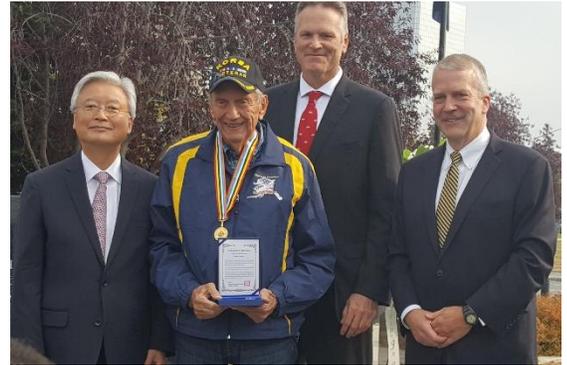




ALASKA PIONEER HOMES

FY2019 Advisory Board Report Summary

- The State of Alaska owns and operates six licensed assisted living homes, including a state veterans home, known collectively as the Alaska Pioneer Homes. These homes are located in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Ketchikan, Palmer, and Sitka.
- The homes, licensed for 497 beds in total, collectively served 592 Alaskan elders in FY2019, which is an increase of 25 elders from FY2018.
- As of July 1, 2019, the Pioneer Homes have an active waitlist of 226 applicants and an inactive waitlist of 5,385 applicants. The active waitlist is for individuals ready to move into a Pioneer Home within 30 days of an offer being made. The inactive waitlist is for individuals who are not ready to move into a Pioneer Home, but may consider moving into one in the future.
- The past year has brought numerous changes to the Pioneer Homes system. The division's mission, "providing elder Alaskans a home and community, celebrating life through its final breath," continues to be the fundamental philosophy as the division strives to provide the best possible service to elders that live in the Pioneer Homes.
- On September 1, 2019, the homes transitioned from offering three levels of service to five levels of service. Definitions for these five levels can be found in the full FY2019 Advisory Board Report and in 7 AAC 74.010. Rates for services were also increased at the same time.
- The division collaborated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to secure funding for a staffing analysis of the Alaska Pioneer Homes system. The results of this study were received in November 2018 and many staffing changes have been implemented as a result of these recommendations.
- A feasibility study was completed to look at contracting out hospitality services across the division, the results of which revealed significant cost savings. After a lengthy process, the contract was awarded to NANA Management Services. This transition was completed from July through September of 2019.
- A significant gap in the continuum of care exists across the state for elders with complex behaviors caused by dementia. As a result, the division is working with many partner agencies to develop a neighborhood in the Anchorage Pioneer Home dedicated to serving those elders. This project is ongoing and anticipated to be completed in the spring of 2020.



Allan, an Anchorage Pioneer Home elder, is pictured with the Republic of Korea's Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, Governor Mike Dunleavy, and Senator Dan Sullivan, after receiving an "Ambassador of Peace" medal for his service in the Korean War.



Two Juneau Pioneer Home residents enjoy the scenery during a visit to the Douglas Island Pink & Chum hatchery.



Eunave, a Sitka Pioneer Home elder, colors pictures together with a Mt. Edgecumbe preschool student.

Board Recommendations

The Alaska Pioneer Homes Advisory Board understands the importance of the Pioneer Home system in serving the needs of Alaska seniors. These homes serve as a safety net for the aging population and are a vital part of the continuum of care in this great state. This is a summary of the board's recommendations. For more information, please see the 2019 Advisory Board Annual Report.

- The degradation of the Ketchikan Pioneer Home sewer system has reached a critical level. A failure of this system would threaten the life, health and safety of the elders residing in this home. The board recommends that the state follows emergency procedures to have these repairs completed immediately.
- Increase the funding available to address deferred maintenance across the Pioneer Home system.
- Explore collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer more benefits to the veterans living within a Pioneer Home.
- Align the payment assistance program with the requirements to qualify for a Medicaid waiver.
- Conduct a feasibility study on existing state land for repair versus rebuild of the Fairbanks Pioneer Home and explore partnerships for outside funding to pay for the study.
- Replace the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home roof.
- Consider offering respite care at the Anchorage Pioneer Home, as this service is needed within the greater Anchorage area.
- Work with community partners to provide education around long-term care planning. This would include helping citizens understand the financial implications of long-term care.
- Allow State of Alaska employees to purchase long-term care insurance as part of their optional benefits, rather than waiting until retirement to purchase these plans.
- Make video conferencing available in all of the homes for elders and their families.
- Adjust baseline minimum qualifications to make it easier to recruit entry level positions and find efficiencies to streamline the hiring process.
- The Alaska Pioneer Home Advisory Board also strongly recommends that all state and local elected officials spend time visiting the homes. This will help officials to understand the importance of the Pioneer Homes in serving Alaska's elders.



U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie visited the Alaska Veterans & Pioneers Home in July and presented 103-year-old Navy veteran Hallie Dixon with one of his coveted Commanding Officer coins in honor of her World War II service.

For more information, the Alaska Pioneer Home Advisory Board Annual Report is at dhss.alaska.gov/daph/Pages/advisoryboard.aspx



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