

Community-Based Services

Trust
Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority



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Essential community-based services offer Alaskans with disabilities and behavioral health conditions the opportunity to receive care in their home or their community, rather than in institutions or other isolated settings.

Community-based services are critical for Alaskans with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities, behavioral health disorders, dementia, and traumatic brain injuries. Some of these services are provided via telehealth or are distance delivered.

These services might include:

- Personal care services and respite
- Mental health treatment and recovery services
- Addiction treatment and recovery services
- Case management
- Job coaching and employment assistance
- Peer support
- Reentry and transition services
- Home-delivered and congregate meals
- Transportation
- Day habilitation
- Assisted living

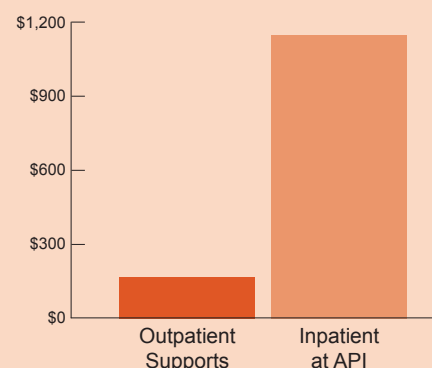
The Role of Medicaid:

Medicaid is the primary funder of community-based services in Alaska, providing cost-effective care for individuals with disabilities, behavioral health conditions, and chronic illnesses while reducing reliance on institutional care. These services improve health outcomes and depend on a well-supported workforce, with Medicaid reimbursement rates playing a key role in sustaining healthcare jobs.

Community-based services are more cost effective than institutional care for people with disabilities

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

Average Cost per Day per Person of Outpatient Support and Inpatient Support



- Community behavioral health treatment costs for Alaskans experiencing mental illness are 88% less than placement in the Alaska Psychiatric Institute.
- Community supports for Alaska's seniors can cost 45% to 90% less than nursing home care.²
- Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Intellectual and/or Developmental Disability (IDD) waiver services cost on average 59% less than services received through Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Intellectual Disabilities (ICF/IID).³
- Without community support services, a family can lose their ability to care for a loved one at home.
- A justice-involved individual who experiences addiction or mental illness is at risk for relapse and committing new crimes without access to community recovery and reentry supports.

Key Points

- Community-based services are person-centered and promote independence, choice, and inclusion.
- People with disabilities report that they overwhelmingly prefer services in their home and community.
- Community-based services and supports cost significantly less than institutional care for all payers, including state and federal government.
- These services are funded through Medicaid or other health insurance, out-of-pocket payments, and through grants.

A strong system of community-based services relies on a healthy workforce. The Trust and partner advisory boards are addressing workforce shortages for healthcare professionals including:

- Direct Support Professionals (DSPs)
- Personal Care Assistants (PCAs)
- Case Managers
- Care Coordinators
- Community Health Aides
- Behavioral Health Aides
- Behavioral Health Clinicians
- Peer Support Specialists
- Psychiatrists, Geriatricians, and Neurologists

¹ 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.

² 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.

³ State of Alaska Automated Budget System, Final Auth20 report, Harmony and COGNOS.