

# Alaska's Maternal and Child Health Five-Year Plan 2026–2030

Laying the foundation for lifelong health and well-being to achieve the vision of Healthy Alaskans.

## PLAN INCLUDES

- Perinatal/Infant Health
- Child Health
- Adolescent Health
- Women's/Maternal Health
- Child & Youth with Special Health Care Needs

## COMMUNITY INPUT

States survey the community and review data in order to select priority areas to focus their work for the 5-year grant cycle.

## FUNDING

Our work is funded by Title V of the Social Security Act. The Title V Block Grant is a federal and state partnership that serves as the financial foundation for much of our work. The Division of Public Health (DPH) coordinates and collaborates with many organizations and other state agencies to implement activities that address grant goals and objectives.

## SNAPSHOT

This report offers an at-a-glance snapshot of the next five-year plan for your review. Snapshots include three selected strategies for each population domain. To view all strategies, if you have questions, or for more information about the Maternal and Child Health Program, please contact [mch-epi@alaska.gov](mailto:mch-epi@alaska.gov).



The Title V Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant Program promotes and improves the health and well-being of Alaska's mothers, children, young adults and families.



Every five years, states are required to conduct a comprehensive, statewide needs assessment to assist with strategic planning and resource allocation.



## CROSS-CUTTING HEALTH PRIORITIES

- Increase connection to behavioral and mental health information, training, resources, and supports for families and providers.
- Increase partnerships and connections with community agencies to support access to basic needs.





# Perinatal & Infant Health

Reduce harmful substance use  
among women of childbearing age  
and caregivers of infants.

## TOP HEALTH NEEDS

- Access to Basic Needs
- Substance Use in Family
- Unsafe Sleep Environments and Sudden Unexplained Infant Death (SUID)
- Parental Mental Health
- Child Abuse or Neglect
- Family Violence

## SELECT STRATEGIES

1. Enhance on-going surveillance, data analysis, and data dissemination regarding substance-affected pregnancies and substance use among women of childbearing age.
2. Promote provider and birthing facility staff use of Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) for all harmful substances, interpersonal violence, and maternal mental health among women of childbearing age, especially those who are pregnant to identify infants with risk factors for SUID.
3. Leverage multi-sector partnerships to provide evidence-based and culturally appropriate safe sleep materials and education for families who experience high-risk factors for SUID, including caregiver tobacco use.

1. Alaska Maternal and Child Health Indicators Data Hub. Alaska Department of Health, Division of Public Health, Section of Women's, Children's and Family Health; <https://mch-indicators2-alaska-dhss.hub.arcgis.com>



Substance use during pregnancy and early parenthood is closely linked to unsafe sleep environments, child maltreatment, and barriers to meeting basic needs.

Alaska's infant mortality rate (IMR) rose from 4.9 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2019 to 7.3 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2023, exceeding the national IMR of 5.6.<sup>1</sup>



“Supporting new parents and providing valuable information to give the infants/children an opportunity to be healthy and succeed.”

– Needs Assessment Survey Respondent





# Child Health

Foster safe, stable, and nurturing environments for Alaskan children.

## TOP HEALTH NEEDS

- Access to Basic Needs
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Behavioral and Mental Health
- Social Support Systems
- Poor Nutrition

## SECURITY & SUPPORT

Child maltreatment continues to be an urgent need. A safe and stable environment is essential for a child's healthy development, yet many children in Alaska face child abuse, neglect, exposure to violence, and unmet basic needs.

Families experiencing housing instability, food insecurity, and financial hardship often struggle to provide the security and support children need to thrive.

## SELECT STRATEGIES

1. Support school nurses and counselors in their work to build safe, stable, and nurturing environments for children.
2. Collect, analyze, and disseminate data to better understand child wellbeing in Alaska (e.g., ALCANLink, PRAMS, CUBS, education data sources, etc.).
3. Support efforts to improve access to basic needs for Alaska families with children, including access to high quality and affordable child care.

1. Alaska Longitudinal Child Abuse and Neglect Linkage (ALCANLink), 2025  
2. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families. (2022). Child Maltreatment 2022. Retrieved from <https://aacf.gov/sites/default/files/documents/cb/cm2022.pdf>  
3. Early Childhood Alaska. 2024 Updated Needs Assessment. Alaska Department of Health, Child Care Program Office, August 2024.



Approximately 46% of children born in Alaska experience an allegation of harm for any maltreatment type before their 14th birthday.<sup>1</sup>

As of 2023, approximately 39% of children under age six in Alaska have an unmet need for early care and education.<sup>3</sup>

Alaska's rate of confirmed child maltreatment remains among the highest in the nation, with 14.6 victims per 1,000 children compared to the U.S. national rate of 7.7 per 1,000.<sup>2</sup>



“Children having access to a safe place, a safe person.”

