolina -- the pleasant climate, for example -- but the high crime rates would be enough to scare off many retirees, and the life expectancy (one of the lowest in the nation) is a downside.

No. 3: Alaska

- *Economic factors:* Cost of living is 128 percent of the national average, unemployment is at 7.7 percent, and the average state and local tax burden is 6.4 percent.
- *Climate:* Average monthly temperatures range from 16.5 degrees in January to 59.0 degrees in July.
- *Crime rate:* 8th in the nation in violent crime, and 23rd in property crime.
- *Life expectancy:* 77.1 years.
- *Reason for low rank:* The nation's lowest tax burden is more than offset by the high cost of living, and the harsh climate and high rate of violent crime are not friendly to retirees.

No. 2: Michigan

- *Economic factors:* Cost of living is 97 percent of the national average, unemployment is at 13.1 percent, and the average state and local tax burden is 9.4 percent.
- *Climate:* Average monthly temperatures range from 18.87 degrees in January to 68.32 degrees in July.
- *Crime rate:* 10th in the nation in violent crime, and 27th in property crime.
- *Life expectancy:* 76.3 years.
- *Reason for low rank:* The high unemployment rate is indicative of a severely damaged economy, the climate is a little rough, and the violent crime rate is a concern.

No. 1: Nevada

- *Economic factors:* Cost of living is 105 percent of the national average, unemployment is at 14.3 percent, and the average state and local tax burden is 6.6 percent.
- *Climate:* Average monthly temperatures range from 30.43 degrees in January to 71.94 degrees in July.
- *Crime rate:* 3rd in the nation in violent crime, and 13th in property crime.
- *Life expectancy:* 75.8 years.

- *Reason for low rank:* Nevada has the second lowest tax rate in the country, but scored poorly on just about every other criterion. Gambling enthusiasts may disagree, but high crime rates and a dismal economy make Nevada a bad bet for retirees.

For the full list of states, check our blog post [Best and worst states for retirement: The complete list.](#)

About the Author

Richard Barrington has earned the CFA designation and is a 20-year veteran of the financial industry, including having served for over a dozen years as a member of the Executive Committee of Manning & Napier Advisors, Inc. Richard has written extensively on investment and personal finance topics.



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February 1, 2011

The Honorable Bettye Davis, Chair
Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska Capitol, Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 16 (Hawker) and SB 21 (Wielechowski)—Support

Dear Chair Davis:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we are pleased to indicate our very strong support for HB 16, authored by Representative Mike Hawker which will extend the Senior Benefits program for another four years as well as SB 21, authored by Senator Bill Wielechowski. SB 21 has a Primary co-sponsorship by your Committee colleague Senator Kevin Meyer as well as co-sponsorship by your Committee colleague Senator Johnny Ellis. Senators Kookesh, McGuire and Paskvan are also primary co-sponsors and Senators French and Menard are co-sponsors. Representative Hawker's HB 16 has twenty-one co-sponsors and passed the House 37-0.

There is no doubt that the Senior Benefits program has proven to be an invaluable help to many older Alaskans who might not be able to afford to stay here without it.

We all recognize that Alaska's seniors face high health care costs as well as high energy costs.

The Senior Benefits program has allowed over 10,000 older Alaskans to deal with these costs and to remain citizens of our state.


We want Alaskans to be able to stay here after retirement. The Senior Benefits program is essential to achieve that goal.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote for HB 16 as well as for SB 21.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marie Darlin".

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Senator Egan
Senator Ellis
Senator Meyer
Senator Dyson
Senator Wielechowski
Representative Hawker



Alaska State Legislature

Please enter into the record my testimony to the Senate Health & Social Services
committee name

Committee on SB 21, dated 2-2-11
bill # / subject public hearing date

TO: Honorable Senators of the State of Alaska

Regarding SB 21.

FROM: Mary Wallis

I am very concerned about the potential loss of Senior Benefits.
I am a 70 year old woman whose annual social security benefit is \$11,976.
I also have a part-time job for my past employer which grosses \$1940 annually
(which I have to pay SE taxes on).

Since I retired at age 64, my benefits can never increase, and without the help of my family,
I could not survive financially.

But my mother, Dorothy Westphal, is 89 years old and will need our help.

Please consider situations such as mine, and others who have worse situations.
Frankly I will have a very tough time getting by without the help from Senior Benefits.
Thank you for your attention.

