

Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY 2008 – 2011 Implementation Activities

*****Latest Activity Reports:**

- 1. (FY 08) Alaska GEC Sponsors Numerous Training Activities.** Among the many training activities sponsored or co-sponsored by the Alaska Geriatric Education Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage were: three ADRD Distance-Delivered Certificate Program courses, a Senior Companions training in Palmer, three Certified Eden Associate Trainings, an Alaska Family Medicine/WWAMI Medical Residency didactic presentation by Dr. Loren Lipson, a three-credit distance-delivered course on “Intro to Dementia,” a two-day training in Soldotna (“Alzheimer’s Pieces of the Puzzle”), a three-hour presentation by Dr. Peter Lichtenberg (“Recognition and Screening for Depression and Cognitive Impairments in Late Life”) at the Behavioral Sciences Conference of the North, a four-hour simulation experiential training for caregivers at the Island Cove Adult Day Center in Kodiak (“Hearing Voices That Are Distressing”), and twelve half-day on-site trainings on “Understanding and Responding to Challenging Behaviors Related to Alzheimer’s Disease.” (Strategy 2.B.Other)

- 2. (FY 08) ADRAA Sponsors Caregiver Education Classes.** The Alzheimer’s Resource Agency of Alaska aims to provide caregivers for individuals with ADRD with more information and greater skills to help them care for their family member, through a variety of educational program series such as Savvy Caregiver and ABCs of Caregiving. In FY 08, ADRAA held 142 awareness events statewide, with a total of 1,737 participants. Further, 350 caregivers attended education programs. ([Strategy 3.B.1](#))

- 3. (FY 08) LTCO Developing Quality Improvement Plan for Assisted Living Homes.** The Long-Term Care Ombudsman’s Office is currently emphasizing quality improvement for Alaska’s assisted living services. The LTCO has begun an Assisted Living Home Improvement Incentives Project that would rate all assisted living homes in the state and provide a higher reimbursement rate for those that provide good or excellent or outstanding care and services to their residents. A workgroup consisting of the heads of State of Alaska Medicaid Quality Improvement, State Assisted Living Licensing, the LTCO, and the president of the Assisted Living Home Association of Alaska is in the process of identifying measurable standards of care and services that would be used to rate (on a five-star system) assisted

living homes and provide evidence for higher reimbursement rates. ([Strategy 2.A.4](#))

- 4. (FY 08) ABADA/AMHB Supports Senior Behavioral Health Outreach Project.** ABADA/Alaska Mental Health Board worked with the Alaska Commission on Aging and the Division of Behavioral Health to design the SOAR (Senior Outreach, Assessment and Referral) Project, which the 2008 Legislature funded and which will be implemented by DBH. [This project is now known as the Senior Behavioral Health Project.] The project includes a community gatekeeper component, in which community members who have regular contact with seniors will be trained to help identify those who may need behavioral health intervention. ([Strategy 2.A.7](#))
- 5. (FY 08) AgeNet Successfully Calls for Higher Reimbursement Rates.** During the 2008 legislative session, increased reimbursement rates for Medicaid waiver providers was a top AgeNet priority. The Legislature did provide for an increase. AgeNet's number one priority for the FY 09 session is to obtain automatic rate increases similar to what nursing homes receive by statute. AgeNet has joined with other provider groups in a coalition to advocate for a statute which would review Medicaid reimbursement rates each year and automatically increase rates annually, as is currently done with nursing homes. They are seeking a legislator to sponsor the bill. ([Strategy 2.C.17](#))
- 6. (FY 08) SESS Supports Alaska-Focused Changes to Long-Term Care Insurance Plans.** Southeast Senior Services staff have inquired of the State of Alaska's Division of Retirement and Benefits and Premera Blue Cross how the long-term care insurance plan for State retirees might be modified so that the types of home- and community-based services offered in Alaska might be covered under the plan. [Adult day programs must have an R.N. on staff to be covered under the plan; however, the small adult day programs in Alaska typically do not have this type of staffing.] AgeNet testified regarding this issue during the HCBS Strategies Community Forum. SESS is also in discussion with several fellow AgeNet members (Kodiak, Serendipity Adult Day, etc.) to have an Adult Day Conference which would include this as one of the topics for discussion and advocacy. ([Strategy 2.C.14](#))
- 7. (FY 08) MASST Helps Hundreds of Seniors Enter Job Market.** The MASST Program served 422 participants during FY 08, with participants averaging 203 days in their current assignment, and an average of 164 days in all assignments. Of the 422 participants, 184 were age 60 and older, 364 were below poverty, 102 were at risk of becoming homeless, 49 were displaced homemakers, 106 were

veterans or their spouses, and 229 were receiving public assistance. 104 participants entered employment. ([Strategy 5.A.3](#))

