

MESSAGE *from the*
Governor



Governor Frank H. Murkowski.

I came into this office with a vision that all Alaskans — children, families, seniors — would have better access to the social services they may need at one time or another in their lives. My vision contained a promise that is being fulfilled on a daily basis by the employees of the Department of Health and Social Services: to enable every Alaskan to be as self-sufficient as possible.

Under the leadership of Commissioner Joel Gilbertson, and now continuing under the guidance of Commissioner Karleen Jackson, more Alaskans are finding help in ways that make common sense.

When a family finds itself in economic freefall because of catastrophic illness or sudden job loss, instead of being shuffled from office to office they can find “one stop” temporary financial relief and a team in place whose single goal is getting the breadwinners back to work.

When a senior with health problems needs to find out what resources are available, there’s one number to call: SeniorCare Information Office (1-800-478-6065, or Anchorage 260-3680; www.seniorcare.alaska.gov).

When an emotionally disturbed child needs residential treatment, instead of sending that child thousands of miles away, we’re making progress toward keeping that child near her or his home in Alaska, where the family can be intimately involved in the treatment process.

When a nursing home resident, recovering from a stroke, wants to be back home where loved ones or community members are capable of administering care, we help that happen.

When a youngster commits a minor crime, we pay attention and intervene at the earliest stage, working with the family and community to make sure the young person’s behavior doesn’t lead to serious crimes.

When Alaskans are mentally disturbed, we don’t warehouse them. We include them and their families in treatment planning.

Ultimately, a healthy Alaska is a place where all Alaskans who want to work can find self-sustaining employment. A healthy Alaska is a place where people who need temporary help can find help, and then receive further assistance to move on to self-sufficiency.

The Department of Health and Social Services has moved steadily toward its goals, in line with my vision, over the last three years. I am proud of the progress the department has made under Commissioner Gilbertson — and I have confidence that Commissioner Jackson will continue the momentum.

Governor Frank H. Murkowski

