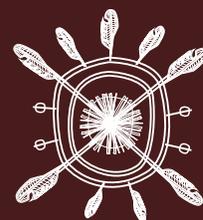
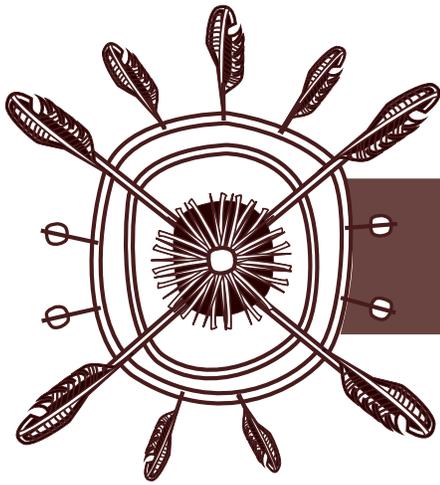




Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)
FY2017 Annual Report



Alaska Commission on Aging



The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to ensure the dignity and independence of all older Alaskans, and to assist them to lead useful and meaningful lives through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency cooperation.

Alaska Commission on Aging FY2017 Annual Report

<http://www.alaskaaging.org/>

Bill Walker, Governor
State of Alaska

Valerie Nurr'araaluk Davidson, Commissioner
Department of Health & Social Services

Denise Daniello, Executive Director
The Alaska Commission on Aging



Alaska Commission on Aging
PO Box 110693
(240 Main Street, Suite 100
Court Plaza Building)
Juneau, AK 99811-0693
Phone: (907) 465-3250

January 2018

*Photos courtesy of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services,
Alaska Commission on Aging, and Lesley Thompson, ACoA Planner.*

FY2017 Annual Report

How would you rate Alaska as a place for yourself and aging loved ones to grow old?

While Alaska tends to be an expensive place to live, and that certainly holds true for the cost of long-term care, our state ranks high in comparison to other states for the quality of care provided to seniors.

Alaskans value their older people. This is evident in our home and community-based services and supports for Alaska seniors, funded mostly with state and federal dollars, which are delivered by a network of community-based service provider agencies. These services play a vital role in promoting the health and well-being of older Alaskans so they may live safely with dignity and independence. Local senior providers offer a lifeline of services that touch the daily lives of older Alaskans and their family caregivers.

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA and “the Commission”) is proud to be a partner in this collaborative effort through planning, education, and advocacy. ACoA provides leadership in planning and implementing the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services and Alaska’s Roadmap to Address Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias. The Commission strives to incorporate senior and other public input into Alaska’s Senior State Plan, ACoA’s policy recommendations, and associated advocacy activities. We are committed to educating policymakers and public members regarding senior needs and the enormous resources seniors bring to their families and communities.

The Commission’s FY2017 Annual Report provides data about the Alaska senior population, along with prevailing trends, and serves as a resource to promote understanding how older Alaskans are faring. This report also presents ACoA’s legislative recommendations and its related activities with the aim to continually improve policies and programs which impact the quality of life for Alaskan seniors.

Alaska provides a full continuum of senior services. These services protect the most vulnerable; offer basic respite and supports so that families may care for their own at home for as long as possible; and provide flexible services to meet the needs of seniors living in diverse remote, rural, and urban locations. These services also complement other systems of health care through the provision of nutritious meals and a friendly welfare check to homebound seniors; transportation to medical appointments; and in-home assistance with personal tasks and household chores. These services are especially critical for seniors



David Blacketer
FY2017 ACoA Chair,
Public Member,
Kodiak

During these difficult budget times, what advice do you have for legislators to resolve the State’s fiscal problems?

“My suggestion to Alaska Legislators is that they renew the Senior Benefits Program. If they need to cut any of the benefits, reduce a little on each tier, but do not eliminate Tier 3 that serves those most in need.”

**FY2017
Alaska Commission
on Aging Staff**
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Denise Daniello,
Executive Director

Lesley Thompson,
Planner

Contact Us
.....

**Alaska Commission
on Aging**
Department of Health &
Social Services

Physical address:
240 Main Street, Suite 100
Court Plaza Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 110693
Juneau, AK 99811-0693

Phone:
(907) 465-3250

Fax:
(907) 465-1398

Website:
www.alaskaaging.org

Email:
hss.acoa@alaska.gov

who meet the level of care criteria for nursing home admission, but are able to live at home due, in part, to core home and community-based supports. Alaska’s assisted living homes, including the Pioneer Homes as well as skilled nursing facilities, provide quality care for elderly seniors who are no longer able to live at home because of infirmity and advanced stages of dementia.

According to a nationwide study, Alaska ranked fifth highest overall among all states as measured by indicators within five main categories identified in AARP’s 2017 Long-Term Support Services Scorecard. These indicators were selected as being most important for creating a high quality system of care from the consumer’s point of view. Specifically, Alaska ranked in the top ten states for the following measures:

- ⊗ “#4 Quality of Life and Quality of Care” defined as being treated with respect and preferences honored when possible;
- ⊗ “#6 Choice of Setting and Provider” reflecting a person-centered approach for consumer choice and control of services;
- ⊗ “#7 Support for Family Caregivers” meaning that natural caregivers are provided with supports to assist them in caring for elderly loved ones living at home; and
- ⊗ “#6 Effective Transitions” defined as seniors receiving a warm hand-off with appropriate long term support services in their move from institutional settings back home to the community.

At the low end, Alaska ranked “#23” in the measure of being able to “easily find services and services are affordable.” AARP’s other high performing states include Washington (#1), Minnesota (#2), Vermont (#3), and Oregon (#4) – which like Alaska – tend to have colder climates.

Alaska’s older adult population is booming with 129,908 Alaskans age 60+ representing 17.6% of the state’s total population in 2017. By 2030, when the growth of this age segment is expected to slow, almost 25%, or one in four Alaskans, is projected to be a senior. As our state moves forward in designing sustainable programs that promote healthy and age-friendly communities, much work remains to be accomplished. Alaska must improve senior access to medical and behavioral health

services particularly for Medicare beneficiaries; develop infrastructure and transportation to support the needs of people of all ages and abilities; build housing to allow for aging in place; and create new intergenerational opportunities for continuing work, volunteering, education, and recreation.

Seniors make a difference. There are many needs that deserve attention and energy from the senior community. Seniors have a lifetime of experience, knowledge and wisdom to share. They also have a strong desire to give back. A very wise Elder from Southeast summarized a person's life in this way: Learn, Earn, and Return. Learn as a young person through formal education and life experience. Earn money and resources through your vocation. Then, return what you have learned and some of what you have earned back to your community and loved ones. This completes the cycle of life.

Sincerely,

David Blacketer, FY17 ACoA Chair

Denise Daniello, ACoA Executive Director



FY2016 - FY2017 Alaska Commission on Aging Members

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David Blacketer
FY17 Chair,
Public Member,
Kodiak

Marie Darlin
FY17 Vice Chair,
Public Member,
Juneau

Linda Combs
Public Member,
Palmer

Anna Frank
Public Member,
Fairbanks

Gordon Glaser
Public Member,
Anchorage

Banarsi Lal
Public Member,
Fairbanks

Mary Shields
Public Member,
Anchorage

Rachel Greenberg
Senior Service Provider,
Palmer

Kathryn Abbott
Executive Director,
Serve Alaska, Department
of Commerce, Community
and Economic
Development
Anchorage

Duane Mayes
Director,
Senior and Disabilities
Services, Department of
Health and Social Services,
Anchorage

Bob Sivertsen
Alaska Pioneer Home
Advisory Board Chair,
Ketchikan



Denise Daniello
ACoA Staff,
Executive Director,
Juneau



About the Alaska Commission on Aging

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA and “the Commission”) was established in 1981 for the purpose of assisting older Alaskans to maintain good health, independence, and dignity through planning, outreach, and advocacy by collaboration with other agencies. The Commission meets the federal requirement as described in the Older Americans Act 306(a)(6)(D) that every state establish an advisory council to advise policymakers on matters related to aging.

The Commission is authorized to:

- ⊗ Formulate the four-year Alaska State Plan for Senior Services subject to review by the Department of Health and Social Services, and with reference to the State Senior Plan prepare and submit an annual analysis to the Governor and the Legislature about the services provided to Alaska seniors.
- ⊗ Make recommendations directly to the Governor, the Legislature, and the Administration regarding policies and budget items that affect Alaska’s older people.
- ⊗ Serve as a statutory advisory board to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority by providing budget and policy recommendations concerning Senior Trust Beneficiaries who are older persons living with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, serious mental illness, chronic alcohol and substance abuse, and brain injury. The Commission also offers assistance to Alaska Housing Finance Corporation’s Senior Housing Office on request in the performance of the office’s duties.

What would you say are the major values or principles that you live by?

“Live life with purpose, meaning, and passion. This perspective will promote new opportunities to learn, explore, engage, and grow.”

The Commission is comprised of eleven members, seven of whom are public members (with six members being 60 years and older), appointed by the Governor to serve four-year terms. Two seats are filled by the Commissioners of the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development. The remaining seats are reserved for the Chair of the Pioneer Home Advisory Board and a senior services provider, regardless of age. In FY2017, the Commission was supported by an office staff of three for part of the year which was then reduced to two staff that include the executive director and one planner going forward.

Highlights of Activities

Planning

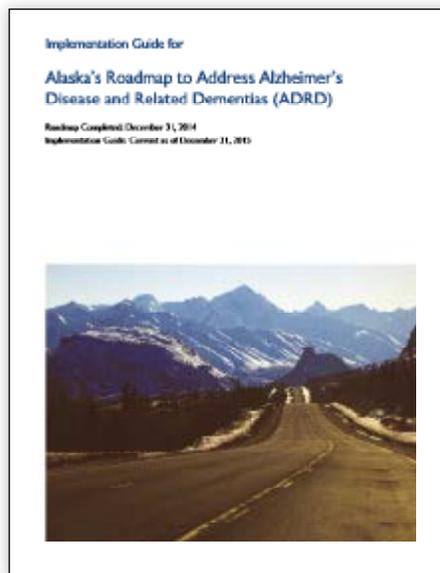
Implementation of Alaska's State Plan for Senior Services, FY2016-FY2019.

The ACoA hosted an implementation meeting for the State Senior Plan bringing together lead agencies and key partners to share activities accomplished in FY2017 with reference to the State Plan's performance measures. The Commission compiled a report of those implementation efforts and distributed the document to the Governor's Office, the Legislature, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Alaska Congressional delegation, the U.S. Administration on Community Living, and public members (February 2017).



Implementation of Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is a growing public health concern as the senior population continues to increase and advanced age is the most serious risk factor. ACoA, in collaboration with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, held the second Roadmap Stakeholder implementation meeting with lead agencies, service providers, and the national Alzheimer's Association to share activities accomplished in FY2017 with reference to the Roadmap's priority strategies and discussed plans for future activities in FY2018. A report describing the Roadmap's implementation and planning



Marie Darlin
FY17 Vice Chair,
Public Member,
Juneau

"According to AARP there are 85,000 family caregivers in Alaska. I would like to see more support given to these family caregivers. With the aging population there will be more and more need for family caregivers and they deserve training, respite, and support."



