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Commissioner

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Department of Health

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Alaska Governor's Task Force on Child Care Releases Final Report with Key Recommendations to Address Statewide Child Care Crisis

December 27, 2024, ANCHORAGE — The Department of Health announces the release of the Governor's Task Force on Child Care's (The Task Force) final report, highlighting critical steps to address the pressing need for accessible, affordable, and high-quality child care across Alaska. This report culminates nearly two years of dedicated efforts and collaboration between state agencies, local organizations, and the public.

"My goal is making Alaska the best state in the country to raise a family. Having access to quality and affordable child care is essential for working parents," said Governor Mike Dunleavy. "I'm thankful for the work the Task Force on Childcare has put into creating this report which will help inform policy that can improve child care across the state."

The Task Force, established under Administrative Order 346, was charged with identifying evidence-based solutions and gathering public input to address Alaska's child care crisis. Key findings reveal significant challenges: over half of Alaska's young children live in households where all parents are employed, yet 61% of Alaskans live in "child care deserts" with limited access to licensed facilities.

During the pandemic, Alaska lost nearly 10% of its licensed child care providers, but the sector is now stabilizing. Implementing the Task Force's recommendations will expand access to quality child care, strengthening both the workforce and the economy.

Department of Health Commissioner Heidi Hedberg chaired the Task force. She emphasized the need for innovative and sustainable solutions: "The recommendations put forward are not only responses to immediate challenges but also a roadmap for a resilient infrastructure that serves both working parents that need reliable, safe care, and the licensed facilities that provide that care," said Commissioner Hedberg. "Removing barriers, especially in rural areas, and supporting the child care workforce, are other areas we expect to see long-lasting improvements, as a result of this important work."

The Task Force's reports provide 56 recommendations across six key areas:

1. **Streamlining processes**
2. **Expanding licensing options**
3. **Stabilizing the workforce**
4. **Improving accessibility**
5. **Affordability and sustainability**
6. **Ensuring quality care**

The Department of Health has already implemented 13 recommendations and is actively working on 21 of the remaining recommendations. Highlights of this work include regulatory changes, using remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to purchase digital fingerprinting equipment and launching a new Child Care Information System.

For more information, visit the [Task Force's website](#).

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