Signed: Mary Wallis
Testifier

Representing (optional)

5125 Silver Salmon Drive #15 Kenai, AK 99661

Address

(907 283-0668)

Phone number

PHONE CALL

FOR	Senator Davis	DATE	2-1-11	TIME	11:29 ^{AM} P.M.
M	Dixie Hood - Age 77				
OF	789-2068				
PHONE	Mr. Vece mail	CELL	→ 5862200		
MESSAGE	Sr. Benefits Legislation Gross Income to Net Income			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	TELEPHONED
				<input type="checkbox"/>	RETURNED YOUR CALL
				<input type="checkbox"/>	PLEASE CALL
				<input type="checkbox"/>	WILL CALL AGAIN
				<input type="checkbox"/>	CAME TO SEE YOU
SIGNED	p.m.			<input type="checkbox"/>	WANTS TO SEE YOU

Matsou legislative information
- Office -
600 E. Railroad Ave.
Wasilla, AK. 99654-8135

January 12, 2011

Barbara A. Schumacher
P.O. Box 873505
Wasilla, AK, 99687

To Whom it may concern,
Please think very carefully about the Senior Benefits Program, here in Alaska. It has been a great source of comfort & financial stability to me for the last 3 years. I shudder to think what it would mean to your Senior Constituents, who benefit so greatly from this program if it were to be discontinued.
Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Barbara A. Schumacher - age 75
BARBARA A. SCHUMACHER
Wasilla, AK.

Date: January 12, 2011

To: MatSu Legislative Office

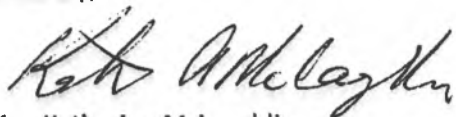
To whom it may concern;

I am the daughter of a Wasilla area resident senior citizen. It has come to my attention that the State needs to seek renewal for the Alaska Senior Citizen Benefits Program. I strongly support this program and urge the State to petition for renewal of this very important service to our Seniors. The Senior Care benefits that my mother receives allow her that tiny bit of extra wiggle room on her fixed retirement income, without which, her standard of living will become negatively affected.

Many Alaskan Seniors are in similar, or worse, situations. Without these benefits the State would surely see a rise in emergency medical care resulting from senior's not getting the medications, doctor visits, appropriate food, etc. they need because of less income.

Please support the continued funding for the Alaska Senior Citizen Benefits Program.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Katherine McLaughlin
PO Box 8043
Chenega Bay, Alaska 99574



January 19, 2011

AARP Alaska
3601 C Street
Suite 1420
Anchorage, AK 99503

T 1-866-227-7447
F 907-341-2270
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/ak

The Honorable Bill Wielechowski
Member of the Senate
Alaska Capitol, Room 101
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 21 (Wielechowski, Kookesh, Meyer, Paskvan, McGuire)—Support

Dear Senator Wielechowski:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we are pleased to indicate our very strong support for SB 21 which will extend the Senior Benefits program for another four years.

There is no doubt that the Senior Benefits program has proven to be an invaluable help to many older Alaskans who might not be able to afford to stay here without it.

We all recognize that Alaska's seniors face high health care costs as well as high energy costs.

The Senior Benefits program has allowed over 10,000 older Alaskans to deal with these costs and to remain citizens of our state.

We want Alaskans to be able to stay here after retirement. The Senior Benefits program is essential to achieve that goal.

On behalf of all those older Alaskans who may not be aware of your leadership on this issue, please accept our thanks for all that you have done, continue to do, and will do in the future.

We are pleased to thank Senators Kookesh, Meyer, Paskvan, and McGuire as prime co-sponsors and Senators French and Menard as co-sponsors for SB 21.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Marie Darlin, Coordinator
AARP Capital City Task Force
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506
Juneau, AK 99801
586-3637 (voice)
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Senator Albert Kookesh
Senator Lesil McGuire

Senator Kevin Meyer
Senator Hollis French

Senator Joe Paskvan
Senator Linda Menard

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2009

Older Alaskans are a highly diverse group of individuals, living a great variety of lifestyles in communities large and small. Statistics about our senior population do not capture the unique personalities and circumstances of all the seniors we know. Nevertheless, information about some aspects of the collective lives of Alaska's seniors illustrates many of the issues of concern to older Alaskans and their advocates.

