



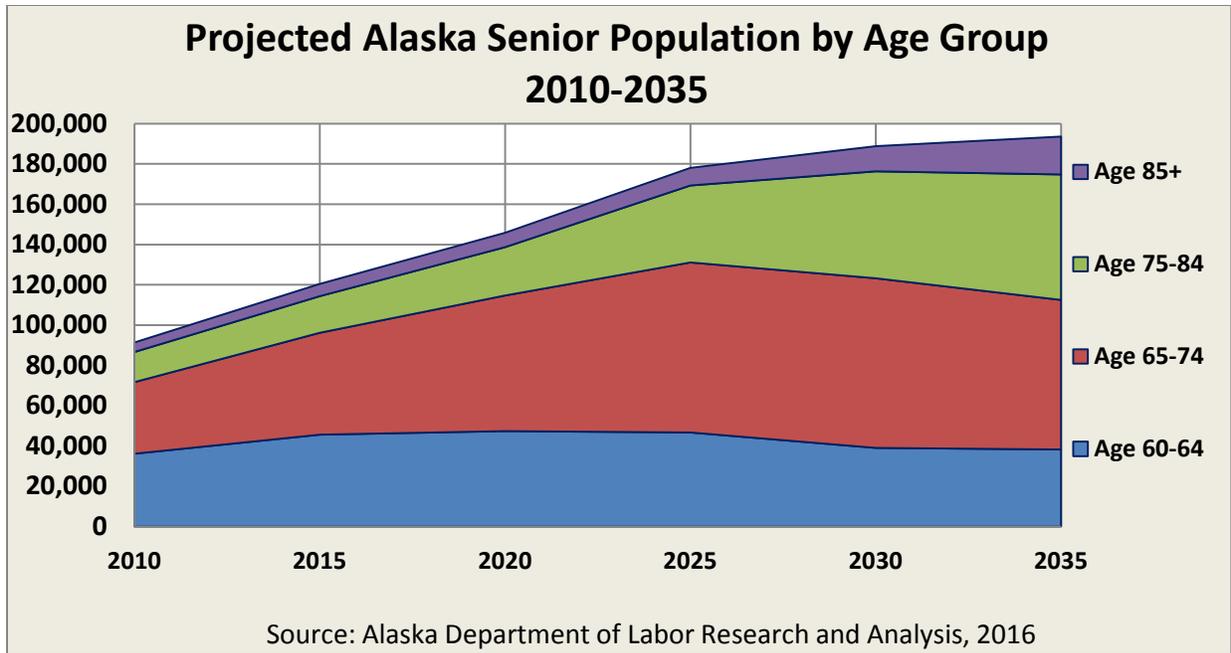
Alaska Commission on Aging SFY2017 Legislative Advocacy Priorities

Preserve the *Senior Safety Net* for vulnerable older Alaskans

As people age, they become more at risk for chronic diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, as well as other disabling conditions. Older people living on fixed incomes are also at an increased risk for poverty. This "Net" provides critical financial assistance and home- and community-based long-term support services to 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.

Recommendations: Maintain programs that provide appropriate long-term support services, improve access to health care, and offer financial assistance to Alaska seniors living on small fixed incomes.

- Sustain base funding for the **Senior Community Based Grants** (Division of Senior and Disabilities Services) that provide senior meals, transportation, adult day, respite, and homemaker services as these services target the most vulnerable, many of whom are homebound, and provide support to family and other natural support caregivers.
- Preserve funding for the **1915(c) Adults Living Independently Waiver** (Division of Senior and Disabilities Services) that provides essential services to Alaskans age 21 and older who meet eligibility requirements and choose to receive services provided in their homes and in the community rather than institutional settings.
- Uphold funding for **Medicaid Optional Services** that include Personal Care Services, waiver services, Medicaid Adult Dental, hospice, podiatry, and the proposed 1915(k) to refinance waiver and Personal Care Services. Medicare does not cover the cost for most dental services. Retired seniors on a fixed income often go without.
- Sustain funding for **Senior Benefits** (Division of Public Assistance) to help low-income seniors pay for food, housing, heat, and prescribed medications. Reauthorize Senior Benefits which is scheduled to sunset on June 30, 2017. The Governor's FY2018 budget includes a reduction of \$43,200 for Senior Benefits.
- Move forward with implementation of the **Medicaid 1915(k) state plan option** by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services for Personal Care Services and Consumer-Directed Personal Care Services as recommended in the *Health Management Associates Implementation Plan (September 2016)* to realize an enhanced 6% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) to replace declining general funds.
- Include **assistive and tele-health technologies** in the senior service array to support seniors in their efforts to live independently at home and in the community. Many assistive technologies are low cost, offer significant savings, and provide support for caregivers.
- Protect Older Alaskans from financial exploitation, abuse, and harm by maintaining appropriate base funding for **Adult Protective Services (APS)** (Senior and Disabilities Services), **Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO)** (Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority), and the **Office of Elder Fraud and Abuse** (Office of Public Advocacy).
- Retain \$1 million AHFC capital funding for **Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund** as proposed in the Governor's FY18 budget to match \$1.75 million from the Rasmuson Foundation. This funding provides critical gap financing for the construction and renovation of affordable senior housing statewide.



What is the estimated cost to provide long-term support services for seniors?

Program in FY2016	Number of Seniors Served	Average annual cost/person	Total Costs
Senior Community-Based Grants (age 60+)	27,091	\$435	\$11,784,585
Personal Care Services (age 60+)	3,261	\$18,183	\$59,294,763
Alaskans Living Independently (ALI) Waiver (age 65+)	1,428	\$32,868	\$46,935,504
Alaska Pioneer Homes (December 2016, age 65+)	Level 1: 54 residents Level 2: 118 residents Level 3: 252 residents	\$77,981 \$103,014 \$161,942	\$57,176,010
Nursing Home Residents (Medicaid recipients only, age 60+)	622	\$153,009	\$95,171,598
Total Costs of Care			\$270,362,460
Total if all seniors eligible for nursing home and the ALI waiver received services in the nursing home.			\$444,480,723

Source: Division of Senior & Disabilities Services (December 2016 & January 2017) and the Alaska Pioneer Homes (December 2016) using a format developed by SDS for the continuum of care and adapted by ACoA for senior services.