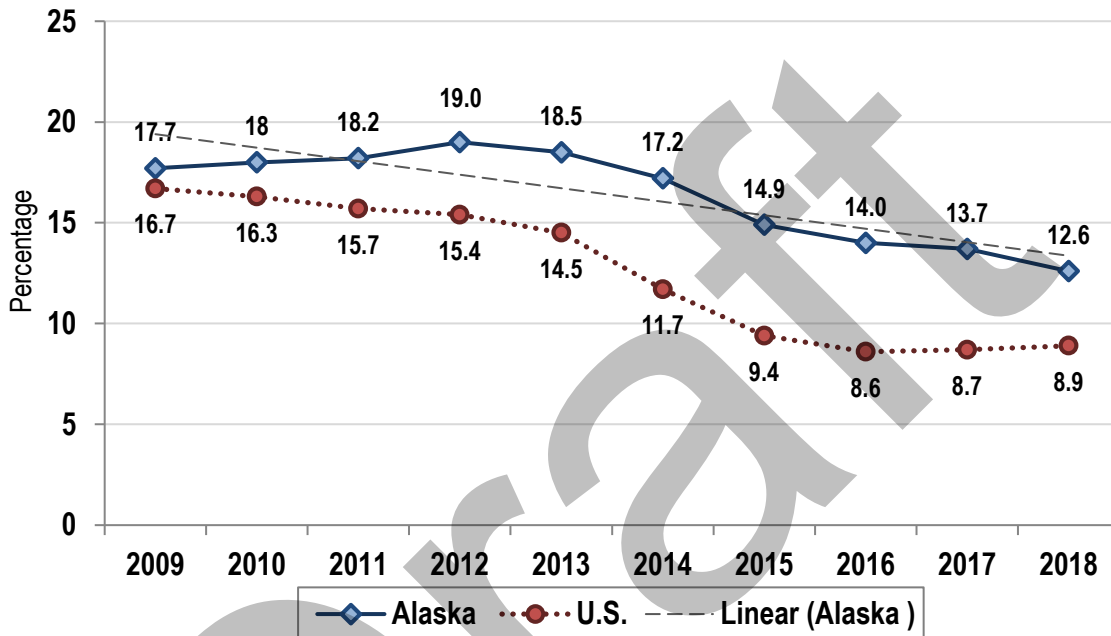


## Goal 2: Alaskans have Access to Integrated Healthcare Options that Promote Optimal Health, Wellness, and Independence

Indicator: Percentage of population without health insurance in Alaska and U.S., 2009 – 2018



Population: Alaska Statewide

**Population Results:** *Comp Plan Objective: 2.1:* Alaskans have access to integrated healthcare options that promote optimal health, wellness, and independence healthcare services.

**Story behind the baselines (info, research, agenda, “causes”):** Without access to and coverage for healthcare services, which include behavioral health in all geographic areas, there is increased risk of Alaska’s population having poor physical and mental health outcomes. The Department of Health and Social Services strives to meet the goal of all Alaskans having access to health care services by having 100% of the population with adequate health insurance. In 2018, only 8.9% of Alaskans were uninsured, compared to 12.6% nationally. Even with access to health insurance, barriers continue to exist in receiving services. There are often long wait times for the first appointment for a new patient, and currently, many primary care providers have stopped accepting new patients on Medicare or Medicaid. This wait often leads patients to decide to not access care, seek care in a more expensive setting such as an Emergency Room, or they recover from the acute illness without being examined or provided a diagnosis of illness. Location of services in Alaska also presents as a barrier

as air travel is often necessary in order to seek health care. Telehealth appointments can offer a range of necessary services, however barriers such as the type of services offered and limited technology put limits on the telehealth capacity.

**Partners:**

- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid
- Indian Health Services
- Alaska Primary Care Association
- Alaska Behavioral Health Association
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

**What Works? (info, research, “solutions”- include no cost/ low cost ideas)**

Alaskans must be healthy if the state is to thrive. When a population is healthy, more people attend work and school, participate in their communities, engage in traditional cultural practices, and care for their families. Uninsured rates decreased between 2013 and 2018 following the introduction of the Affordable Care Act. Among states, Alaska had the fifth highest (behind Texas, Oklahoma, Georgia and Florida) proportion of uninsured population in 2018.<sup>1</sup> In many states across the nation, state health departments have partnered with federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and rural health clinics (RHCs). Insured or uninsured patients can access these facilities which offer a sliding scale fee to those without health insurance. Here in Alaska, Alaska Primary Care Association has 27 FQHCs and is a strong provider offering medical care, behavioral health treatment, and dental services.

**Comp Plan Strategies:**

- a. Strategy: Support an increase in the number of healthcare access points to expand the availability of services to underserved, disadvantaged, geographically isolated, and special needs populations.
- b. Strategy: Expand upon, leverage, and navigate healthcare and service options to promote Alaskans seeking affordable healthcare.
- c. Strategy: Provide guidance, resources, and flexibility to enable beneficiaries to access competitive, affordable insurance options.

**Action Plans (links to other scorecards/ action plans):**

- Alaska Medicaid Dashboard:  
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Pages/dashboard.aspx>
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- Healthy Alaskans: <http://hss.state.ak.us/ha2020/>
- Alaska Healthcare Transformation Project:  
<http://www.akhealthcaretransformation.com/>

**Source:**

U.S. Census Bureau (2018). American Community Survey Tables for Health Insurance Coverage. Table HI-05.<sup>2</sup>

**Source Contact:**

Available at <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/health-insurance/acs-hi.2018.html>.

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