Find out more about our agency partners:

[AARP = AARP Alaska](#)

[ABADA/AMHB = Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse / Alaska Mental Health Board \(State of Alaska\)](#)

[ABIN = Alaska Brain Injury Network](#)

[ACOA = Alaska Commission on Aging](#)

[ADRAA = Alzheimer’s Disease Resource Agency of Alaska](#)

[AHFC = Alaska Housing Finance Corporation \(State of Alaska\)](#)

[AKGEC = Alaska Geriatric Education Center \(University of Alaska\)](#)

[AMHTA = Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority \(State of Alaska\)](#)

AN = AgeNet

[ANTHC = Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium](#)

[BH = Behavioral Health \(State of Alaska\)](#)

[DOL = Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development – MASST Program \(State of Alaska\)](#)

[DPH = Division of Public Health \(State of Alaska\)](#)

[GCDSE = Governor’s Council on Disabilities & Special Education \(State of Alaska\)](#)

[GEC = Geriatric Education Center \(University of Alaska Anchorage, Center for Human Development\)](#)

[LTCO = Long-Term Care Ombudsman’s Office \(State of Alaska\)](#)

MHP = Medical and Health Policy (Dept. of Health & Social Services, State of Alaska)

[PH = Pioneer Homes \(State of Alaska\)](#)

[RF = Rasmuson Foundation](#)

[SDS = Senior & Disabilities Services \(State of Alaska\)](#)

Click on an objective to view all the activities of the Alaska Commission on Aging and its agency partners that have addressed the strategies under that objective:

State Plan Goals:

Objectives:

<p>1. Alaskan seniors stay healthy, active, and involved in their communities.</p>	<p>A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote healthy lifestyles and develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance the physical, mental, economic and social well-being of Alaskan seniors.</p>
	<p>B. Information and education will be available to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors to encourage the development of healthy lifestyle habits, financial security, and civic and social</p>

	<p><u>involvement.</u></p> <p><u>C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that seniors can remain healthy, active, financially secure, and engaged in civic and social affairs.</u></p>
<p>2. Older Alaskans have access to an integrated array of health and social supports along the continuum of care.</p>	<p><u>A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of the health and long-term care needs of seniors and to develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance infrastructure development and access to an integrated array of health and social supports along the continuum of care.</u></p> <p><u>B. Information and education will be available to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors to locate the health care and long-term care services they need.</u></p> <p><u>C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that seniors have access to the health care and long-term care services they need at each level along the continuum of care.</u></p>
<p>3. Families are supported in their efforts to care for their loved ones at home and in the community.</p>	<p><u>A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of family caregivers' issues and to develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance the well-being of caregivers.</u></p> <p><u>B. Information and education will be provided to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors regarding programs and activities targeted to the needs of family caregivers.</u></p> <p><u>C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that unpaid family caregivers are recognized and supported in their role as primary care providers for seniors in need.</u></p>
<p>4. A range of adequate, accessible, secure and affordable housing options is</p>	<p><u>A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of senior housing needs and to develop policies,</u></p>

<p>available to seniors.</p>	<p><u>programs, and developments aimed at providing a greater number of affordable, accessible, appropriate housing options for Alaskan seniors across the state.</u></p>
	<p><u>B. Provide information and education for seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors about housing options and the supports available to assist them in developing additional senior housing in their community; and provide information about senior housing needs and preferences to building trade groups.</u></p>
	<p><u>C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that an adequate number and variety of senior housing options are available as the number of seniors in Alaska increases over the next 25 years.</u></p>
<p>5. Alaska supports a stable workforce for senior and health care services as well as a range of attractive employment opportunities for seniors.</p>	<p><u>A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote a stable senior services and health care workforce and appealing employment opportunities for seniors, and will develop policies, programs, and activities to work toward these goals.</u></p>
	<p><u>B. Information and education will be provided to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors, as well as to educational institutions and employment agencies, about how individuals can access opportunities to become part of the senior services workforce and how seniors can find jobs in their communities.</u></p>
	<p><u>C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that a stable senior services workforce is in place as increasing numbers of Alaskans join the senior population, and to promote the employment of seniors.</u></p>

<p>6. Older Alaskans are safe from catastrophic events and protected from personal exploitation, neglect, and abuse.</p>	<p><u>A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of risks to seniors' safety and security, and to develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance the safety and security of seniors in their communities and in their homes.</u></p>
	<p><u>B. Information and education will be provided to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors to encourage awareness of risks to safety and security as well as knowledge of how to respond and who to turn to in the event of such a threat.</u></p>
	<p><u>C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that the safety and security of seniors are protected.</u></p>

Goal 1: Alaska seniors stay healthy, active, and involved in their communities.

