

Alaska's Response to Medicare Access

- AARP: State member surveys, National "Health Action Now!" Health Care Reform Campaign
- Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center: Significant growth in numbers of Medicare patients seen at ANHC and other community health centers. Seeking clinic expansion, partly to accommodate growing Medicare population. Provides advocacy and information about issue.
- ASHNHA & APCA: SB 139, "Incentives for Certain Medical Providers", loan repayment and incentives to address health care workforce shortages.
- Congressional Delegation: Alaska Medicare reimbursement 35% rate increase legislation effective January 1, 2009. Obtained by efforts of Former Senator Ted Stevens, Senator Lisa Murkowski, and Representative Don Young. Ongoing forums and advocacy by Senator Murkowski.
- Hospitals and other Health Systems: Feasibility studies of Medicare/senior clinics. Consideration by hospitals to develop or expand local clinics to accommodate growing Medicare population.
- Municipality of Anchorage: Medicare forums, discussions, and reports, Senior Citizens' Advisory Council focus area for advocacy. Medicare Consumer Forum 4/22/09; report will be available in fall 2009. A recent survey of service providers indicated the top two perceived issues for Anchorage seniors were access to health care and housing.
- Older Person's Action Group: Provides location for seniors to call for assistance finding a physician or other primary care provider.
- Pathway Alliance/Alaskans for Access to Health Care (AAHC): Community Medicare clinic business model and feasibility study. Review of national models and recommendations on clinic models for Alaskans with access difficulties. Report to AAHC on 5/13/09; findings will be made public.
- Representative Les Gara: HB 178, "Doctors for Seniors Act", introduced in 2009 legislative session, was not passed in 2009. Offers direct payments to providers who accept a certain number of Medicare patients per year.

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- State of Alaska Health Care Commission: Newly appointed and tasked with recommending policy on health and health care for Alaskans. Improving Medicare access in Alaska is a major emphasis. Topic considered at meeting scheduled for May 1-2, 2009, and subsequent meetings.
- State of Alaska Senior and Disabilities Services, State of Alaska Medicare Information Program Office: Senior information hotline for Medicare counseling; increased need for referrals and counseling regarding access issues. 1-800-478-6065 (statewide), or visit <http://hss.state.ak.us/dsds/seniorInfoOffice.htm>.
- University of Alaska Anchorage/Institute for Social and Economic Research: 3/2009 report: *"How hard is it for Alaska's Medicare Patients to Find a Family Doctor?"* This report can be downloaded at <http://www.iser.uaa.alaska.edu/>.
- University of Alaska Anchorage College of Health and Social Welfare: Strategic focus on gerontology and geriatrics. School of Social Work offers Gerontology Minor. Geriatric Education Center provides continuing education for health professionals.
- University of Alaska Anchorage Office of Health Programs Development: Geriatric/Gerontology Education Planning Project (with Geriatric Education Center) includes review of prior studies and literature, a feasibility study concerning interdisciplinary student-involved and other senior clinic models, education/training needs assessment and review of coursework in the gerontology minor and health and other academic programs, and survey of student interest in geriatrics and gerontology.

Health care occupations program expansion, including for primary care providers, is a major emphasis area for the University of Alaska. The Office of Health Programs Development facilitates planning and implementation of new, expanded and distributed health programs.

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