

GOAL 9

THE STATE OF ALASKA HAS THE WORKFORCE CAPACITY, DATA, AND TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS IN PLACE TO SUPPORT THE RESOURCES AND FUNDING OF ALASKA'S COMPREHENSIVE INTEGRATED MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM.

- 9.1 Objective:** Strengthen workforce capacity with improved recruitment and retention to obtain and maintain knowledge and support innovation and modernization.
- 9.2 Objective:** Advance the competencies of the healthcare, behavioral health, and public health workforce.
- 9.3 Objective:** Ensure funding is available to support Alaska's Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program.
- 9.4 Objective:** Optimize information technology investments to improve process efficiency and enable innovation.
- 9.5 Objective:** Encourage a culture of data-driven decision-making that includes data sharing, data analysis, and management to link support services across Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) divisions and other departments.

GOAL 9: WORKFORCE, DATA, AND FUNDING

It is important that there are adequate resources and funding committed to ensure Alaska's Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program is available to help improve the quality of life of all Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust) beneficiaries and Alaskans.

Funding is required to support programs and services. In addition to funding, requisite planning and logistical resources are needed to maintain a continuum of care that provides quality services at maximum efficiency and effectiveness. Without the programs and resources contained in this plan, more Alaskans will utilize the most intensive, intrusive, and expensive services, such as hospital emergency departments, or the most restrictive services, such as residential care or correctional facilities. In some cases, Alaskans may require services only available out of state.

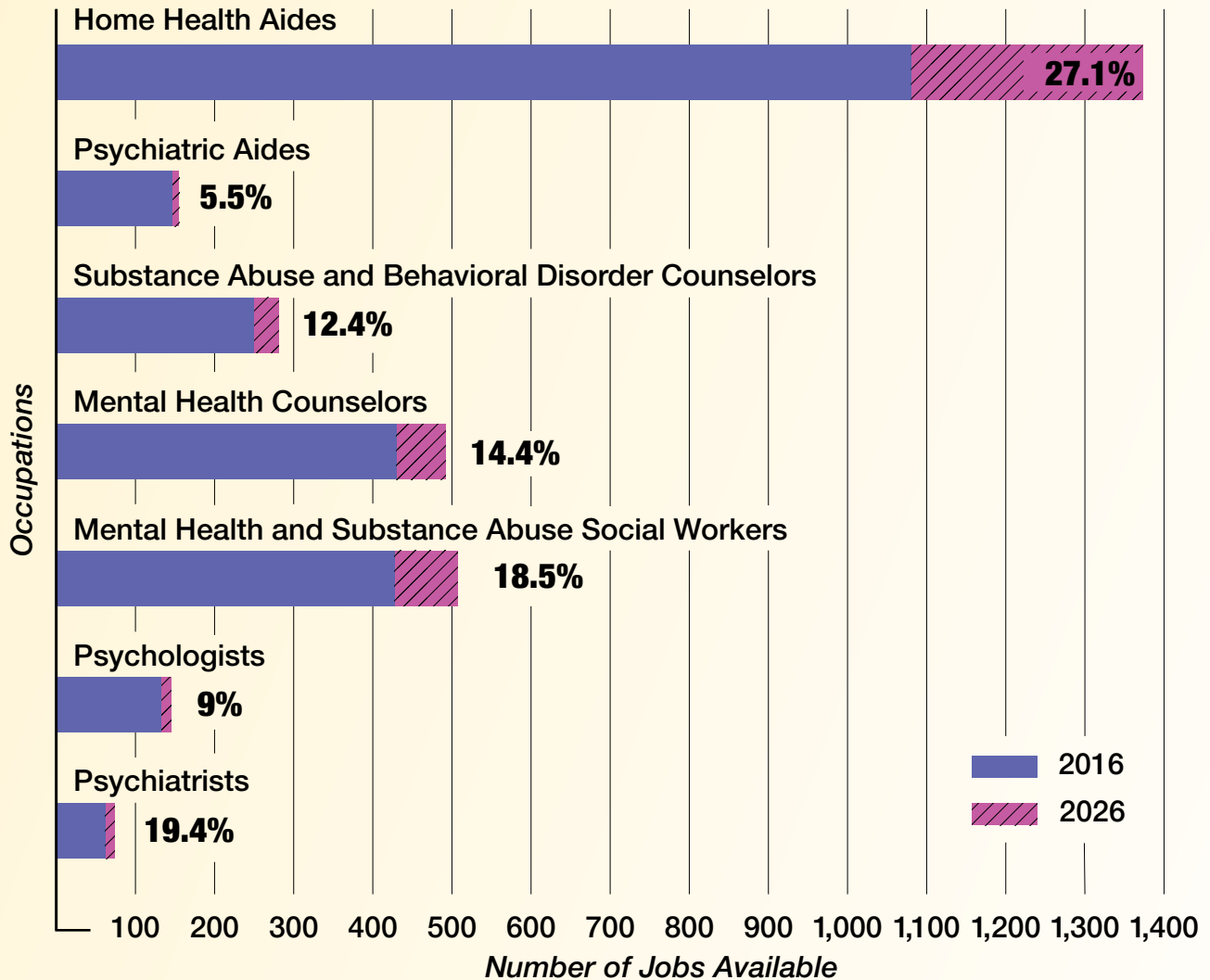
HEALTH INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (HIT): tools and processes for data gathering and comprehensive management of health information¹