Duane Mayes
ACoA Commissioner,
Director of Senior &
Disabilities Services,
Anchorage



"The value of long term support services in a home and community based setting (HCBS) is a shift nationally to financial pressures to get services to elders in their homes. Alaska's HCBS program does that at a cost that is fair and reasonable."

activities was developed and shared with the Governor's Office, the Legislature, Alaska's Congressional delegation, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Department of Health and Social Services, and public members (February 2017).

The Commission also collaborated with the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services and other stakeholder partners in a technology workgroup to develop a policy paper exploring the use of technology as a way to increase safety, supplement caregiver efforts, and save on the cost for long-term care for persons experiencing Alzheimer's and related dementias.

Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS)

Module. The Commission, in collaboration with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the national Alzheimer's Association, successfully submitted a request to the Division of Public Health to include the Caregiver Module in the 2017 Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey conducted by telephone. This module, which addresses one of the Roadmap's priority strategies to gather caregiver information, will provide the first Alaska specific data about unpaid, natural support caregiving, the types of care provided, and its impacts to the caregiver. These findings will inform program planning and decision-making to reduce caregiver burden, improve caregiver health outcomes, and improve safety and quality of care for the care recipient.



The Alaska BRFSS Perceived Cognitive Impairment module was conducted in 2016. Findings received in FY2017 show that 14% of Alaskans age 60 and older, or approximately one in seven, report they are experiencing memory loss and confusion that is happening more often or is getting worse. Less than half of these individuals (48.3%) have discussed their condition with a health care provider. For those with worsening memory problems, almost 41% said that this condition has created functional difficulties that has caused them to give up day-to-day activities and/or interferes with work or social activities.



Gordon Glaser
ACoA Commissioner,
Public Member,
Anchorage

Medicaid Reform and Redesign. The Commission participates on several committees related to implementation of Medicaid reform initiatives as specified in SB 74 that passed the Legislature in 2016 and is now law. These workgroups include the Medicaid Redesign Stakeholder Committee, Telehealth/Telemedicine Stakeholder Workgroup, and the SB91-SB74 Criminal Justice and Health Care Reform Integration Committee. In addition, ACoA participates in committees coordinated by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services to implement Medicaid reform of long-term support services such as the Inclusive Community Choices Council (to develop and implement the Community First Choice 1915 (k) option and the Individual Supports Waiver for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities) as well as external workgroups addressing “Soft Caps on Day Hab,” “Companion Services” and the “Enabling Technology Committee.” In addition, ACoA serves on the Aging and Disability Resource Center Advisory Council.

“While Alaska’s available government resources diminish, the population of aging Alaskans increases. The ACoA seeks to empower older Alaskans to lead useful and meaningful lives that enhance their dignity and independence. Tomorrow may offer uncertainty and fear. We must ensure that the future also offers hope, so that we may truly live not just survive.”



North Star Council on Aging and their new Meals on Wheels truck, thanks to a grant from Kinross, Fort Knox – Photo courtesy of Greg Martin



Linda Combs
ACoA Commissioner,
Public Member,
Palmer



During these difficult budget times, what advice do you have for legislators to resolve the State's fiscal problems?

"Alaska's aging population should be looked at as an asset that can be tapped for wisdom and experience in dealing with improvements and continued care and services to our Alaskan families and Alaskan Communities."

Advocacy

Legislative Efforts:

The ACoA monitored a total of 42 bills and resolutions during the FY2017 legislative session and actively supported thirteen pieces of legislation, including the operating and capital budget bills. ACoA also provided testimony along with letters of support to legislative committees and bill sponsors.

State Budget:

The Commission advocated successfully with other partners to maintain FY2018 operating funding for senior community based grants, Senior Benefits, Personal Care Services, Adults Living Independently Waiver, Medicaid Adult Dental Program, Elder Protection Services, and the Pioneer Homes.

The ACoA and its partners also advocated successfully for several capital budget items including the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) Home Modification & Upgrades to Retain Housing (\$1,050.0 million using \$750,000 General Funds and \$300,000 Mental Health Trust Authority Authorized Receipts, MHTAAR); DHSS Deferred Maintenance and Accessibility Improvements (\$250,000 MHTAAR); Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund (\$1 million), and for the Department of Transportation Coordinated Transportation and Vehicles (\$1.3 million using \$1 million General Funds and \$300,000 MHTAAR).

State Legislation:

The ACoA and other partners advocated successfully for passage of the following legislation that were signed into law by Governor Walker:

- ☼ **Protect Vulnerable Adults/Long-Term Care, SB 83**, by Governor Walker, David Wilson, aligns state statutes of the Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman with changes in federal statutes and regulations. Governor Walker signed the bill into law on August 2, 2017.
- ☼ **Fiduciary Access to Digital Assets, HB 108**, sponsored by Representative Matt Claman modernizes inheritance law by providing a means to manage and dispose of a principal's digital assets by their designated fiduciary including on-



Representative Seaton with ACoA commissioner Marie Darlin and Amanda Lofgren, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Program Officer.

line financial transactions (banking, direct deposits, and purchases), personal emails, Facebook accounts, photos, music, and other personal items stored electronically. HB 108 is in alignment with the Uniform Law Commission and will make Alaska's statute inter-state compatible which is important when principals and their fiduciaries live in different states. This legislation is also of importance to seniors as many are becoming on-line users and want to have a means to specify how they would like their digital assets to be managed by their fiduciaries as tangible property. HB 108 was signed into law on August 2, 2017.

 **Driver's License Requirement; Disability; ID and Training, HB 16**, sponsored by Representative Steve Thompson, increases safety for people with impairments not physically apparent (such as those having hearing difficulties, memory problems, as well as people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and those who have a tendency to wander) by providing training to peace officers to increase their ability to recognize these impairments and respond appropriately to these public members in addition to other bill provisions. HB 16 was signed into law by Governor Walker on May 22, 2017.



Kathryn Abbott
ACoA Commissioner,
Commerce, Community &
Economic Development,
Anchorage

"The mission of Serve Alaska is to foster, support, and promote the ethnics of service and volunteerism to all Alaskans."

*"In 2017, seniors, age 60+, now count 129,908 representing 17.6% of the state's population, a gain of 4,022 seniors from 2016.
—2016/2017 Senior Snapshot"*



Rachel Greenberg
ACoA Commissioner,
Senior Service Provider,
Palme



"Senior service organizations are struggling to keep up with the demand for services. Seniors need to use their voice to ensure meals, transportation, adult day services, caregivers support, respite, chore, personal care attendant, ADRD education & training programs, etc. (i.e. programs they depend on for food, shelter, access, and independence) are available. Alaska Seniors need to advocate for these services and themselves by contacting their elected officials, the advocacy groups, the Administration, their family, friends, and community."

Pending legislation of interest to seniors and supported by ACoA during the 30th legislative session include:

- ☼ **Extend the Alaska Senior Benefits Program, HB 236** sponsored by Representative Scott Kawasaki, seeks to extend the program four years to June 30, 2022. Without continuing legislation, the Senior Benefits Program is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2018. This program provides moderate cash assistance for low-income seniors that can be used for food, heating, electricity, transportation, housing, and medical expenses. In FY2017, Senior Benefits served more than 11,300 income-eligible Alaskans age 65+.
- ☼ **Disclosure of Health Care Costs, HB 123** sponsored by Representative Ivy Spohnholz, aims to improve consumer awareness about the costs of common health care services by requiring health care providers and facilities to publicly post the full price of their most common services and procedures.
- ☼ **Civil Legal Services Fund, HB 106** sponsored by Representative Zach Fansler, would provide a sustainable funding source for Alaska Legal Services by allowing the legislature to appropriate a certain percentage of court filing fees to a fund to pay for civil legal services that serve seniors, veterans, and low-income Alaskans.
- ☼ **Food Donations, HB 186** sponsored by Representative Talerico, would remove the risk of liability for businesses to donate their excess unsold food items to charitable organizations, like food banks, which also serve senior centers, in order to increase the amount of donated food and reduce the amount of food discarded. This legislation responds to nearly 15% of Alaskans who are "food insecure" and could benefit from donated food.

Federal Legislation:

The Commission advocated to Alaska's Congressional delegation regarding the following measures:

- ☼ **American Health Care Act (March 2017).** The Commission submitted public comment expressing concern regarding provisions in the proposed American Health Act including:

Recommended implementation of “age grading” that would increase the cost of health care insurance for people age 50 to 64; measures that would compromise the solvency of Medicare over the long-run; implementation of Medicaid caps that would restrict federal funding and potentially limit the availability of long-term support services, delete the enhanced federal match for the new Community First Choice option, as well as constrain enrollment of younger seniors under Medicaid expansion; and removal of the Public Health Fund that provides resources for chronic disease self-management programs for diabetes, fall prevention, and Alzheimer’s education and outreach, among other health promotion activities.



Mary Shields
Public Member
Anchorage



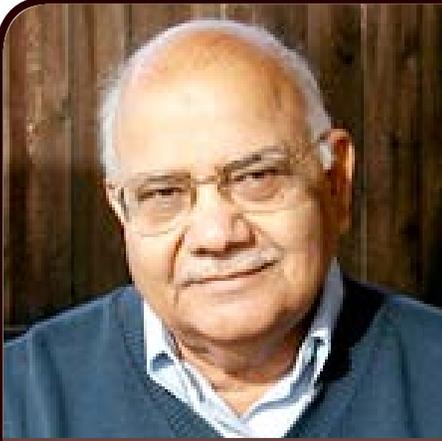
What do you believe is the most important role of the Alaska Commission on Aging?

“ACoA must be the eyes, ears and speaker for the growing older population of the State of Alaska. Its gathering and sharing of information regarding events/actions which impact these individuals lets the Commission provide the Governor and Alaska Legislative members with the information they need to make sound decisions in areas that affects the lives and welfare of these valuable people.”

Amended American Health Care Act (AHCA, June 2017).

The Commission submitted follow-up public comment with proposed recommendations to address concerns identified in its March 2017 letter including the provision of federal funding to support Alaska’s 1332 waiver application to continue the State’s reinsurance program and lower the cost for health care insurance premiums; conduct a federal cost-benefit analysis to show the impact of age grading and Medicaid caps proposed by the AHCA on the projected cost of insurance and services for targeted populations; and advocated in support of retaining enhanced federal match for the Community First Choice option as well as continued funding for the federal Public Health Fund.

Senior Program Funding (June 2017). The Commission submitted public comment in support of restored federal base funding for the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) which funds the Alaska Medicare Information Office and for the Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSESP) that funds the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) program that offers vocational training for income-eligible persons age 55+ who meet program requirements. Proposed FFY2018 funding for these programs was maintained by the U.S. Senate but reduced in the budget proposed by the U.S. House.



Banarsi Lal
ACoA Commissioner,
Public Member,
Fairbanks



What are some of the most important lessons you feel you have learned over the course of your life?

"Avoid acting on impulse, think long and hard before agreeing on a course of action, and always remember that whatever you do can and will have implications for yourself or others you care for."

