



For Immediate Release July 1, 2009

Contact: Cathy Stadem, 269-3495, catherine.stadem@alaska.gov,
Sarana Schell, 269-8041, sarana.schell@alaska.gov

State Senior and Disabilities Services responds to federal review

Temporary moratorium on some Medicaid applications and enrollment

(Anchorage, AK) —The state Division of Senior and Disabilities Services is working this summer in coordination with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to improve its compliance with federal standards in the areas of Home and Community Based Medicaid Waivers and Personal Care Services (Personal Care Assistance).

“We greatly appreciate the thorough and helpful review that CMS recently completed and we are eager to work hand-in-hand with them in any way that will better serve Alaskans who use and need our services,” said Rebecca Hilgendorf, Director of Senior and Disabilities Services.

The CMS review cited several areas in need of improvement to assure that the state’s oversight of the Waivers and Personal Care Services is consistent with federal and state regulations.

While the improvements are ongoing, the state cannot accept new applications for the Home and Community Based Services Waivers or Personal Care Services at the direction of CMS. The department is evaluating other programs available to provide interim services to the persons who are affected by the CMS-imposed moratorium.

“This is only a temporary moratorium while we catch up with a backlog of assessments and implement systems designed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of Alaskans,” Hilgendorf explained.

The division will also assure that its staff and managers responsible for the Home and Community Based Services and Personal Care Services programs attend Web-based waiver training, which is sponsored by CMS. Following the training sessions, the division will develop a work plan and timeline to implement a quality-improvement strategy and end the moratorium.

“After our plan is developed, we will submit it to CMS for approval,” Hilgendorf said. “Our goal is to quickly resolve the areas of concern while strengthening Alaska’s long-term care system for now and the future.”

Providers and Medicaid recipients with questions may contact Angela Salerno at 465-4874, or angela.salerno@alaska.gov.

###

DHSS is now on Twitter. Follow health updates at www.twitter.com/Alaska_DHSS.