– Needs Assessment Survey Respondent





# Adolescent Health

Promote safe, supportive connections for adolescent well-being.

## TOP HEALTH NEEDS

- Behavioral and Mental Health
- Unhealthy Relationships
- Reproductive Health
- Substance Use
- Social Support Systems

## SUPPORTIVE ADULT & PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Strong, supportive relationships are essential to personal well-being and the health of our communities. They build trust, foster resilience, and promote personal responsibility. Promoting connection within families, schools, and communities helps protect individuals from harm and reinforces values that support safe, stable environments.

## SELECT STRATEGIES

1. Support initiatives that improve youth access to appropriate healthcare services while supporting parental involvement.
2. Increase meaningful connection between youth and supportive adults through programs that support mentorship and community involvement.
3. Collaborate with the Division of Behavioral Health to support mental health resources and suicide prevention efforts.

1. Alaska Department of Health. (2023). 2023 Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Summary Report.

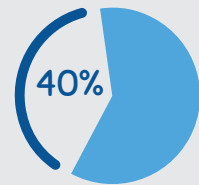
2. Youth Interview, Alaska Title V MCH Needs Assessment, 2025.

3. Alaska Division of Public Health, Health Analytics and Vital Records Section. Last updated on 08/01/2024.



Adolescents want services that support their full well-being beyond clinical care.<sup>2</sup>

In 2023, 40% of Alaska high school students reported persistent feelings of sadness or hopelessness.<sup>1</sup>



In 2023, Alaska's age-adjusted suicide mortality rate was 27.8 per 100,000. Among Alaskans aged 15-24, the suicide mortality rate was 42.3 per 100,000.<sup>3</sup>



“Available information for teens to know where to find help and to be encouraged to not be afraid to ask for help.”

– Needs Assessment Survey Respondent





# Maternal & Women's Health

Increase access to comprehensive health care for women, including preventive services.

## TOP HEALTH NEEDS

- Behavioral and Mental Health
- Reproductive Health Concerns
- Partner, Family or Community Violence
- Access to Basic Needs
- Substance Use

## ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH CARE

Access to quality health care, including preventive services, family planning, and maternal health care, is essential for women's overall well-being. Barriers such as geographic isolation, limited provider availability, and gaps in insurance coverage can make it difficult for women to access the care they need.

## SELECT STRATEGIES

1. Collaborate with community-based partners and public and private providers statewide to improve and expand access to preventive health services.
2. Engage hospitals and birthing facilities in data-driven, collaborative quality improvement focused on reducing severe maternal morbidity in partnership with the Alaska Perinatal Quality Collaborative (AKPQC).
3. Continue to partner with Medicaid and department leadership on promoting the availability of extended postpartum coverage and supporting ongoing evaluation.

1. Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System



Ensuring timely and complete services supports healthy pregnancies, reduces the risk of chronic conditions, and improves long-term health outcomes.



In 2023, 16% of Alaskan women indicated experiencing postpartum depression while 25% reported postpartum anxiety.<sup>1</sup>



“...women aren't met with strengths-based systems that connect them to everything they need to be successful.”

– Needs Assessment Survey Respondent





# Children & Youth with Special Health Care Needs

Increase education and supports for families and caregivers around accessing coordinated care and pediatric specialty care.

## TOP HEALTH NEEDS

- Support/Training for Parents/Caregivers
- Access to and Quality of Home Services
- Pediatric Specialty Care
- Coordination for Transition to Adult Care
- Resources to Help Coordinate Care

## NAVIGATING SYSTEMS

Families and caregivers of children and youth with special health care needs (CYSHCN) often face challenges in navigating healthcare systems, accessing pediatric specialty care, and coordinating services.

Strengthening access to information, training, and support helps families manage their child's health needs and reduces stress and improves outcomes.

## SELECT STRATEGIES

1. Partner with parents, audiologists, and Early Intervention to increase referrals and enrollment by 6 months of age for children diagnosed with a hearing loss.
2. Continue to provide limited gap-filling pediatric specialty clinics and family navigation services as needed and as resources allow.
3. Provide sustainable implementation of Family Engagement training through community partnerships.

1. National Survey of Children's Health, Health Resources and Services Administration, Maternal and Child Health Bureau. <https://mchb.hrsa.gov/data/national-surveys>



In 2022–2023, 12% of CYSHCN compared to 8% of non-CYSHCN found it very difficult to find the specialty care needed, while another 4% of CYSHCN were unable to obtain the specialty care needed.<sup>1</sup>

Limited provider availability, geographic barriers, and complex referral processes can make it difficult to obtain necessary care.



“Recognizing unique needs of Alaskan children, especially Alaska Native children and the unique needs of children in villages or remote settings who may not have the same access as children in urban settings to services.”

– Needs Assessment Survey Respondent