The Alaska Commission on Aging has gathered a selection of data on older Alaskans in order to provide a sketch of the older residents of our state and their well-being. In our **Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2009**, we offer a number of data points, which corroborate the following observations:

- ◆ For the second year in a row, Alaska has the fastest-growing senior population of the 50 states, with an increase of almost 50% among individuals age 65 and older during the past ten years.
- ◆ While senior populations in several regions have grown especially rapidly in the past seven years (for example, the Southcentral region's seniors have increased by over 60%), all nine regions have witnessed an increase in their senior populations of at least 18% during this time period.
- ◆ Older baby boomers are swelling the ranks of the youngest group of seniors, now the fastest-growing age group, second to the 85-and-older group, whose members are the most frail, the most likely to struggle with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ARD), and the most likely to depend on home- and community-based care as well as institutional long-term support services.
- ◆ While Alaska seniors appear less likely to be living in poverty than the national average among seniors, many of them are struggling to get by financially. Over 20 percent of Alaskans age 65 and older are receiving a modest monthly cash supplement from the Senior Benefits Program, a percentage which varies greatly by location, from 13 percent in the North Slope region to 59 percent in the Bethel/Wade Hampton region. To qualify for this program, seniors must have incomes below 175% of the federal poverty level for Alaska. In 2009, that meant no more than \$23,678 for a single senior, and no more than \$31,868 for a couple.
- ◆ Retired seniors as a whole contribute approximately \$1.7 billion annually to Alaska's economy, including their retirement income and health care spending. While Alaska's "retirement industry" may not yet be competing with those of Florida or Arizona, this source of cash flow is in fact one of the state's top industries. And its value is enhanced by the fact that it produces local spending and is environmentally benign, stable, year-round, compatible with other industries, spread throughout the state, and helps create economies of scale (particularly in health care) which benefit the entire population.
- ◆ Alaskan seniors are more likely than U.S. seniors as a whole to die of causes linked to behavioral health issues. Older Alaskans have high suicide rates as well as high rates of accidental deaths and alcohol-induced deaths. These figures suggest that behavioral health programs targeted to seniors with depression, other mental illness, and substance abuse problems could have a dramatic impact on our seniors' quality of life.

- ◆ In spite of these areas of unfavorable comparison, Alaska's seniors are actually healthier than the national average – less likely to die from any of the leading causes of death and less likely to die in a given year from *any* cause of death. Alaskan seniors' age-adjusted death rates are substantially lower than those of U.S. seniors as a whole. For every 100,000 Alaskans age 65 and older, only 3,818 die in a given one-year period, while for every 100,000 U.S. seniors, 4,722 die during that period. In other words, an Alaskan senior is 19 percent less likely to die (from any cause) during a given year than his or her U.S. counterpart.
- ◆ Alaskan seniors report higher levels of self-described disability than do U.S. seniors as a whole. The BRFSS (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, a Public Health phone survey) asks whether they are "limited in their activities because of physical, mental, or emotional problems." Alaskan seniors are about 20 percent more likely to answer, "Yes."
- ◆ Today's Pioneer Home residents are more likely than not to require care at Level III, the most advanced level of care, which includes 24-hour nursing care. This presents the Pioneer Homes with a challenge because it is a very different mix of residents from that which the homes were originally designed to serve. However, one reason for this more intensive level of need is that older Alaskans are able to remain in their own homes longer today thanks to more comprehensive home- and community-based services. The average Pioneer Home resident today is more than six years older than the average resident of a decade ago.
- ◆ A substantial number of complaints about abuse and neglect involving seniors are being received by agencies such as Adult Protective Services and the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office. Cases of abuse, neglect and exploitation of seniors may involve friends and family members, paid caregivers, telemarketers, and others. Reports to Adult Protective Services have increased by 169% in the last four years alone.