Objective A. Agency and community partnerships:

(FY 08) **Healthy Body/Healthy Brain Campaign Begins.** The Healthy Body/Healthy Brain Campaign, a joint public awareness effort with the Division of Public Health, the Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska, and the Trust, was initiated this year to educate seniors and baby boomers about ways to enhance their brain health and reduce the risk of Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD) by making lifestyle changes with respect to nutrition, physical activity, mental stimulation, and social engagement. Activities included developing and distributing posters and bookmarks to senior centers and health care facilities; developing a standardized curriculum that health centers and other agencies can use to educate the public about the latest research on ADRD and ways to make lifestyle changes to improve brain health; surveying the public about their knowledge of ADRD and related lifestyle risks through surveys and the BRFSS (ongoing); developing a page on ACoA's website devoted to publishing information from the latest research findings and Campaign activities; delivered a presentation at the statewide Legislative Health Caucus; highlighted the Campaign at the May 1st "Celebrate Older Americans Month in Alaska 2008" event. ([Strategy 1.A.1](#))

(FY 08) **Agencies Partner for Senior Oral Health Assessment Project.** Public Health partnered with the Alaska Commission on Aging,

Senior & Disabilities Services, Pioneer Homes, AARP, and Older Persons Action Group to submit a grant application seeking federal funding for an initial assessment of older Alaskans' dental health care needs and access to services. The grant was selected for funding and activities are currently underway. ([Strategy 1.A.1](#))

(FY 08) Public Health Supplies Health Promotion Information and Materials. The Division of Public Health regularly provides information and resources to the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) regarding health promotion and disease prevention topics. The information and resources are then made available through the ACoA's website and quarterly newsletter. DPH also collaborates with ACoA on development of Healthy Body/Healthy Brain Campaign materials. ([Strategy 1.A.1](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Work to Prevent Falls. Falls are a major concern for residents and staff of the Pioneer Homes. They have implemented a fall prevention program in all of the homes. Staff are diligent about identifying and removing fall hazards. Fall occurrences are reported and tracked. The root cause of the fall is analyzed and measures are implemented to prevent future falls. Falls in all the Pioneer Homes are below the national average for similar facilities. A zero-lift program is being piloted in the Palmer Home; this program is expected to reduce the number of injuries to residents and staff when a resident is moved. ([Strategy 1.A.3](#))

(FY 08) Alaska Commission on Aging, Public Health, and Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska Promote Healthy Brain Awareness. Activities to promote the Healthy Body/Healthy Brain Campaign are underway by multiple agencies to provide education about brain health and reduce the risk of ADRD. ([Strategy 1.A.4](#))

(FY 08) Public Health Presents on Healthy Aging at Health Summit. The Division of Public Health gave a presentation on healthy aging at the 2007 Health Summit. They provided information and distributed materials regarding the Healthy Body/Healthy Brain Campaign. ([Strategy 1.A.4](#))

(FY 08) AHFC Funds Senior-Friendly Campaign. AHFC provided \$5,000 to the UAA Center for Human Development's Geriatric Education Center and to the Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission to create the "senior friendly" campaign in the Anchorage area. The purpose of the program, which began Sept. 1, 2007, was to increase and promote senior friendly business practices within Anchorage's retail sector by providing improved services to older adults. ([Strategy 1.A.6](#))

Objective B. Education and public awareness strategies:

(FY09) **Public Health and Alaska Commission on Aging Promote Statewide Senior Fall Prevention Program.** Falls are the number one injury causing hospitalization among seniors and a top cause of brain injury. ACoA submitted a budget recommendation to the Trust and to the Department of Health and Social Services for funds to plan and implement a senior falls prevention program to provide education, medication and low-impact exercise programs (to improve balance and coordination) to help keep seniors safe from falls. ([Strategy 1.B.1](#))

(FY 08) **Public Health Participates in Legislative Health Fair.** The Division of Public Health participated in the Legislative Health Fair. Its exhibit provided information and distributed materials regarding the Healthy Body/Healthy Brain Campaign to legislators and staff who attended for health information and screening. ([Strategy 1.B.1](#))

(FY 08) **Public Health Promotes Healthy Body/Healthy Brain.** Public Health participated in the Nation of Wellness event at the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium. Public Health provided information and distributed materials regarding the Healthy Body/Healthy Brain Campaign. ([Strategy 1.B.2](#))