Public Awareness, Community Education, and Collaborations

Lunch and Learn Legislative Presentation, "Medicaid Home and Community-Based Waivers." Representative Dan Saddler hosted a "Lunch and Learn" legislative presentation at the Capitol regarding the benefits of Medicaid home and community-based waiver services. This presentation, made by ACoA and other partners for legislators and their staff, included an overview of all four waivers and services provided. The Alaskans Living Independently Waiver, which provides community-based long-term support services to qualifying older Alaskans, is the largest of the four waivers. This presentation highlighted the cost savings from each program and provided client examples describing how these waivers help vulnerable Alaskans live safely in the community.

Governor's Housing Summit Update Meeting, Senior Housing Workgroup (January 2017): On behalf of the Senior Housing Workgroup the ACoA, AHFC Senior Housing Office, and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority presented a report at the Governor's Housing Summit Update meeting that highlighted community education workshops conducted by AHFC Senior Housing office regarding resources for home modification; utilization of Home Map assessments to improve home accessibility and reduce falls; advocacy in support of restored capital funding for AHFC's Senior Citizen Housing Development; efforts to pilot a roommate finder service for seniors; and passage of legislation to reauthorize the ACoA for eight more years. A written report was provided to the Governor's Office and attendees which is posted on the Governor's website.

Tlingit-Haida Caregivers Workshop (January 2017): ACoA staff made a presentation about senior fall prevention at the Tlingit-Haida Caregivers Workshop in Juneau. The presentation highlighted some of the latest assistive technology devices in fall prevention.

Health Promotion, Disease Prevention Presentation, AgeNet Annual Meeting (June 2017): Staff representing ACoA and the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services presented information describing evidence-based health promotion activities for seniors and provided examples of public and private sector funding

resources to support these efforts for senior centers. AgeNet is the statewide association of senior service providers.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority: In its role as a statutory advisor, the Commission made four presentations at the AMHTA quarterly board meetings providing population data about the needs of Senior Trust beneficiaries, an evaluation of programs that serve them, and recommendations for policy and budget items to improve the lives of seniors living with dementia and their caregivers.



Anna Frank
ACoA Commissioner,
Public Member,
Fairbanks

What would you say are the major values or principles that you live by?

"It is important to speak up for the underprivileged and be the voice for the people, especially the elders."

Senior Legislative Advocacy Teleconferences (January-April 2017): ACoA hosted nine statewide senior legislative advocacy teleconferences during session providing legislative updates on bills and budget items related to programs serving seniors:

- ☼ Invited legislators and their staff to talk specifically about legislation and budget items affecting seniors that were being considered during session;
- ☼ Sought input from seniors about legislation of importance to them in order to inform the Commission's advocacy positions;
- ☼ Helped to coordinate local grassroots advocacy efforts in support of budget and legislation of benefit to seniors.



Bob Sivertsen
ACoA Commissioner,
Pioneer Home
Advisory Board Chair,
Ketchikan



What advice do you have for a person planning to retire?"

"Don't wait too long, embrace it and find your passion. After you retire you will wake up in the morning with nothing to do. By the time you go to bed you will only have it half done. I still wonder how I found time to work. If you prepare, don't over think it."

Quarterly Board Meetings: The Commission on Aging conducted four board meetings during legislative session. Public comment was held at each meeting.

🌀 **September 2016.** The Commission met by videoconference and teleconference to discuss legislative advocacy priorities for the upcoming legislative session. Other agenda topics included updates about the Medicaid Redesign efforts, changes at the federal level regarding the Older Americans Act and Elder protection, among other discussion items.

🌀 **December 2016.** ACoA met by videoconference and teleconference to finalize its legislative advocacy platform and also heard presentations about new developments in assistive technology and biosimilar medications. The Commission's meeting was also held during the same week of the implementation meetings for the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services and the ADRD Roadmap.

🌀 **February 2017.** The ACoA held a face-to-face meeting in Juneau to meet with legislators and their staff to provide information about senior needs and to advocate for their concerns. In addition, the Commission conducted rural outreach visits to communities in Southeast Alaska including Kake, Ketchikan, Haines, and Juneau to meet with seniors, providers, and other public members to hear about senior needs in these communities. The Commission also coordinated with AgeNet, the statewide senior provider association, for the joint legislative advocacy fly-in to meet with policymakers about senior concerns.

🌀 **May 2017.** The Commission met by videoconference and teleconference to review the outcomes from legislative session and hear reports from speakers on a variety of senior issues. Commission members living in Anchorage, Mat-Su Borough, and Fairbanks participated in the Older Americans Month in Alaska celebrations in their respective home communities.





Governor's Executive Proclamations

On behalf of Alaska seniors and their loved ones, the Commission worked with the Governor's office for the following Executive Proclamations that prompted corresponding community-based public awareness activities:

- 🌸 **May is Older Americans Month in Alaska (May)** recognizes the substantial volunteer contributions made by Alaska seniors that were celebrated during special senior recognition events sponsored by the Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission, the Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Advisory Commission, and Mat-Su Senior Services. The theme for Older Americans Month was Age Out Loud to recognize the power and vitality of older people who contribute to the betterment of our nation and state.
- 🌸 **Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Day (September 22)** encourages Alaskans of all ages to practice fall prevention and to offer their support to seniors to reduce the risk of senior falls. Falls, the leading cause of fatal and non-fatal injuries for Alaska seniors, was responsible for 36 deaths, 1,600 hospitalizations, and 123 emergency room visits in 2015. The Commission made a remote presentation to Sitka

Many thanks to Governor Walker for issuing these FY2017 Executive Proclamations in support of important senior issues.

May

Older Americans Month

September 22

Senior Fall Prevention Awareness Day

November

Family Caregiver Month and
Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month





What you can do to prevent falls:



Begin a regular exercise program.



Have your health care provider review your medicines.



Have your vision and hearing checked.



Make your home safer.

Many falls can be prevented. By making some changes, you can lower your chances of falling.

For more information, please call the Aging and Disability Resource Center at 1-877-6AK-ADRC (1-877-625-2372) or visit our website at www.alaskaaging.org.

health care and senior providers about ways to prevent falls and highlighted new assistive technology in fall prevention. In addition, ACoA collaborated with the Division of Public Health and submitted an updated profile to the National Council on Aging about the impact of senior falls in Alaska and statewide senior fall prevention efforts.

- 🌱 **Family Caregivers Month (November)** acknowledges the generous contributions of family and other uncompensated caregivers in Alaska who provide the foundation of long-term care for seniors and vulnerable Alaskans as well as the organizations that provide caregiver support. According to AARP estimates (2016), nearly 85,000 informal caregivers provided uncompensated care for a loved one requiring assistance with an approximate value of \$1.26 billion in Alaska. Of those caregivers, an estimated 33,000 provided unpaid care to a loved one with dementia. The approximate value of this unpaid care is \$480 million (2017 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures).
- 🌱 **Alzheimer's Disease Awareness Month (November)** to promote awareness about Alzheimer's as a public health priority that affected an estimated 6,800 Alaskans age 65 and older in 2016. Public awareness activities highlighted healthy behaviors that promote brain health as well as resources available that provide assistance to these vulnerable Alaskans and their loved ones.



Karen Hunt, 2017 recipient of the Ron Hammet Award, presented at the May 2017 Older Americans Month celebration at the Anchorage Senior Activity Center."



ACoA Legislative Advocacy teleconference meeting in Juneau



Soldotna Senior Center Food Pantry

ACoA's FY2018 Legislative Priorities

To promote optimal aging for Alaska seniors, improve elder safety, and increase cost savings by preventing the need for premature institutional care, the Commission's FY2018 legislative advocacy platform will focus on the following priorities:

- (1) **Support HB 236 to extend the sunset clause of the Alaska Senior Benefits Program until 2022.** This program assists low-income older Alaskans by providing modest cash assistance to help pay for basic expenses like food, heating, housing, prescription medication, and transportation. Without passage of legislation during the FY2018 session, the Senior Benefits Program will end on June 30, 2018, putting thousands of seniors at risk for being able to afford essential items in order to maintain a healthy lifestyle.





ACoA Commissioners David Blacketer and Mary Shields meet with Representative Geran Tarr at the Capitol

(2) Protect the Senior Safety Net for vulnerable older Alaskans to the greatest extent possible. This net provides critical financial assistance and community-based long-term support services for vulnerable older Alaskans. These core services prevent seniors from becoming Medicaid-eligible and requiring higher cost care. When these services are reduced or eliminated, older people become more at risk for declining health and impairment, which, in turn, increases the burden of care on family and other natural caregivers, and raises the possibility for expensive out-of-home placement. These services include grant funded services for seniors (meals, transportation, adult day, respite, and homemaker services), Medicaid optional services (personal care services, waiver services, Medicaid adult dental), senior housing assistance, and elder protection.

(3) Increase appropriate supports for family and other natural caregivers caring for older Alaskans. Unpaid family caregiving is the bedrock for long-term care and a rapidly growing component of Alaska's health care system. The need for long-term care will increase substantially as baby boomers age and become at greater risk for developing chronic health conditions, disabilities, and Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. While family caregivers provide the majority of long-term care in the home, the supply of family caregivers is not expected to keep up with the demand because the senior population is growing faster than other age categories. Caregivers often experience poorer physical health, depression, and financial hardship than non-caregivers. The burden and impact of caregiving is increasingly being viewed as a public health issue. The Commission supports

- a) appropriate funding for the Family Caregiver Supports Program;
- b) adoption of a uniform assessment tool to identify caregiver needs that can be used to develop a caregiver plan of care with tailored supports that address gaps in caregiver skills/knowledge and other specific needs in order to enable caregivers to remain in their role; and



- c) utilization of telehealth and assistive technologies to enhance safety, improve quality of life, and reduce the burden on family caregivers.

(4) Improve capacity to serve Alaskans with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias. Alzheimer’s disease, the most common cause of dementia, is a progressive and irresistible brain disorder that slowly destroys memory and thinking skills, and eventually the ability to carry out the simplest tasks requiring a person to depend completely on others for basic activities of daily living. Other types of dementia that may develop include vascular dementia, Lewy body dementia, Parkinson’s disease, mixed dementia, among other forms depending on the types of brain changes that may be taking place. Because age is the greatest risk factor for Alzheimer’s, the rapidly growing number of older Alaskans will lead to an increase in the number of seniors impacted by this disease. The number of seniors living with Alzheimer’s is projected to grow from 7,100 in 2017 to 11,000 by 2025. In 2017, Alaska spent an estimated \$59 million in Medicaid alone (Alzheimer’s Association Facts and Figures 2017). The Commission supports:

- a) Protecting funding for Adult Day programs and Senior In-Home Services for seniors with dementia who do not qualify for waiver services;
- b) Moving forward with the Community First Choice (1915k) Medicaid state plan option to provide cueing and supervision for persons with dementia living in the community as well as telehealth and assistive technologies to improve elder safety and reduce senior falls; and
- (c) Exploring usage of an 1115 demonstration waiver to provide core services for low-income seniors with dementia who do not meet level of care criteria, including those who live in assisted living facilities and the Pioneer Homes, as well as enhanced training/ supports for family caregivers so that they may continue to provide quality care for elderly loved ones at home for as long as possible.