Three core areas that maintain and support a comprehensive program are 1) a competent and qualified workforce, 2) a complete system of health information technology (HIT) to facilitate quality services, and 3) available data and data sharing that allow for appropriate data-driven decision-making and policy development.

Alaska has a known workforce shortage across many health- and behavioral health-related disciplines. Without a capable and competent workforce, the continuum of services and care is at risk of not being able to meet the needs of the most vulnerable Alaskans. Key workforce development strategies include "growing our own" professionals through primary and secondary education, training, loan repayment, recruitment, and retention.

Optimizing infrastructure and policy related to the use of HIT and data sharing will bring a significant return on investment of funding and resources. For example, the use of distance technologies such as telemedicine can not only improve the quality of care for Alaskans, but also has the potential to drive down costs through increasing access and service in an individual's community of choice and reducing travel costs.

Figure 16: Projected Percentage of Increased Demand for Selected Trust Beneficiary-Related Occupations, 2016-2026



Source

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development <http://akdoltest.ayera.net/occfst/index.cfm#g21>

9.1 Objective: Strengthen workforce capacity with improved recruitment and retention to obtain and maintain knowledge and support innovation and modernization.

- a. Strategy:** Engage and prepare Alaska’s youth for health careers.
- b. Strategy:** Improve retention strategies for existing health professionals.
- c. Strategy:** Develop strong leadership courses and offerings.

- d. Strategy:** Promote organizational culture that supports workforce development.
- e. Strategy:** Ensure a stable, sustainable statewide network of behavioral health providers is available to serve Alaskans with behavioral health needs.

9.2 Objective: Advance the competencies of the healthcare, behavioral health, and public health workforce.

- a. Strategy:** Create an attractive career path for those entering the workforce with accompanying training.
- b. Strategy:** Ensure payment levels align with actual costs to promote providers paying a livable wage.
- c. Strategy:** Expand and enhance training and professional development opportunities for all healthcare and behavioral health professionals.
- d. Strategy:** Enhance the use of technology for distance-delivered educational opportunities.
- e. Strategy:** Support curriculum development and the training of health professionals to ensure they learn, enhance, and update essential knowledge and skills.
- f. Strategy:** Support training and other activities that enhance the health workforce's competency in providing culturally and linguistically appropriate care.
- g. Strategy:** Expand the number and type of training and technical assistance opportunities that educate students and providers to work in inter-professional teams and participate in practice transformations.
- h. Strategy:** Support technical assistance, training, and other opportunities to help safety net providers expand, coordinate, and effectively use HIT to support service delivery and quality improvement.

CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY APPROPRIATE CARE: effective, equitable, understandable, and respectful quality care and services that are responsive to diverse cultural health beliefs and practices, preferred languages, health literacy, and other communication needs²

9.3 Objective: Ensure funding is available to support Alaska’s Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Program.

a. Strategy: Advocate to ensure the Mental Health Budget Bill includes the appropriations necessary to fund the operating and capital expenditures for the continuum of services.

b. Strategy: Maintain grant funding to pay for essential behavioral health services that are not funded through Medicaid or other sources.

c. Strategy: Leverage Medicaid funding.

MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET BILL: Alaska is unique in that it has an operational budget, a capital budget, and a mental health budget bill; the mental health budget bill provides appropriations/funding to ensure there is an integrated comprehensive mental health program³

9.4 Objective: Optimize information technology investments to improve process efficiency and enable innovation.

a. Strategy: Explore utilization of innovative distance technology to increase access and cost savings.

b. Strategy: Evaluate potential technologies and solutions.

9.5 Objective: Encourage a culture of data-driven decision-making that includes data sharing, data analysis, and management to link support services across Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) divisions and other departments.

a. Strategy: Support innovation policies and collaborative planning efforts.

b. Strategy: Understand what data is available and streamline efficiencies.

c. Strategy: Enact purpose-driven data collection and data analysis.

d. Strategy: Using the department’s systems map and legal determination, create a data-streamlining and data-sharing plan.

e. Strategy: Obtain legal counsel for final determination on the opportunities and constraints of inter-divisional data-sharing, including new regulations found in 42 CFR Part 4.

ENDNOTES

¹ http://dhss.alaska.gov/HIT/Documents/HIE_HIT%20Update_20100719.pdf

² <https://www.thinkculturalhealth.hhs.gov/clas/standards>

³ AS 47.30.046