(FY 08) **Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) and AARP Supports Financial Education for Seniors.** AHFC and AARP present money management, financial planning and estate planning classes for seniors. For the second year in a row, AHFC will offer trainings in 14 communities during FY 09. ([Strategy 1.B.3](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Promotes Healthy Brain Education.** The Alaska Commission on Aging developed a Healthy Body/Healthy Brain section on its website, devoted to information about lifestyle factors which contribute to development of (or prevention of) Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD). The Commission is encouraging senior centers and community health centers to provide Healthy Body/Healthy Brain information to seniors and baby boomers, and to engage senior center participants in "brain games" on a regular basis. ([Strategy 1.B.4](#))

(FY 08) **Public Health Promotes Senior Participation in President's Fitness Challenge.** Public Health actively promoted the participation of seniors in the 2008 President's Challenge, a fitness competition that encouraged every U.S. resident to engage in physical activity daily. The state of Alaska finished in first place! ([Strategy 1.B.4](#))

(FY 08) **Pioneer Homes Emphasize Preventive Care.** Pioneer Home residents are encouraged to use Medicare or other insurance to obtain preventive services. Pioneer Home direct care staff evaluate and monitor

residents and can recommend a visit to the proper health care provider before a medical/dental situation becomes critical. Transportation can be arranged for those residents who need it. Most Pioneer Home residents have been able to receive preventive health care. Some homes have made arrangements to have doctors come to the home so residents can take advantage of this service without having to leave the home. ([Strategy 1.B.8](#))

(FY 08) Alaska GEC Sponsors Numerous Training Activities. Among the many training activities sponsored or co-sponsored by the Alaska Geriatric Education Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage were: the annual Care of the Elderly Conference (“Living Longer, Living Well: Taking a Look at Health Issues in Aging”) in Sitka, lectures at the Alaska Health Summit (“Aging & Nutrition” and “Prevention is Primary”), presentations at the Lilly Arctic Institute on Innovations & Excellence in Teaching – Celebrating Adult Learning & Culture Attunement, and the 2008 Promoting Best Practices in Aging & Healthy Communities Conference – a two-day statewide training held at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. (Strategy 1.B.Other)

(FY 08) ABADA/AMHB/ACoA/DBH Publish Senior Suicide Article. Staff of ABADA/Alaska Mental Health Board, the Alaska Commission on Aging, and the Division of Behavioral Health authored a well-received feature article for the Senior Voice (circulated to over 10,000 Alaska seniors) discussing the senior suicide statistics for Alaska as well as warning signs to look for and suggested responses when a friend or loved one appears suicidal. (Strategy 1.B.Other)

Objective C. Advocacy activities:

(FY 08) LTCO Advocates for Financial Safety Nets for Seniors. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman’s Office takes every opportunity in every forum to push for enhanced financial benefits and safety nets for seniors. These subjects are raised at training sessions that are done by the LTCO. ([Strategy 1.C.1](#))

(FY 08) AARP, the Trust, and ACoA Advocate for Range of Safety Net Bills. Senior advocates successfully supported HB 208 and SB 289 (energy assistance legislation) and full funding for Senior Benefits for the second half of FY 08 as well as FY 09. ([Strategy 1.C.1](#))

(FY 08) Alaska Senior Advocates Brief Congressional Staff on Medicare Problems. The Alaska Commission on Aging, Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission, and AgeNet representatives met with staff members of Alaska’s Congressional delegation in Washington, DC and discussed problems related to Medicare that affect primary care access for seniors in Alaska, and potential strategies to improve access. Federal

legislation later addressed this issue, with providers scheduled to receive an increased Medicare reimbursement rate in January, 2009. ([Strategy 1.C.1](#))

(FY 08) **Pioneer Homes Upgrade Facilities, Offers Payment Assistance Subsidies.** The Pioneer Homes offer a safety net for Alaska seniors. Senior Pioneer Home staff petitioned the Legislature for adequate capital and operating funds to continue to provide a safe and secure environment for residents. Applicants to a Home are screened for eligibility for Medicare, Medicaid, veteran benefits, and any other federal benefit to mitigate resident cost of care. The Pioneer Home Payment Assistance subsidizes the cost of care of residents who cannot afford to pay the full charge so that no residents are evicted. The Pioneer Homes received capital funding in FY 09 for repair of the roof of the Sitka Home, for a zero-lift pilot program in Palmer, and for deferred maintenance in all the homes. Adequate operating funds were also received. ([Strategy 1.C.1](#))