*"Those who love deeply
never grow old; They
may die of old age,
but they die young."*
Benjamin Franklin



Looking forward

Alaskans are living longer, including persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, people with behavioral health conditions, brain injury, as well as those with physical disabilities due to medical advancements and the availability of community-based support services. Development of the Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY2020-2023 ("Senior State Plan") will begin in 2018. The new Plan will focus attention on supportive aging of an increasing population with diversified needs to live as long as possible in appropriate community settings.

Alaska's expanding senior population is the result of both aging of the resident population and changes in the traditional senior migration pattern where most seniors left the state upon retirement. For the seventh consecutive year, Alaska is the state with the fastest growing population of people age 65 and older per capita in the nation and seniors are the fastest growing age demographic in the state. Alaska's increasing senior population is largely attributed to our state having the greatest proportion of baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) of any state. As indicated by the U.S. Administration on Aging's "Profile of Older Americans: 2016," Alaska saw a 63% increase in its age 65 and older population from 2005 to 2015.

Behavioral health conditions, such as alcohol and substance misuse, for example, are an increasing challenge for seniors

as baby boomers continue to age and will be a focus in the next Senior State Plan. Historically, older adults have not demonstrated high rates of alcohol or other drug abuse as compared to younger adults or participated in large numbers at substance abuse treatment programs. While alcohol remains the most commonly used substance among older adults, opioid addiction is an emerging challenge for seniors. Seniors who suffer from chronic pain are at particular risk for dependence on pain relief medications prescribed by their doctors.

Several senior issues remain ongoing for the next Senior State Plan. For example, many seniors who live in the Railbelt continue to be challenged in finding primary care providers who offer medical and behavioral health care services for Medicare patients in their communities. Primary health care providers report low reimbursement rates and excessive Medicare administration requirements as barriers to the provision of care for Medicare patients. Other complicating factors for senior access to health care include workforce shortages, provider retirement, and the high cost of care for dual eligible patients having complex medical conditions who are insured by both Medicare and Medicaid. ACoA's newly formed Medicare Committee, comprised of policymakers, health care providers, and public members, seeks to improve access to primary health care for Medicare beneficiaries by:

- 1) Promoting greater public awareness about utilizing nurse practitioners and physicians' assistants for primary care as these providers accept Medicare reimbursement, charge less for services than doctors, and are appropriate for treating patients with multiple chronic health conditions;
- 2) advocating for federal changes to add licensed mental health clinicians and other behavioral health care providers to the list of eligible providers for Medicare reimbursement; and
- 3) investigating strategies used by other frontier states to find out how they encourage primary care doctors to accept Medicare payments as they also have high costs of medical care and relatively low rates of Medicare reimbursement.

The provision of health care in appropriate settings helps to decrease utilization of the emergency department for



*"Alaska's cost for assisted living home care ranks in the top ten states with a median cost of \$72,000 year.
2016/2017 Senior Snapshot"*





Ketchikan Adult Day Program

*Aging is not lost youth
but a new stage of
opportunity and strength*
- Betty Friedan



preventable diseases and reduces the need for premature placement in institutional settings.

Housing continues to be a top priority for Alaska seniors with a generalized need for senior housing options across the continuum of care. Some seniors say they want to remain in their own homes as they age. Other older Alaskans seek smaller, more accessible and affordable accommodations, either in independent senior housing developments or supportive senior housing where long-term support services are available on-site. In addition, smart home and assistive or “enabling” technologies are being piloted and utilized to promote safety, greater independence, and choice for seniors and disabled persons living at home. These technologies include a diverse array of options that offer assistance to caregivers and provide a non-intrusive and cost-effective means to improve home care for older people with disabilities, including those with early to intermediate stages of dementia.

Advocating for appropriate amounts of base funding to support core senior services is of utmost importance in the next State Senior Plan to support the needs of a growing senior population that is increasing at an average annual rate of four to six percent, many with complex and challenging needs. Although the majority of seniors do not use long-term support services paid with public funds, the need for these services will increase proportionately for the next 20 years or longer to care for a growing number of older seniors who experience disabilities, dementia, and periods of frailty in their later years. Funding for these services has remained relatively flat in recent years.

As the legendary actress Betty Davis once quipped, to which many seniors would agree, “Old age ain’t no place for sissies.” While there are fears and hardships associated with aging such as health problems that do not improve, money problems, restricted mobility, as well as the loss of loved ones - there is another perspective on becoming old. Research shows that even when older adults experience a loss of their physical and cognitive functioning, many also report feeling a greater sense of well-being that improves with age. Seniors know that the power of aging is focusing on what matters now utilizing their lifetime of knowledge and experience in order to make a positive difference for their community and loved ones.

Legislative Teleconference Schedule

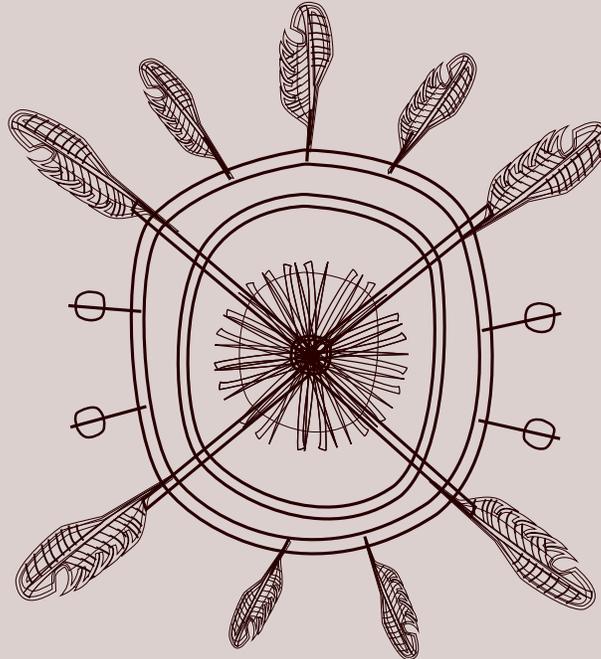
Join us for the 2018 legislative teleconferences to discuss bills of interest to seniors across the state of Alaska.

2018 Schedule

ACoA Legislative Teleconferences 9:30–11:00 a.m.

- 🌸 January 26
- 🌸 February 13
- 🌸 February 23
- 🌸 March 9
- 🌸 March 23
- 🌸 April 6
- 🌸 April 13
- 🌸 April 20

***Please call
Lesley Thompson,
ACoA Planner, at
907-465-4793 for
more information.***



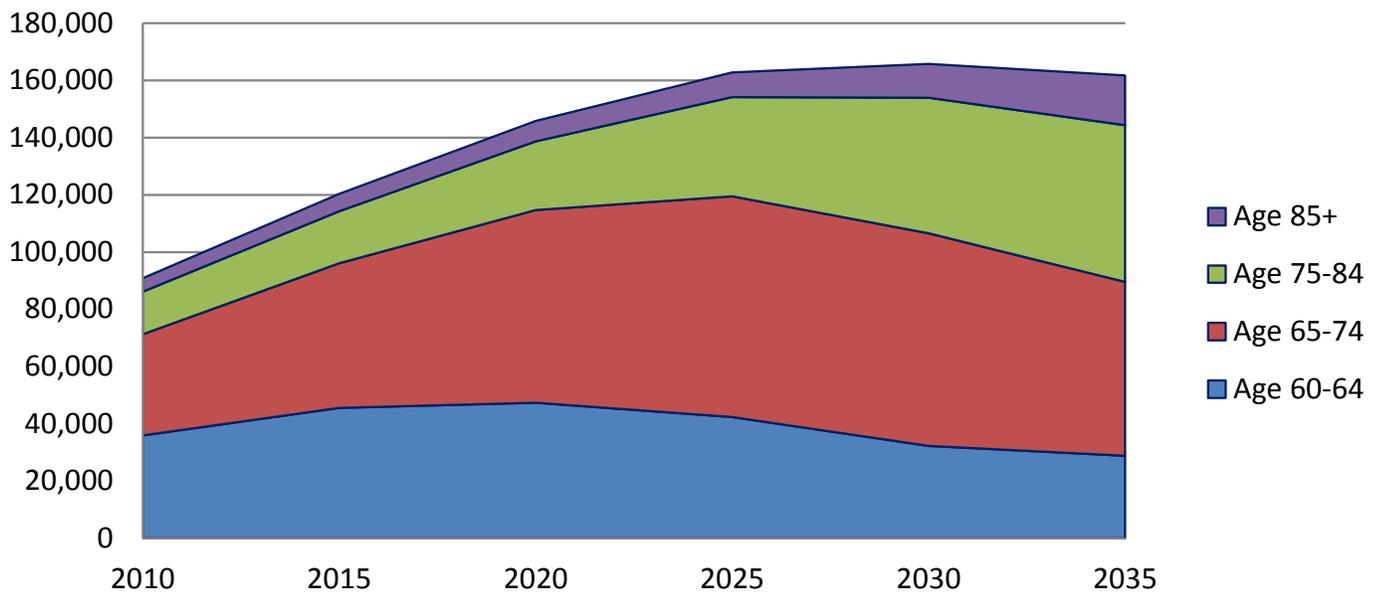
2018 Senior Legislative Advocacy

2017 Host Sites

- 🌸 Anchorage Pioneer Home
- 🌸 Anchorage Senior Activity Center
- 🌸 Homer Senior Center
- 🌸 Juneau, ACoA
- 🌸 Ketchikan Pioneer Home
- 🌸 Nenana Tortella Council on Aging
- 🌸 North Slope
- 🌸 North Star Council on Aging
- 🌸 Palmer Senior Citizens Center, Inc.
- 🌸 Senior Citizens of Kodiak
- 🌸 Soldotna Area Senior Citizens
- 🌸 Wasilla Area Seniors
- 🌸 Wrangell Senior Citizens

