

# HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES



Vision: All individuals and families are healthy, safe & productive.

Mission: To promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans.

## 2012 PRIORITIES

*The overriding theme for the future direction of the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services is helping individuals and families create safe and healthy communities.*

### **Integrated Health & Wellness**

We are focused on improving the health status of all Alaskans. It is necessary to continue bridging both policy and practice gaps that have traditionally existed between primary health care and behavioral health care. We need to prevent, intervene early, treat and help people recover from substance abuse as much as we need to screen, diagnose and treat chronic disease and mental health conditions. We desire to see a healthier Alaska, and believe the following strategies will bring us closer to this reality:

- Promoting prevention and healthy life choices
- Integrating primary care with behavioral health
- Detecting and controlling the spread of infectious diseases
- Promoting diagnostic, treatment and recovery services
- Improving emergency response and preparedness
- Promoting rural infrastructure development

### **Health Care Access and Delivery**

The department is taking steps to improve access to quality health care in Alaska. Alaska Medicaid provides health insurance coverage to approximately 18 percent of Alaska's population. As in other states, Alaska's Medicaid program is challenged to meet increasing costs and demands for services. We believe the following strategies will allow for systemic improvements in both access and service delivery:

- Promoting technology for sustainable and effective health care delivery.
- Supporting workforce development
- Enhancing management of high cost health needs
- Improving quality and access of care for underserved populations
- Promoting rural infrastructure development

### **Sustainable Long-Term Care Delivery System**

We are striving to improve long-term care service delivery. Alaska has successfully begun making more services available in homes and communities thereby delaying or avoiding higher cost and more restrictive institutional care for many individuals. There is still work to be done to improve access in rural and remote areas of our state and improve standardization of quality care across the continuum, in order to assure the health and welfare of these citizens. We believe the following strategies are vital to achieving this outcome:

- Identifying and coordinating health and welfare needs
- Promoting a service array that meets the needs of those requiring long-term care services
- Developing an integrated and comprehensive model of care
- Promoting rural infrastructure development

*Partnerships*

## 2012 PRIORITIES

## Safe and Responsible Families and Communities

We are working to improve family and community safety and responsibility. When our neighbors struggle, appropriate supports should be in place to prevent progressively worsening circumstances. Our citizens, from infants to elders, deserve to feel safe, supported and ultimately empowered to become successful, contributing Alaskans. It takes strong families to build strong communities. We believe the following strategies will advance safety and responsibility in Alaskan families and communities:

- Providing effective and timely protective services
- Strengthening programs addressing family violence prevention
- Targeting suicide prevention efforts to communities in need
- Integrating and coordinating services to families
- Establishing community partnerships to identify and solve health problems.
- Promoting rural infrastructure development

While much of our attention is outwardly focused, we are committed to efficient and effective service delivery internal to the department. We believe we serve the public best by: integrating and coordinating our services, maximizing resources for effective service delivery, promoting accountability, strategically leveraging technology and implementing sound health policy decisions.

