

GOAL 2

ALASKANS HAVE ACCESS TO
INTEGRATED HEALTHCARE OPTIONS
THAT PROMOTE OPTIMAL HEALTH,
WELLNESS, AND INDEPENDENCE.

- 2.1 Objective:** Alaskans have access to and receive quality healthcare services.
- 2.2 Objective:** Medicaid is efficiently managed and adequately resourced.
- 2.3 Objective:** Trauma-informed, person-centered healthcare services are delivered.

GOAL 2: HEALTHCARE

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. 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.

MEDICAID IN THE UNITED STATES:

a federal and state program that helps with medical costs for some people with limited income and resources¹

OPTIONAL MEDICAID SERVICES:

benefits that states may cover if they choose²

For many Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust) beneficiaries, Medicaid is an integral access point for health, wellness, and independence within their home communities. As of 2017, Medicaid served 205,908 Alaskans overall³ (27.9% of Alaska's population based on the Department of Labor's 2017 estimated Alaska population),⁴ and 44,767 Alaskans are served through Medicaid expansion. While Medicaid's required services for healthcare are critical, so are Medicaid's optional services. Both required and optional Medicaid services keep Alaskans in their home communities, affording them the opportunity to pursue meaningful

lives. Optional services can also supplant the need for costlier services; for example, home- and community-based (optional) waiver services are less costly than similar (mandatory) services provided in institutional settings.

Alaska's Medicaid system has undergone many changes in the past few years. The Medicaid Expansion and Reform Plan was initiated in 2015, enhancing access to Medicaid for Alaskans. Since Senate Bill 74 was passed in 2016, Alaska's Medicaid program has been in the process of comprehensive reform and redesign. A few initiatives included in Medicaid reform work to expand the availability of services through the application of the 1115 Medicaid waiver demonstration project, and telehealth technology and other initiatives add to new, optional programs, such as the Community First Choice program and the Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW), to bring in additional federal dollars. While Medicaid serves a significant portion of the state's population, timely and meaningful access across all regions continues to be a challenge.

Medicare is the leading insurance coverage for older Alaskans. Due to the low reimbursement rates with Medicare, many clinics have been unwilling to accept patients,

resulting in many seniors utilizing community health centers or urgent care facilities for general primary care and preventative services. Receiving services in these settings does not guarantee that a patient will be seen by the same healthcare provider each visit, causing challenges for the patient, healthcare provider, and clinic.

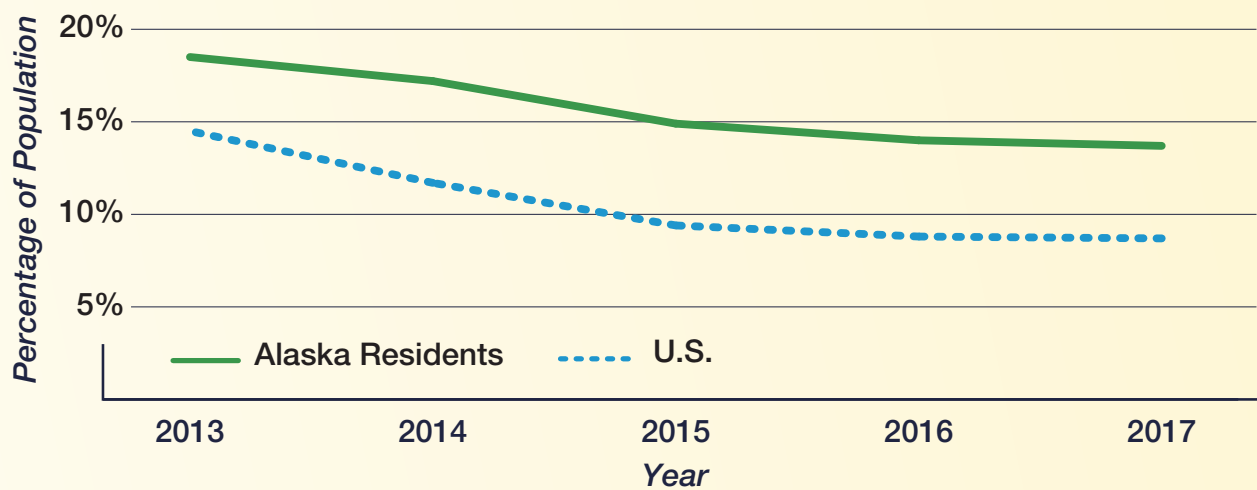
Most importantly, all Alaskans, no matter their medical insurance, should be covered by or have access to necessary medical and behavioral health services at a reasonable price.

