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SERVICES**

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Alaska Veterans Home earns VA certification

(Juneau, Alaska) — Today the Department of Health and Social Services announced that the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has certified the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home in Palmer. As a result, qualified veterans will get help paying for their residency at the home.

“To gain the VA certification, we passed all the inspections; we have in place all the necessary programs and policies; and we have the right staff on board,” Virginia Smiley, Director of the Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes said. “It means we are ready to provide our veterans with the care and services they deserve and now the VA will provide financial assistance for that care.”

Retroactive to Feb. 7, 2007, the VA will pay a Veterans Domiciliary benefit of \$31.30 per day to the state of Alaska for each qualified veteran who resides in the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home in Palmer. For an average month, the benefit totals \$939, which represents 16 to 42 percent of the monthly rate at the Pioneer Homes, depending on the level of service the veteran requires. This rate is adjusted each year on Oct. 1.

In May 2004 the Alaska legislature approved development of the state’s first veterans home. In the summer of 2005, in conjunction with the VA, the state of Alaska began a major remodel and upgrade of the Palmer Pioneer Home. The new facility opened in July 2006 and was renamed the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home. Seventy-five percent of the 79 beds in the home are designated for veterans, and 25 percent are available for non-veterans.

For more information on the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Homes visit <http://hss.state.ak.us/dalp/palmer/default.htm>. For more information on the Veterans Domiciliary benefit, please contact the Alaska Pioneer Home Veterans Liaison at (907) 465-5737, or visit <http://www1.va.gov/domiciliary/>.

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