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2009

Population Age 60+	2008	% of Area's Total 2008 Pop.	Seniors Change Since 2001	Comments
<i>Statewide Total</i>	79,850	11.7%	+43.2%	<i>All census areas. 4.6% increase over 2007. NOTE 1</i>
I. Bethel Area	2,089	8.5%	+18.3%	Bethel, Wade Hampton
II. Interior	11,254	10.8%	+46.5%	Fairbanks NSB, Yukon-Koyukuk, Denali, SE Fbks
III. North Slope	579	8.6%	+19.6%	North Slope Borough
IV. Anchorage	31,220	11.0%	+39.6%	Municipality of Anchorage
V. Southcentral	19,533	13.5%	+61.1%	Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su, Valdez-Cordova
VI. Aleutians	471	6.6%	+26.3%	Aleutians East, Aleutians West
VII. Southwest	2,307	11.1%	+36.7%	Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kodiak, Lake & Peninsula
VIII. Northwest	1,588	9.4%	+21.2%	Nome, Northwest Arctic
IX. Southeast	10,809	15.6%	+35.4%	Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon, Wrangell-Petersburg, Yakutat
		% of AK Seniors:		
Age 60-64	30,395	38.1%	+62.9%	Older baby boomers entering this group. NOTE 2
Age 65-74	31,019	38.8%	+34.1%	
Age 75-84	13,795	17.3%	+24.1%	
Age 85+	4,641	5.8%	+61.4%	
Rank Among States in Growth of Senior Population	Ranking: #1	AK Growth, 1998-2008: 49.8%	U.S. Avg. Growth: 13.0%	Age 65+. NOTE 3

Economic Status			Comments
Seniors' Economic Contribution to Alaska	2004: \$1.461 billion*	2008: \$1.662 billion**	*ISER figure from "Report on the Economic Well-Being of Alaska Seniors" (2007) **2009 ACOA estimate. NOTE 4
Percent in Poverty (Age 65+)	Alaska, 2008:	U.S., 2008:	2009 Current Population Survey/American Social and Economic Supplement
Below 100% FPL	3.4% (Rank: #51)	9.7%	Not adjusted for higher living costs in Alaska (FPL = Federal Poverty Level)
Average Monthly Social Security Pmt, Age 65+	AK, Dec. 2008: \$1,087	U.S., Dec. 2008: \$1,123	A total of 45,710 Alaskans age 65+ received Social Security benefits (92%). Social Security Administration. NOTE 5
Average Monthly PERS Pmt	\$1,503.57	# of seniors: 10,705	AK Dept. of Administration, Div. of Retirement & Benefits. Public Employees Retirement System. NOTE 6
Average Monthly TRS Pmt	\$2,715.70	# of seniors: 4,087	AK Dept. of Administration, Div. of Retirement & Benefits. Teachers Retirement System. NOTE 7
# of Senior Benefits Recipients	Nov. 2009:	% of Seniors Age 65+:	Alaska Division of Public Assistance. NOTE 8
<i>Statewide</i>	9,987	20.2%	<i>7.3% increase over Nov. 2008 statewide total</i>
I. Bethel Area	812	58.9%	0.6% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
II. Interior	1,200	17.6%	8.2% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
III. North Slope	45	13.2%	9.8% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
IV. Anchorage	3,572	18.6%	6.5% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
V. Southcentral	2,363	19.3%	9.8% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
VI. Aleutians	39	20.3%	21.9% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
VII. Southwest	422	29.7%	9.0% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
VIII. Northwest	413	40.2%	5.6% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
IX. Southeast	1,120	16.5%	8.7% increase over Nov. 2008 region total
Seniors (Age 60+) on Food Stamps	Nov. 2009: 3,861 (60+)	Nov. 2009: 2,239 (66+)	Alaska Division of Public Assistance; senior (age 60+) Food Stamp recipients up 22% since November 2008

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2009

Avg. Mo. Benefit (Food Stamps)	\$160.72 (Age 60-65)	\$99.23 (Age 66+)	Alaska Division of Public Assistance. NOTE 9
Seniors Receiving Old Age Assistance (Adult Public Assistance)	November 2009: number of AK seniors: 5,045 (29.1% of all APA)	November 2009: average amount of APA monthly benefit, all recipients: \$277.91	Alaska Division of Public Assistance. NOTE 10
Senior Medicaid Eligibles	Dec. 2009: 9,064	% of Senior Pop.: 11.4%	Alaska Division of Public Assistance