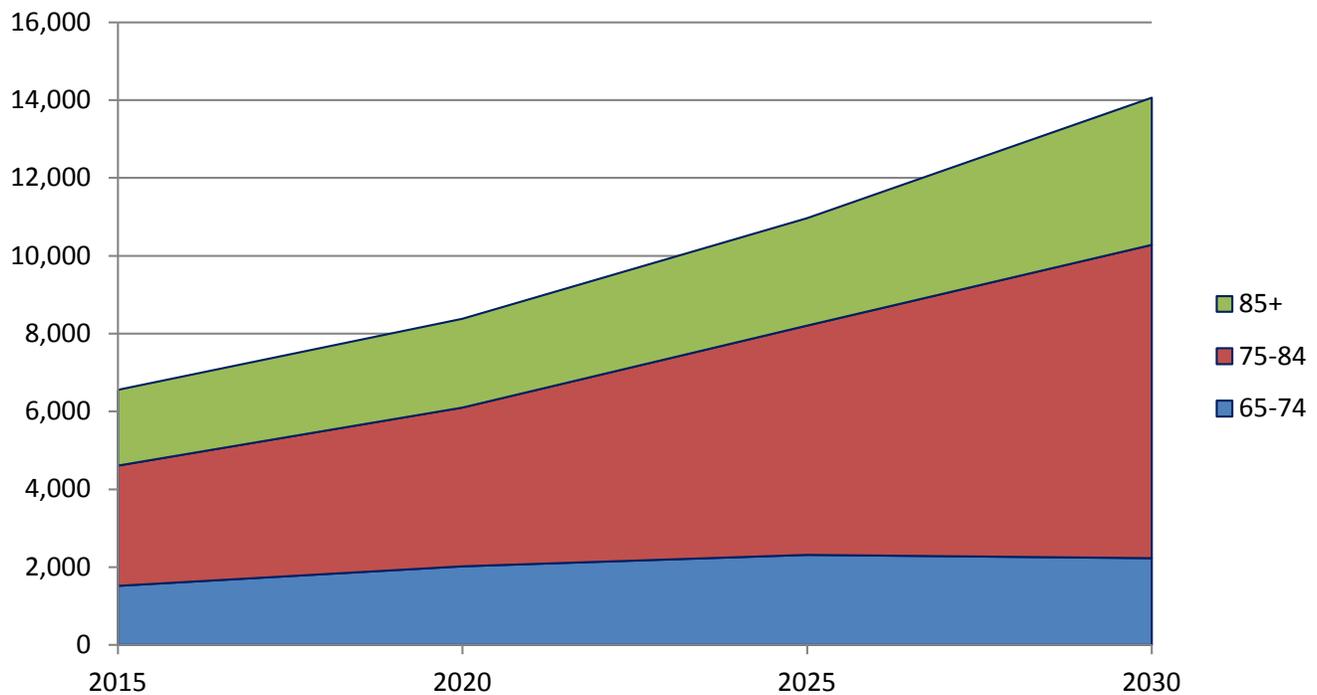


Projected Alaska Senior Population by Age Group, 2010-2035



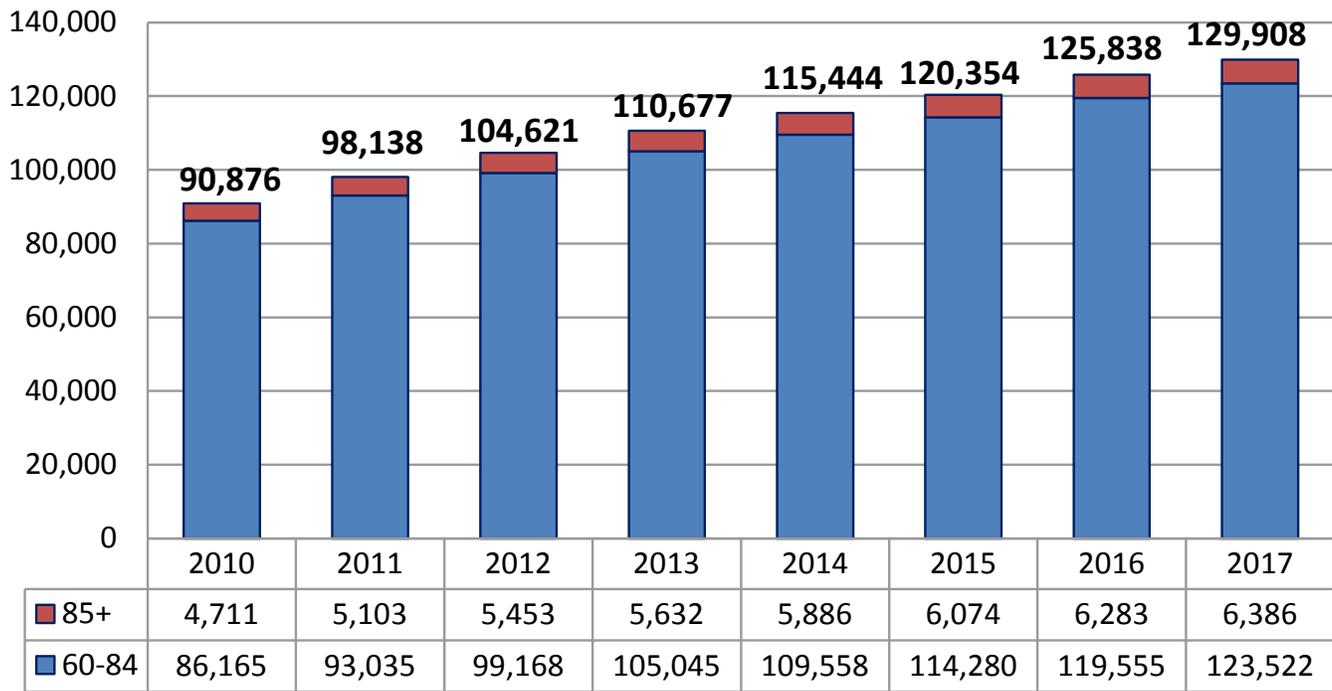
Source: Alaska Department of Labor, Workforce and Development, Research and Analysis, Population Projections

Projected Number of Alaskans with Alzheimer's, Age 65+



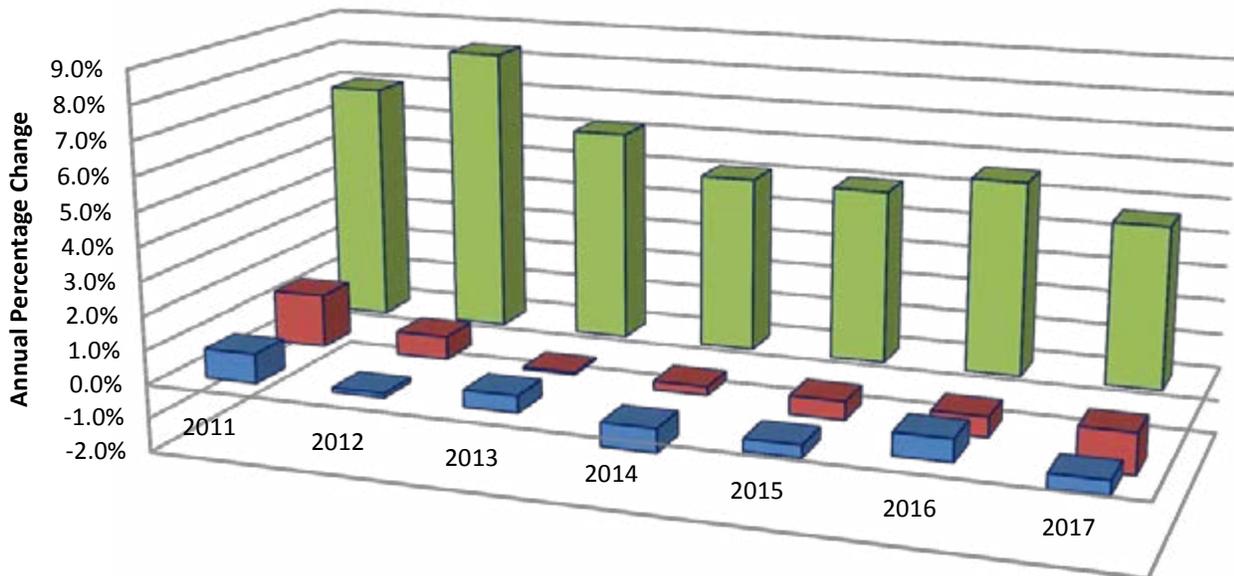
Source: 2017 Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures and Alaska DOLWD Research and Analysis Population Projections, 2015-2035

Population Estimates of Alaskan Seniors, Age 60+ and 85+



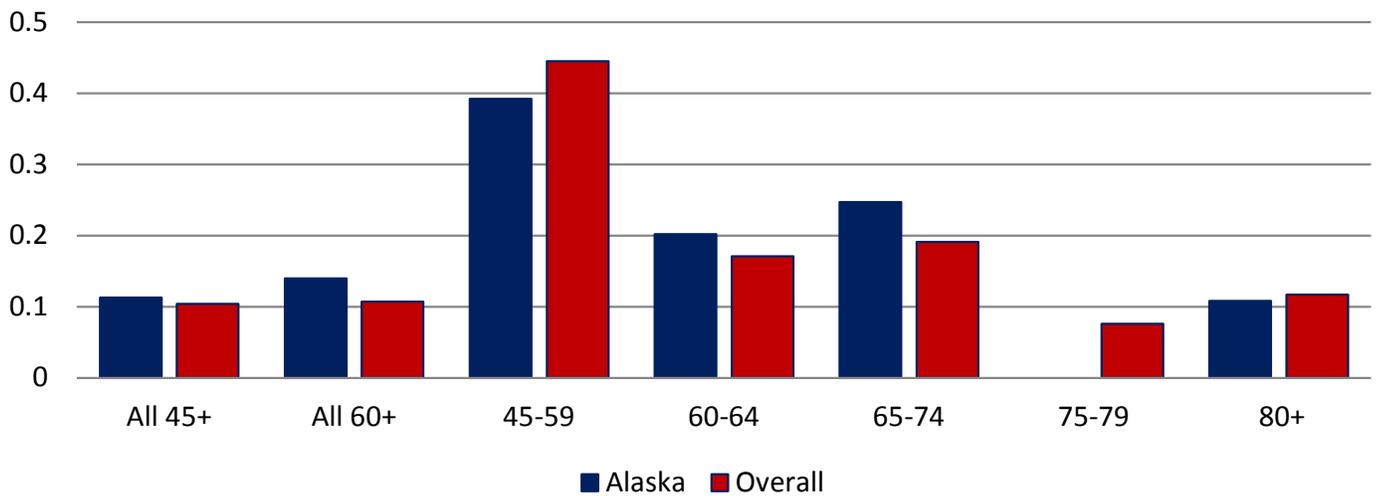
Source: Alaska DOLWD Research and Analysis, January 2018

