

Trust

Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority

Alaskan Seniors
Living Longer Growing Stronger
from the Alaska Commission on Aging



Community-Based Services

To help Alaskans remain safe, independent, and out of institutional care

Community-based services are critical for Alaskans with intellectual-developmental disabilities, behavioral health disorders, dementia, and traumatic brain injury. These services might include assisted living and personal care services, housing and job assistance, mental health and addiction treatment, case management, employment assistance, peer support, reentry services, home-delivered and congregate meals, transportation, day habilitation, and more.

When funding for community-based services is reduced or eliminated, Alaska's most vulnerable citizens, including Trust beneficiaries,¹ are more likely to 'fall through the cracks' and end up in more expensive institutional care—hospital emergency rooms, nursing homes, out-of-state residential care, and prison—usually at state expense.

Without community support services, a family can lose their ability to care for a loved one at home. A justice-involved individual struggling with addiction or mental illness is at risk for relapse and committing new crimes. A person who has experienced severe trauma may not access important recovery services.

Community support services are more cost effective than institutional care for people with disabilities.

For example, for people with a mental health disorder, community behavioral health treatment costs 87.9% less than placement in Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API).²

Community supports for Alaska's seniors can cost 45% to 90% less than nursing home care.³

Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Intellectual-Developmental Disability (IDD) waiver services cost on average 58.6% less than services received through Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID).⁴

Home and community-based services promote independence, choice, and inclusion. People overwhelmingly prefer services in their home and community and these services and supports cost significantly less than institutional care for all payers.

Why Are 'Continuums of Care' Important?

'Continuums of care' offer an integrated system and delivery of health care services to targeted populations over the lifespan, including prevention and early intervention, treatment and interventions, and long-term recovery and maintenance. Housing and long-term services and supports are also an important part of continuum of care. A complete continuum means that all Alaskans have access to the right level of service, at the right place, at the right time.

For seniors and people with intellectual-developmental disabilities, a continuum of care might include early diagnosis and intervention in schools or doctor's offices, in-home support services, transportation support, and family respite.

A continuum of care for people experiencing mental illness or substance use disorders might include early screening and identification, brief intervention in doctors'

offices, outpatient or residential treatment for Alaskans needing those levels of care.

Having a well-planned and coordinated continuum of care with adequately-funded

community support services offers Alaskans with disabilities access to appropriate care that reduces dependence on expensive emergency, crisis, or institutional care.

What are some community support services supported with state dollars?

- Behavioral health treatment grants
- Assisted living/group homes
- Day habilitation
- Personal care services
- Case management/care coordination
- Adult day programs
- Home-delivered/congregate meals
- Supported employment/job coaching
- Reentry/transition services
- Peer/mentorship/trauma support

Community support services provide local jobs

- Non-profit organizations that provide community-based services are important not only to the Alaskans they serve, but for local economies as well.
- Reductions in grant programs and Medicaid funding affect the ability of local providers to recruit and retain staff, which negatively impacts clients, providers, and local economies.

Community support services maintain stability

- Alaska's most vulnerable citizens are more likely to remain stable, safe, and productive in their communities when they have access to community-based healthcare.
- Alaskans with disabilities entering into the community after foster care, juvenile justice, or incarceration benefit from transition services that help them get and remain stable.

Community support services are less expensive than institutional care

- Community behavioral health treatment and rehabilitative services cost 20-50% less than a psychiatric hospital for people with severe mental illness.
- Community supports for seniors can cost 45% to 90% less than nursing home care.
- Community supports for people with IDD cost on average 58.6% less than services received through intermediate care facilities.

The Trust and partner advisory boards support community-based services for all Alaskans, including people with intellectual-developmental disabilities, behavioral health disorders, dementia, and traumatic brain injury, so they can remain safe and stable in their communities. ❖

¹ Alaska Mental Health Trust beneficiaries include people with mental illness, substance use disorders (SUD), intellectual-developmental disabilities (IDD), including fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD), Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD), and traumatic brain injury (TBI).

² Comparing outpatient mental health services provided by community behavioral health centers, clinics, and psychologists (average cost per day of \$174 per person) to inpatient psychiatric treatment at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (average cost per day of \$1,445 per person) Source: Department of Health and Social Services Division of Behavioral Health Overview, Presentation to the Alaska Legislature, March 11, 2019.

³ Comparing home and community-based services like personal care attendants (average FY18 annual cost \$14,744 per person) and Medicaid waiver services (average FY18 annual cost ranging from \$36,598 to \$90,173 per person) to skilled nursing facility costs (average FY18 annual cost \$163,090 per person). Source: Alaska Department of Health and Social Services Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, Presentation to the Alaska Legislature, March 8, 2019.

⁴ State of Alaska Automated Budget System, Final Authorized FY19 report, Harmony and COGNOS (\$88,769 average annual cost per HCBS IDD waiver/\$214,423 average annual cost per person in ICF/IID).

For more information, go to: www.alaskamentalhealthtrust.org/jointadvocacy