Senior Health	Alaska	U.S.	Comments
# with ADRD (estimate)	2008: 5,702	5,300,000	AK estimate based on national prevalence rates by age group. NOTE 11
Age-adjusted death rate (per 100,000 seniors 65+)	2008: 3,817.6	2006: 4,721.9	Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. NOTE 12
Suicide rate (per 100,000 seniors age 65+)	2004-2008: 19.9	2006: 14.2	Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. NOTE 13
Other accidental deaths (per 100,000 age 65+)	2004-2008: 78.2	2006: 53.8	Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. "Other accidental deaths" exclude fatal falls. NOTE 14
Alcohol-induced deaths	2004-2008: 34.0	2006: 11.6	Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. NOTE 15
Leading causes of death:	2008 (AK):	2006 (U.S.):	Alaska Bureau of Vital Statistics. NOTE 16
Cancer	1,015.1	1,040.0	Per 100,000 age 65+
Heart diseases	833.1	1,370.2	Per 100,000 age 65+
Stroke	250.7	314.0	Per 100,000 age 65+
Chronic lower respiratory diseases	285.1	286.8	Per 100,000 age 65+
Alzheimer's disease	157.7	192.3	Per 100,000 age 65+
Diabetes mellitus	133.5	140.5	Per 100,000 age 65+
Binge drinkers	2.7%	3.2%	Age 65+ - 2008 BRFSS. NOTE 17
Heavy drinkers	3.4%	3.0%	Age 65+ - 2008 BRFSS. NOTE 18
Smokers	9.7%	8.2%	Age 65+ - 2008 BRFSS. NOTE 19
Disabled seniors	39.4%	32.7%	Age 65+ who are "limited in activities because of physical, mental or emotional problems" – 2008 BRFSS. NOTE 20
Obese seniors	31.6%	22.9%	Age 65+ - 2008 BRFSS. NOTE 21
People with "frequent mental distress"	2008: Age 65+: 8.7% Age <65: 13.5%	2006: Age 65+: 17.9% Age <65: 14.2%	2006, 2008 BRFSS. NOTE 22
Pioneer Home residents at Level III	12/31/2009: 58.1%		Data provided by Div. of Pioneer Homes. Level III is the most advanced level of care.
Avg. age of PH resident	Sept. 1, 2009: 82.3 years	1998: 76 years	Data provided by Div. of Pioneer Homes.
Nursing home costs – private room, daily rate	AK, 2009: \$618*	U.S. avg, 2009: \$219	*AK: highest cost in the U.S.; MetLife Mature Market Institute, 2009 Market Survey of Long-Term Care Costs
Older Alaskans Medicaid waiver recipients	FY 2009: 1,651	FY 2008: 1,536	Info from Senior & Disability Services. NOTE 23
Senior grants clients	FY 2009: 15,352	FY 2008: 16,502	Info from Senior & Disability Services. NOTE 24

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2009

Senior Safety			Comments
Long-Term Care Ombudsman complaints	FY 2009: 337	FY 2008: 208	Complaints involving seniors (age 60+) in long-term care. Data from the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman
Adult Protective Services reports	FY 2009: 2,748	FY 2005: 1,021	Adult Protective Services (APS), Senior & Disabilities Services
Corrections intakes of seniors	CY 2009 636:	CY 2008: 787	Intakes of seniors (age 60+) to correctional facilities any time during 2009; info from AK Dept. of Corrections
Senior offenders in AK prisons	12/31/2009: 150	12/31/2008: 148	Per AK Dept. of Corrections; 144 are male, 6 female; 141 felony, 9 misdemeanor,

NOTES:

1. Data from Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's 2008 population estimates. Regions are those used by the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services. "The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY 2008 – FY 2011" prescribes funding by region for those grant programs which include federal Older Americans Act money.
2. Data from Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's 2008 population estimates. Percent of area population column shows percent of statewide population in each age group.
3. Data from "A Profile of Older Americans: 2009," Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The five states with the fastest-growing senior populations during the decade from 1998 through 2008 were Alaska (49.8%), Nevada (48.1%), Arizona (39.7%), Utah (33.7%), and New Mexico (31.3%). Rhode Island and Washington, DC saw a decline in senior population during this decade. Alaska's gains reflect the choices of more and more seniors to remain in the state after retirement.
4. The University of Alaska Anchorage's Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) estimated the 2004 cash contribution of Alaska retirees age 60 and older at \$1.461 billion. The estimate is contained in the 2007 ACOA-commissioned "Report on the Economic Well-Being of Alaska Seniors," available on the Commission's website at: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/acoa/documents/seniorWellbeingReport.pdf>. The Commission estimated seniors' 2009 contributions by applying the increases in the Anchorage Consumer Price Index for 2005 (3.1%), 2006 (3.2%), 2007 (2.2%), and 2008 (4.6%) to the 2004 base figure.
5. Data obtained from Social Security Administration's website. Alaska average includes all Alaska residents age 65 and older who receive Social Security retirement benefits, a total of 45,710 people. U.S. average includes all U.S. residents age 65 and older who receive Social Security retirement benefits. The Alaska average monthly payment may be lower because of the high percentage of Alaska retirees who are subject to the "Windfall Elimination Provision," which limits Social Security retirement benefits to many individuals receiving public employee pensions.
6. Figures on PERS (Public Employee Retirement System) benefits include PERS retirees age 60 and older who currently reside in Alaska.
7. Figures on TRS (Teachers Retirement System) benefits include TRS retirees age 60 and older who currently reside in Alaska.
8. Alaskans age 65 and older with incomes up to 175% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for Alaska are eligible for the Senior Benefits Program. For 2009, 175% of the Alaska FPL was \$23,678 for a single senior and \$31,868 for a couple.
9. Seniors age 65 and older often have higher incomes than those in the 60 – 64 age group because they are receiving Social Security retirement benefits or other benefits that begin at age 65. Hence the lower average monthly Food Stamps value for the 65+ population.
10. Adult Public Assistance is a supplement to SSI, so recipients must be either certified as disabled by the Social Security Administration (with severe long-term disabilities that impose mental or physical limitations on their day-to-day functioning) or be age 65 and older. There are income limits for the program, which is intended to assist aged or disabled individuals in attaining self-support or self-care.