Alaska Annual Population Change by Age Category, 2011-2017



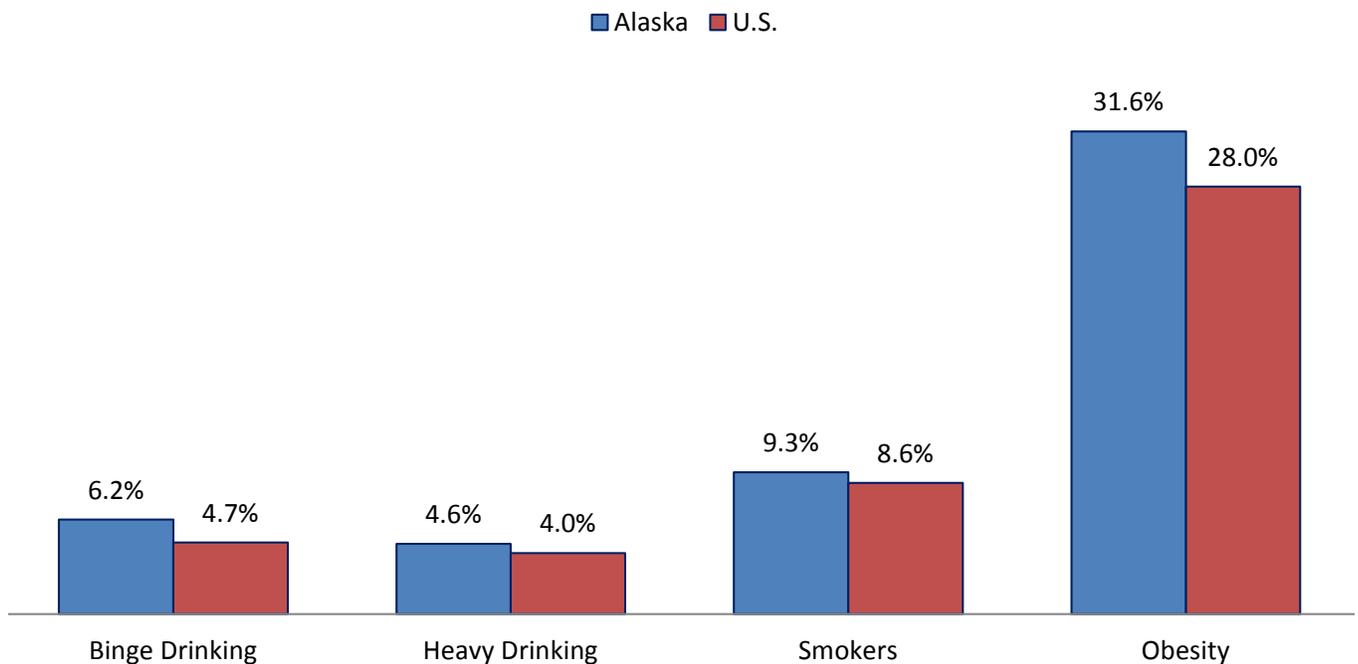
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Children 0-17	0.9%	0.1%	0.5%	-0.7%	-0.3%	0.6%	-0.4%
Adults 18-64	1.5%	0.7%	-0.1%	-0.3%	-0.5%	-0.6%	-1.2%
Seniors 65+	7.0%	8.4%	6.2%	5.1%	5.1%	5.6%	4.70%

Percentage of Seniors Receiving Select Services who have Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias, FY2011-FY2016



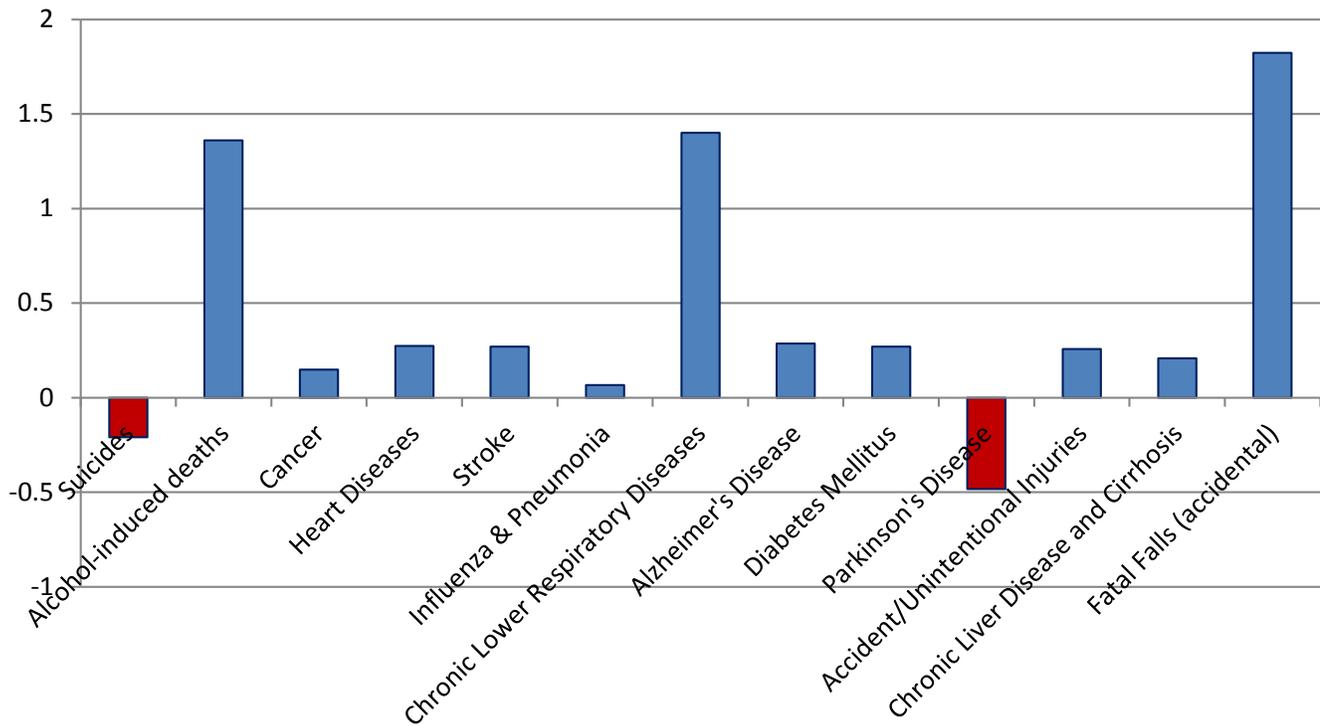
Source: BRFSS PCI 2016 Module Findings for Alaska and 20-State Comparison, Alaska Division of Public Health and National Alzheimer's Association

Senior Behavioral Health, Age 65+



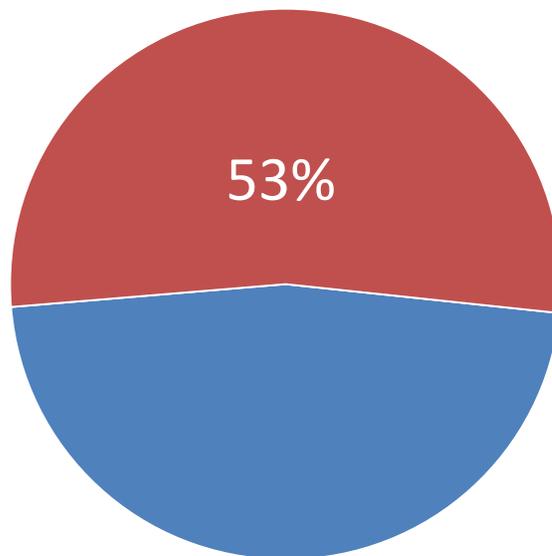
Source: Alaska Division of Public Health, 2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Data

Percentage Change in Death Rates by Cause, Alaskans Age 65+, 2010 and 2016



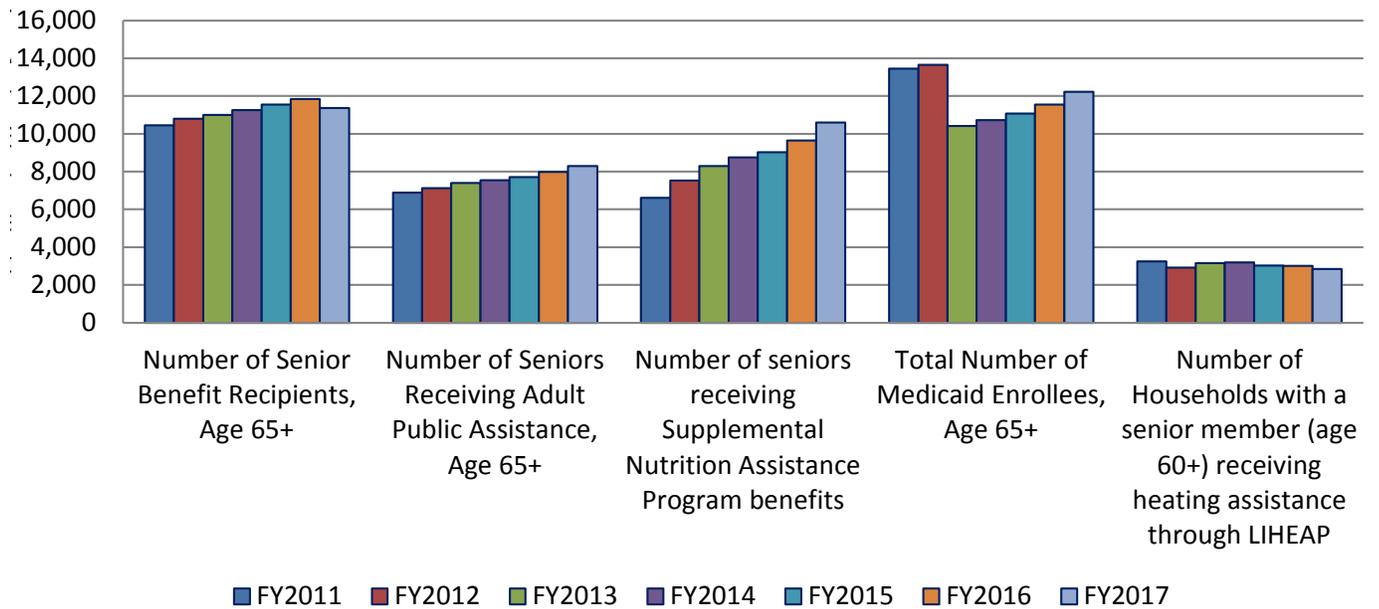
Source: Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records, Updated on 8/10/2017

Percent of Alaskans with Perceived Cognitive Impairment Age 65+ who have not Talked to a Health Care Provider



Source: Alaska 2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey

Financial Programs Serving Alaska's Seniors, FY2011-FY2017



Source: Alaska 2016 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey



Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/17

Annually, the ACoA gathers data to provide a sketch of the health and well-being of Alaskan residents, age 60 years and older. Below are highlights from the 2016/2017 Senior Snapshot:

- ☼ The number of Alaskan seniors age 60+ continues to increase in 2017 to 129,908. Seniors represent 17.6% of the Alaska population. The highest regional growth rate over the past 8 year period was in Southcentral (46.4%). Southeast Alaska has the highest concentration of seniors at 22.3% where over one in five residents in the region is an adult 60 years and older.

Note 1

- ☼ The 85-and-older Alaskan cohort is increasing at a steady pace. These seniors are generally frail, at risk for developing Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias (ADRD), and are the most likely to depend on home- and community-based and long-term support services. The 85-and-older cohort grew from 4,711 in 2010 to 6,386 in 2017, for an increase of 35.6% over the past seven years. **Note 1**
- ☼ The percent of seniors receiving assistance from the Alaska Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) also referred to as the “Food Stamp” program, from 2016 to 2017 has increased to 9,039 families or 19.5% increase. The amount of SNAP assistance provided to each senior is based on the need and income of the entire household. **Note 8**
- ☼ Seniors in Alaska receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also referred to as the Food Stamp Program increased from 2016 7,563 to 2017 9,039 which was an increase of 19.5% or an increase in 1,476 seniors. **Note 8**
- ☼ As of December, 2017 there were 266 applicants on the Pioneer Home active waitlist, down at the same time, from 361 in 2016. To be eligible for the Pioneer Homes, one must be 65 years or older, be a resident for at least one year, and complete an application. To qualify for the active wait list, the senior must be willing and ready to move into a Pioneer Home within 30 days of an offer. **Note 21**
- ☼ According to the Genworth Cost of Care Survey 2017, Alaska continues to have the nursing home costs in the country at \$292,000 per year. The median annual cost in the U.S. was \$97,455. **Note 22**
- ☼ According to the Genworth Cost of Care Survey 2017, Alaska continues to be in the top states for high cost assisted living home care at \$72,000 annual. The median cost for assisted living home care in the U.S. was \$45,000. **Note 22**

The Senior Snapshot incorporates the latest data available however not all items are updated on an annual basis.