2.1 Objective: Alaskans have access to and receive quality healthcare services.

- 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.

QUALITY HEALTHCARE SERVICES: are provided to individuals and patient populations to improve desired health outcomes; to achieve this, healthcare must be safe, effective, timely, efficient, equitable, and person-centered⁵

Figure 3: Percentage of Population Without Health Insurance



Sources

Data from the Alaska Scorecard indicator <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/HealthPlanning/Pages/scorecard/default.aspx>.
 The indicator pulled from the U.S. Census Bureau Survey - Health Insurance Coverage in the U.S.

2.2 **Objective:** Medicaid is efficiently managed and adequately resourced.

- a. Strategy:** Maintain funding for Medicaid services.
- b. Strategy:** Target investments and technical assistance toward communities and organizations that address the needs of vulnerable populations and promote quality improvement activities that advance health equity.
- c. Strategy:** Support ongoing Medicaid waiver and demonstration projects.
- d. Strategy:** Expand Medicaid administrative claiming for the proper and efficient administration of Medicaid.
- e. Strategy:** Bolster Medicaid program integrity efforts to support Medicaid as the payer of last resort.
- f. Strategy:** Provide technical assistance to safety net organizations to ensure their financial and operational health and sustainability.
- g. Strategy:** Ensure effective and efficient management of services for Alaskans who are dually eligible for Medicaid and Medicare by enhancing coordination to improve health outcomes and reduce costs.

2.3 **Objective:** Trauma-informed, person-centered healthcare services are delivered.

- a. Strategy:** Support multi-disciplinary teams to provide the needed level of service.
- b. Strategy:** Ensure quality, comprehensive maternal health services are robust and readily available.
- c. Strategy:** Increase screenings and early interventions across the healthcare system.
- d. Strategy:** Support access to Complex Behavior Collaborative services through a tiered level of services.
- e. Strategy:** Provide comprehensive and coordinated services for seniors and individuals with disabilities.
- f. Strategy:** Optimize the role of the Alaska Pioneer Homes within the statewide array of long-term services and supports.
- g. Strategy:** Improve access to end-of-life care, including hospice and palliative care, and provide appropriate training for caregivers.

PERSON-CENTERED:
an approach to service delivery that is respectful of and responsive to the preferences, needs, cultural identification, and values of the individual seeking services

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAMS: a group made up of members with varied but complementary experience, qualifications, and skills that contribute to the achievement of an organization's specific objectives⁶

ENDNOTES

1. <https://www.medicaid.gov/>
2. <https://www.medicaid.gov/medicaid/benefits/list-of-benefits/index.html>
3. Department of Health and Social Services State of Reform Presentation, October 10, 2018: Alaska Medicaid Redesign Update: http://dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Documents/redesign/20181010_DHSS-Update-State-Reform.pdf
4. Department of Health and Social Services State of Reform Presentation, October 10, 2018: Alaska Medicaid Redesign Update: http://dhss.alaska.gov/HealthyAlaska/Documents/redesign/20181010_DHSS-Update-State-Reform.pdf
5. https://www.who.int/maternal_child_adolescent/topics/quality-of-care/definition/en/
6. <http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/multidisciplinary-team.html>