11. ADRD: Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Alaska ADRD population was estimated by the Alaska Commission on Aging based on national (per Dr. Denis Evans, 1990) prevalence rates of three percent for those age 65 to 74, 18.7 percent for those age 75 to 84, and 47.2 percent for those age 85 and older. National estimate is for 2009, from the Alzheimer's Association's "2009 Alzheimer's Facts and Figures." "The dramatic rise in Alzheimer's underscores that the disease has the ability to undermine the entire U.S. health care system," according to Stephen McConnell, Ph.D., the vice president of advocacy and public policy for the Alzheimer's Association.
12. The age-adjusted death rate shows how many people out of every 100,000 in a particular age group died during a given time period. For states like Alaska with fewer than 100,000 people in the 65-and-older age group, adjustments are made to produce a comparable figure. This statistic tells us that Alaskans age 65 and older were substantially less likely to die from any cause than U.S. seniors as a whole.
13. Alaska's senior suicide rate is 40% higher than that of U.S. seniors as a whole.
14. Alaska's "Other Accidental Deaths" (excluding fatal falls) are 45% higher for seniors here compared with the U.S. as a whole.
15. Alaska seniors are nearly three times more likely than U.S. seniors as a whole to experience an alcohol-induced death.
16. Note that Alaska seniors are less likely to die from any of the six leading causes of death. Death rates from cancer, diabetes mellitus, or chronic lower respiratory disease are slightly lower. Death rates from stroke and Alzheimer's disease are moderately lower. And death rates from heart disease are substantially lower in Alaska.
17. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing multi-state phone survey conducted in Alaska by the Division of Public Health. Binge drinking is defined as males having five or more drinks on one occasion or females having four or more drinks on one occasion.
18. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing multi-state phone survey conducted in Alaska by the Division of Public Health. Heavy drinking is defined as adult men having more than two drinks per day or adult women having more than one drink per day.
19. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing multi-state phone survey conducted in Alaska by the Division of Public Health. Smokers are defined as current smokers.
20. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing multi-state phone survey conducted in Alaska by the Division of Public Health. Seniors with disabilities include those age 65 and over who say that they are limited in their activities because of physical, mental, or emotional problems.
21. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing multi-state phone survey conducted in Alaska by the Division of Public Health. "Obese" individuals are defined as those with a body mass index (BMI) of 30.0 or greater.
22. The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) is an ongoing multi-state phone survey conducted in Alaska by the Division of Public Health. "Frequent Mental Distress" was defined as having 14 or more days of "not good" mental health during the last 30 days. "Frequent Mental Distress" was last assessed in the national BRFSS survey in 2006. However, the Alaska BRFSS survey includes this measure each year.
23. To qualify for services under the Older Alaskans Medicaid Waiver program, individuals must be age 65 or older, income-eligible for Medicaid, and must meet nursing home level-of-care requirements. Waiver services are home- and community-based services (such as meal programs, chore assistance, and care coordination) that allow the individual to continue living in his or her own home.
24. The figure shown represents an unduplicated count of seniors served in "registered services," those services for which data on individual participants is collected. Senior grant programs include Nutrition, Transportation and Support Services (NTS), Senior In-Home Services, Adult Day Services, Family Caregiver, and ADRD Education and Support. The senior grant programs are available to individuals age 60 and older.