Population by Region and Age Group

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Population Age 60+ By Region	Percentage of Regions 2017 Pop.	Seniors in CY2017	Seniors in CY2016	Seniors in CY2015	Seniors in CY2010	Change in Population 2010-2017	Comments
Statewide	17.6%	129,908	125,886	120,444	90,876	38.5%*	*Over an 8-year period. Note 1
I. Bethel Area	11%	2,894	2,841	2,754	2,306	23.2%	Bethel, Kusilvak Census Area
II. Interior	17.1%	19,160	18,565	17,757	13,134	41.4%	Fairbanks NSB, Yukon-Koyukuk, Denali, SE Fairbanks
III. North Slope	11.1%	1,096	1,086	1,057	856	26.9%	North Slope Borough
IV. Anchorage	16.5%	49,066	47,532	45,492	35,079	35.4%	Municipality of Anchorage
V. Southcentral	20.2%	34,611	33,328	31,651	22,760	46.4%	Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su, Valdez- Cordova
VI. Northwest	11.9%	2,131	2,109	2,036	1,681	25.5%	Nome, Northwest Arctic
VII. Southwest	16.7%	3,474	3,312	2,928	2,440	37.5%	Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kodiak, Lake & Peninsula
VIII. Aleutians	14.5%	1,207	1,221	1,201	847	44.2%	Aleutians East, Aleutians West
IX. Southeast	22.3 %	16,269	15,890	15,282	11,764	35.1%	Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Skagway, Hoonah, Angoon, Wrangell, Petersburg, Yakutat
Population Age 60+ By Age Group	Percentage of senior population	Seniors in CY2017	Seniors in CY2016	Seniors in CY2015	Seniors in CY2010	% Seniors Change 2010-2017	
Age 60-64	36.4%	47,222	46,906	45,491	35,938	31.4%	This age category has increased by 31% between 2010 and 2017.
Age 65-74	43.3%	56,195	53,668	50,592	33,139	69.6%	This age category is the fastest growing age group within Alaska's seniors.
Age 75-84	15.5%	20,105	19,031	18,177	14,877	35.1%	
Age 85+	5.0%	6,386	6,281	6,084	4,711	35.6%	

Senior Population Growth

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Population Growth	2015-2011 US Ranking	AK Growth, 2004-2015	US Average Growth, 2004-2015	Comments
Alaska's Senior Population, Age 65+	#1	63%	30%	Data source from the Genworth Long Term Care Cost Survey, 2017 and has not been updated on the growth ranking since 2015. Note 2

Economic Factors

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Economic Contribution	CY2014	CY2013	CY2012	CY2010	Comments
Seniors' economic contribution to Alaska	\$2.5 billion	\$2.4 billion	\$2.1 billion	\$1.7 billion	This number has not been updated since 2014. Note 3
Economic Status Indicators	2017	2016	2015	2013	Comments
Average monthly Social Security payment for Alaska seniors age 65+	\$1,360 (December)	\$1,306 (December)	\$1,328 (December)	\$1,180 (December)	The Alaska average monthly payment may be lower because of the high percentage of Alaska retirees who are subject to the "Windfall Elimination Provision." Note 4
Average monthly PERS payments	\$1,791 (September)	\$1,759 (September)	\$1,729 (September)	\$1,605 (September)	PERS (Public Employees' Retirement System). Note 5
Number of Alaska seniors receiving PERS payments	17,060 (September)	16,318 (September)	15,421 (September)	13,568 (September)	PERS (Public Employees' Retirement System). Note 5
Average monthly TRS Payment	\$2,864 (October)	\$2,861 (October)	\$2,855 (October)	\$2,756 (October)	TRS (Teachers Retirement System). Note 6
Number of Alaska seniors receiving TRS payments	5,863 (October)	5,715 (October)	5,517 (October)	5,046 (October)	TRS (Teachers Retirement System). Note 6

Senior Benefits by Region

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Region	October 2017	October 2016	October 2015	October 2014	Communities in Regions
Statewide Total	11,312	11,784	11,540	11,298	Number of seniors 65+ receiving Senior Benefits. Note 7
I. Bethel Area	720	804	808	775	Bethel, Kusilvak Census Area
II. Interior	1,321	1,406	1,354	1,306	Fairbanks NSB, Yukon-Koyukuk, Denali, SE Fairbanks
III. North Slope	33	35	38	36	North Slope Borough
IV. Anchorage	4,238	4,340	4,231	4,154	Municipality of Anchorage
V. Southcentral	2,932	2,948	2,850	2,795	Kenai Peninsula, Mat-Su, Valdez-Cordova
VI. Northwest	391	422	441	425	Nome, Northwest Arctic
VII. Southwest	368	413	407	415	Bristol Bay, Dillingham, Kodiak, Lake & Peninsula
VIII. Aleutians	45	60	65	60	Aleutians East, Aleutians West
IX. Southeast	1,264	1,356	1,346	1,332	Haines, Juneau, Ketchikan, Prince of Wales, Sitka, Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon, Wrangell-Petersburg, Yakutat

Food Stamps and Other Senior Assistance Programs

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Other assistance	FY2016	FY2015	FY2014	Comments
Seniors in Alaska (age 60+) receiving SNAP	3,889 (60-64) 5,150 (65+) Total 9,039 (November)	3,229 (60-64) 4,334 (65+) Total 7,563 (November)	2,995 (60-64) 4,047 (65+) Total 7,042 (November)	SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps). Note 8
Average dollar monthly benefit for Alaskan seniors on SNAP	\$316 (Age 60-64) \$216 (Age 65+)	\$309 (60-64) \$206 (65+)	\$261 (60-64) \$186 (65+)	SNAP: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps). Note 8
Seniors receiving Adult Public Assistance age 65+	\$235	\$232	\$235	Note 9
Households with a senior member (age 65+) receiving heating assistance	Total: 2,252 LIHEAP: 2,252 AKAHP: Closed	Total: 3,669 3,020 LIHEAP 649 AKAHP	Total: 3,846 LIHEAP: 3,031 AKAHP: 815	LIHEAP: Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. AKAHP: Alaska Affordable Heating Program. Note 10

AHFC and Senior Housing

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Housing	2017	2016	2015	Comments
AHFC total units of senior/disabled housing (statewide)	610 units (December)	610 units (December)	610 units (December)	AHFC (Alaska Housing Finance Corporation). There have been no additional units built in over 7 years. Note 11
AHFC wait list for senior/disabled housing (statewide)	1,511 (November)	873 (November)	663 (November)	AHFC (Alaska Housing Finance Corporation). Note 12
AHFC wait list for housing vouchers	2,933 Families (November)	2,952 families (November)	2,782 families (November)	AHFC (Alaska Housing Finance Corporation). Note 13
Housing Development	FY2017	FY2016	FY2015	Comments
AHFC senior housing units funded for development	92 Units	47 units	95 units	From FY01 thru FY17 there were 1,008 senior housing units were developed with AHFC and other funding sources. Note 14

Senior Safety

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Senior Safety			Comments
Long-Term Care Ombudsman: Number of unannounced visits to senior assisted living homes	Number of unannounced visits to senior facility homes.	2017: 977 2016: 740 2015: 434	In 2016 the Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman began reporting the number of unannounced visits to senior facility homes. Note 29
Long-Term Care Ombudsman: Number of active volunteer ombudsman	2017: 39 2016: 33	2015: 16	In 2016 the Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman began reporting the number of volunteers in the program. Note 29
	FY2016	FY2015	
Adult Protective Services: Reports of harm	703	835	Due to implementation of new software, APS was unable to report FY2017 data in time for this publication. Note 30

Senior Health

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Leading Causes of Death 65+	Alaska 2016 Deaths	Alaska 2016 Rate (per 100,000)	Alaska 2015 Deaths	Alaska 2015 Rate (per 100,000)	U.S. 2016 Deaths	U.S. 2016 Rate (per 100,000)	Comments
Suicides	11	13.4*	11	14.6*	8,204	16.7	Note 15
Fatal falls (accidental)	48	81.7	36	48.0*	29,668	60.2	Note 15
Other accidental deaths	45	62.3	55	73.4	21,251	45.9	Note 15
Alcohol-induced deaths	26	30.7	19	25.3*	7,906*	16.1	Note 15
Drug-induced deaths	3	**	7	9.3*	3575	7.3	Note 15
Cancer	614	894.3	581	776.1	422,929	858.6	Note 15
Heart Diseases	525	818.5	549	733.4	507,118	1,030.0	Note 15
Stroke	160	271.0	133	176.4	121,630	247.0	Note 15
Influenza & Pneumonia	48	84.8	32	42.7	42,479	86.3	Note 15
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	24	29.6	28	37.4	113,002	266.0	Note 15
Alzheimer's Disease	108	198.5	66	94.0	114,883	233.3	Note 15
Diabetes Mellitus	80	110.2	89	94.0	56,452	114.6	Note 15
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	180	273.9	156	208.4	14,903	30.3	Note 15
Parkinson's Disease	16	26.6	35	46.7	28,929	58.7	Note 15
Accident/ Unintentional Injuries	93	144.0	91	121.5	53,141	107.9	Note 15

* Rates based on fewer than 20 occurrences are statistically unreliable and should be used with caution.

**Rates based on fewer than 6 occurrences are not reported.

Senior Health (continued)

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

ADRD Estimates	2017, Alaska	2016, Alaska	2010, Alaska	2000, Alaska	2017, US	Comments
Number with Alzheimer's Disease & Related Dementia (ADRD)	7,100	6,800	5,000	3,400	5.5 million	Alaska's ADRD estimates are based on national prevalence rates by age group. An estimated 9% of Alaska seniors age 65+ has Alzheimer's disease. Alzheimer's disease rates increase with age and directly affect almost half of Alaskans over 85. Note 16

Senior Behavioral Health

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Behavioral Health, Seniors Age 65+	2016, Alaska	2015, Alaska	2016, U.S.	Comments
Binge drinkers	6.2	6.9	4.7	Binge drinkers (males having five or more drinks on one occasion, females having four or more drinks on one occasion). Note 17
Heavy drinkers	4.6	6.1	4.0	Heavy drinkers (adult men having more than 14 drinks per week and adult women having more than 7 drinks per week). Note 18
Smokers	9.3	9.3	8.6	Weighted number of adults (18+) who responded "No" on the BRFSS to the question: "Have you smoked at least 100 cigarettes in your entire life?" or, if the response was "Yes", they responded "not at all" to the question: "Do you now smoke cigarettes every day, some days, or not at all?" Note 19
Disabled seniors	38.3	31.6	41.1	Note 20
Obese seniors	31.6	30.5	28.0	Weighted number of adults (18+) who have a BMI of ≥ 30.0 calculated from self-reported weight ("About how much do you weigh without shoes?") and height ("About how tall are you without shoes?") on the BRFSS, excluding women who are pregnant and biologically implausible values. Note 21

Long Term Care

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Long Term Care	2017, Alaska	2016, Alaska	2017, U.S.	Comments
Nursing home costs – private room, median daily rate	\$800/day	\$816/day	\$267/day	Amount is based on a private room. Alaska has the highest cost of skilled nursing facility care in the country. Note 23
Nursing home costs – private room, median yearly rate	\$292,000/year	\$297,840/year	\$97,455/year	Amount is based on a private room in a nursing home in the U.S. Note 23
Assisted Living Home costs – average median daily rate	\$197/day	\$189/day	\$123/day	Note 23
Assisted Living Home costs – average annual median rate	\$72,000/year	\$69,000/year	\$45,000/year	Alaska’s median cost for assisted living home care is in the highest top 10 states. Washington, DC has the highest cost at \$80,400. Note 23
Home Health Care Costs: Home Health Aide – median daily rate	\$174/day	\$169/day	\$135/day	Note 23
Home Health Care Costs: Home Health Aide – annual median rate	\$63,492/year	\$61,776/year	\$49,192/year	Alaska has the highest cost per year. Average cost of care based on 44 hours per week by 52 weeks. Note 23
Adult Day Services Costs – median daily rate	\$168/day	\$100/day	\$70/day	Alaska has the highest cost for adult day services. This amount is based on 5 days per week for 52 weeks. Note 23
Adult Day Services Costs – annual median rate	\$43,709/year	\$36,582/year	\$18,200/year	Note 23

Waivers	FY2017	FY2016	FY2015	FY2014	FY2013	FY2012	Comments
Alaskans Living Independently Waiver, Seniors Recipients, Age 65+	1,355	1,428	1,884	1,884	2,044	1,992	To qualify for services under the Alaskans Living Independently Waiver, individuals must be age 21 years or older, income-eligible, and must meet nursing home level-of-care requirements. Note 24

Long Term Care (continued)

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

	FY2016	FY2015	FY2014	
Senior grant services through Division of Senior & Disabilities Services. Registered recipients 60+	*26,285 Unduplicated Recipients **34,127 unregistered Total cost: \$15,565,329 Per Senior Recipient: \$592	26,885 Recipients Total cost: \$13,714,273 Per Senior Recipient: \$510	25,671 Recipients Total cost: \$14,367,957 Per Senior Recipient: \$560	FY2017 financial total was funded the following way: Grant funds: \$15,565,329. Recipient count includes the total number of unduplicated seniors (60 and over) receiving registered services. **Unregistered services include duplicated counts. Note 25
Alaskans on Medicare	CY 2017: 86,130 CY 2016: 82,024	CY 2015: 80,836 CY 2013: 73,434	CY 2011: 68,417	The number of Alaskans on Medicare continues to increase as the senior population grows. Note 26
Aging and Disability Resource Centers	4,587 registered *16,359 unregistered	3,979	CY 2014: 3,608	Counts for FY14 and FY16 are unduplicated. *FY17 ADRC unregistered numbers include all ages Note 27
Personal Care Services,	3,261	3,496	3,776	Note 27
Age 60+	3,179	3,261	3,496	The cost per recipient in FY2017 was \$18,223 Note 28

Long Term Care (continued)

Senior Snapshot: Older Alaskans in 2016/2017

Long Term Care	2017, Alaska	2016, Alaska	2015, Alaska	2014, Alaska	Alaska Baseline	Comments
Percent of Pioneer Home residents at Level III	58% (December)	54.3% (November)	56.1% (October)	55.9% (October)	46.1% (December 2004)	Level III is the most advanced level of care. Division of Pioneer Homes. Note 22
Pioneer Home Applicants on Active Wait List	266	361	332	276	374 (2008)	Total number of available beds is 49 across 6 Homes. Note 22
Average age of Pioneer Home resident	86.5 years (November)	86.2 years (November)	86.4 years (October)	86.2 years (October)	76 years (1998)	Applicants must be 65 years or older, a resident for at least one year, and submit an application.

Senior Snapshot Notes and Resources

- (1) Regions are those used by the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. “The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY2016 – FY2019 Revised Funding Formula” prescribes funding by region for senior grant programs which include federal Older Americans Act money. Data from Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development’s 2017 population estimates.
- (2) Data from “A Profile of Older Americans: 2017,” Administration on Aging, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services <https://www.acl.gov/aging-and-disability-in-america/data-and-research/profile-older-americans>
- (3) 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://dhss.alaska.gov/acoa/Documents/documents/seniorWellbeingReport.pdf>. This estimate was updated by the UA Institute of Social and Economic Research for the Power of in Alaska Symposium, 2014.
- (4) 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 for many individuals receiving public employee pensions. Information from the Social Security Administration, Social Security Fact Sheet, accessed 12/14/2017 at: <https://www.ssa.gov/news/press/factsheets/colafacts2017.html>.
- (5) Figures on PERS (Public Employee Retirement System) benefits include PERS retirees age 60 and older who currently reside in Alaska. Information from the Alaska Division of Retirement and Benefits, via e-mail 1/8/2018.
- (6) Figures on TRS (Teachers Retirement System) benefits include TRS retirees age 60 and older who currently reside in Alaska. AK Dept. of Administration, Div. of Retirement & Benefits, via e-mail 1/8/2018.
- (7) The Senior Benefits Program was established on August 1, 2007. It pays cash benefits to Alaskan seniors who are age 65 or older and have low to moderate income. Information from the Alaska Division of Public Assistance, via email 12/15/2017.
- (8) The Alaska Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), also referred to as the Food Stamp Program, provides food benefits to low-income households. Eligible applicants must pass income and assets tests. The gross monthly income test is based on 130% of the current Alaska poverty standard. Information from the Alaska Division of Public Assistance, via email 12/15/2017.

- (9) 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. Information from the Alaska Division of Public Assistance, via email 12/15/2017.
- (10) The Alaska Affordable Heating Program (AKAHP) provides heating assistance to households between 151% to 221% federal poverty level (FPL) but was not funded for FY2017 & FY2018. The federally-funded Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) provide heating assistance to households below 151% FPL. Information from the Alaska Division of Public Assistance, via email 12/15/2017.
- (11) Includes only HUD properties managed by AHFC. The total number of units has not changed for many years. Information from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), via email 1/8/18.
- (12) Includes individuals age 62+ as well as individuals of any age with a disability. Information from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), via email 1/8/18.
- (13) All families, regardless of age, are in this wait list count. Information from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), via email 1/8/18.
- (14) Information from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), via email 1/8/18.
- (15) Crude rates are per 100,000 U.S. populations, Age 65+. *Rates based on fewer than 20 occurrences are statistically unreliable and should be used with caution. ** Rates based on fewer than 6 occurrences are not reported. Alaska Bureau of Health Analytics & Vital Records
Alaska Bureau of Health Analytics & Vital Records, via email 1/8/2018.
- (16) Data from Alaska's Roadmap to Address ADRD, 2014 and the 2016 Alzheimer's disease Facts and Figures report. Available at <https://www.alz.org/facts/overview.asp>
- (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 and females having four or more drinks on one occasion. Information from the section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at Alaska Public Health, via email 1/17/18.
- (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 and adult women having more than one drink per day. Information from the section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at Alaska Public Health, via email 1/17/18.

- (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. Information from the section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at Alaska Public Health via email 1/17/18.
- (20) The definition of disabled has changed. Before 2013, disabled was defined as either an activity limitation and/or use of special equipment. Starting in 2013, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) starting using the Affordable Care Act definition using 5 of the 6 conditions of vision, cognition, mobility, self-care, and independent living. The measure of hearing was not felt appropriate to ask on a telephone survey. See <https://www.cdc.gov/> for a further explanation. Information from the section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at Alaska Public Health, via email 1/17/18.
- (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. Information from the section of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion at Alaska Public Health, via email 1/17/18.
- (22) Information from the Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes, via email 1/5/2018.
- (23) Information from the Genworth Long Term Care Cost Survey Across the United States, 2017. Available at <https://www.genworth.com/about-us/industry-expertise/cost-of-care.html>.
- (24) The Alaskans Living Independently (ALI) Waiver is offered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Information from Senior & Disabilities Services, via email 1/16/2018.
- (25) 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 registered senior grant program numbers 60 and older are unduplicated and unregistered numbers are duplicated and all ages. Seniors (age 60+) need not be Medicaid-eligible in order to receive grant services. Information from Senior & Disabilities Services, via email 1/16/2018.
- (26) Information from the Medicare Information Office, via email 12/15/2017.
- (27) Information from Senior & Disabilities Services, Senior Grants Unit, via email 1/16/2018.

(28) Personal Care Services (also known as Personal Care Assistance) provides support for Alaskan seniors and individuals with disabilities. PCS services provide support related to an individual's activities of daily living (i.e. bathing, dressing eating) as well as instrumental activities of daily living (i.e. shopping, laundry, light housework). PCA is provided statewide in Alaska through private agencies. The administration of the PCA program is overseen by the PCA Unit of Senior and Disabilities Services, Department of Health and Social Services. Information from Senior & Disabilities Services, Senior Grants Unit, via email 1/16/2018.

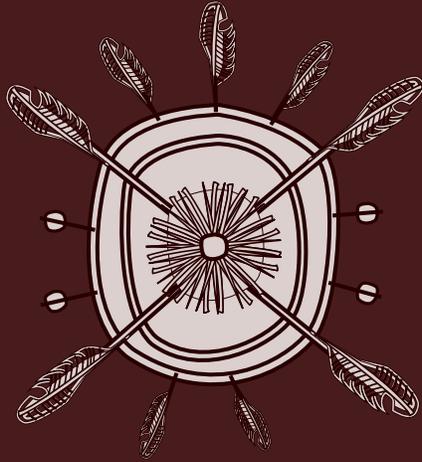
(29) There are 18 nursing facilities with 692 residents, 654 assisted living homes with 3,880 residents (273 are licensed to serve seniors with 2492 residents) in long term care facilities in 34 communities across the state. The OLTCO plans to continue work of recruiting and training experienced volunteer ombudsmen, (who operate under the direct supervision of staff ombudsmen, especially in rural communities, to be able to respond to complaints. Information from the OLTCO office, via email 12/7/17.

(30) Information from Adult Protective Services, State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services for 2017 is not available at the time of printing.

For questions:

Please call the Alaska Commission on Aging, 907-465-3250.





FY2017

Alaska Commission
on Aging
240 Main Street,
Suite 100
Court Plaza Building
PO Box 110693
Juneau, AK 99811-0693
Phone: (907) 465-3250
Fax: (907) 465-1398

www.alaskaaging.org
hss.acoa@alaska.gov

Alaska State Plan for Senior Services Guiding Principles:

Highlight Seniors' Community Contributions.

Keep Seniors Strong and Healthy.

Promote Independence, Empowerment and Choice.

Focus on Partnerships.

Build Community-Centered Agencies.

Provide Home-and Community-Based Care.

Offer a Full Continuum of Care.

Individualize the Response.

Include Younger Generations.

Target Services to the Most Vulnerable Seniors.

Support High-Quality Staff.

Respect Rights.

Aim for Excellence.

Give Fair Reimbursement.