(FY 08) **AARP & ACoA Discuss Universal Health Care Bill.** During its 2008 legislative teleconferences, the Alaska Commission on Aging, AARP, and teleconference participants across the state discussed SB 160, a bill to establish universal health care in Alaska. (The bill did not pass.) ([Strategy 1.C.3](#))

(FY 08) **Public Health Obtains Obesity Program Funding.** The Division of Public Health supported a funding request for a statewide obesity program. Funding for the program was received for FY 09. Public Health is seeking collaborators to help distribute information on agency funding possibilities. ([Strategy 1.C.4](#))

(FY 08) **AgeNet, Southeast Senior Services Pursue Changes to State Retiree Long-Term Care Plans.** Southeast Senior Services staff have inquired of the State of Alaska's Retirement and Benefits office and Premera Blue Cross how the long-term care plan for State retirees might be modified so that Alaska's home- and community-based services are covered under the plan. AgeNet testified regarding this issue during the HCBS Strategies Community Forum. They are also in discussion with several fellow AgeNet members (Kodiak Senior Citizens Inc., Serendipity Adult Day Center and others) to have an Adult Day Conference which would include this as one of the topics for discussion and advocacy. ([Strategy 1.C.8](#))

Goal 2: Older Alaskans have access to health and social supports along the continuum of care.

Objective A. Agency and community partnerships:

(FY 08) AgeNet Supports Incorporation of Senior Agencies into ADRC Network. AgeNet regularly discusses ADRCs in its meetings, wanting senior service agencies to be incorporated as ADRC providers. AgeNet members also testified regarding this matter during the HCBS Strategies recommendation hearings. ([Strategy 2.A.1](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Advocates for ADRC Funding. The Alaska Commission on Aging, along with its agency partners, advocated successfully for State funding to support the Aging and Disability Resource Centers as they transition from management by AHFC and the State Independent Living Council to management by Senior & Disabilities Services after September 30, 2008. ([Strategy 2.A.1](#))

(FY 08) AHFC Supports Regional ADRCs. All activities related to Alaska's Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) were funded through a federal grant managed by AHFC through September 30, 2008. (At that time, the ADRCs will transition to management by Senior & Disabilities Services.) Regional ADRCs continued their linkage with area senior centers where possible. A new ADRC site was created with supplemental funding in FY 08, serving the Southeast Alaska region. ([Strategy 2.A.1](#))

(FY 08) ADRAA Advocates Waiver for Individuals with ADRD, and Medicare Rate Changes to Facilitate Primary Care. The Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska continues to advocate for the establishment of a Medicaid waiver program for individuals with ADRD. The agency met with DHSS staff to share thoughts as to how assessment could be modified or level of care modified to ensure Medicaid coverage for people with ADRD. In addition, ADRAA advocates for increased funding for senior home- and community-based grants, and advocates at the federal level for Medicare changes to benefit Alaska seniors. The Department of Health & Social Services has stated that creation of such a waiver for people with ADRD is one of their 2009 priorities. Also, Alaska's physicians will see a permanent 35% increase in Medicare reimbursement rates as of January, 2009, thanks to changes in federal law. ([Strategy 2.A.3](#))

(FY 08, FY 09) AgeNet Supports Waiver Modification to Include ADRD. One of AgeNet's priorities in FY 08 and FY 09 is to convince the State of Alaska to modify the Medicaid waiver to include as eligible persons with Alzheimer's disease as a primary diagnosis. During the 2008 legislative session, they discussed this issue with key staff at the Governor's Office, Alaska DHSS, Senior & Disabilities Services, and with legislators. During FY 09, they have met with key SDS and ACoA staff to develop strategy. This is another issue AgeNet highlighted during its testimony to consultant HCBS Strategies. This is has continued to be one

of two priorities for Juneau's Community Resource Network (a senior service provider network). ([Strategy 2.A.3](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Helps Obtain \$1 Million Increment to Senior Grants Budget Base. The Alaska Commission on Aging, along with AgeNet, AARP and other agency partners, successfully advocated for a \$1 million increment to the operating budget base to support senior home- and community-based grant-funded services, which help many seniors with ADRD as a primary diagnosis who are not eligible for the Medicaid waiver. ([Strategy 2.A.3](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Pushes for ADRD and TBI Waiver. The Alaska Commission on Aging continues to advocate for development of a Medicaid waiver covering individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) and those with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). These individuals are not currently served by existing waivers. In its budget recommendations to the Trust and the Department of Health & Social Services, ACoA has proposed adding or modifying a waiver to cover these populations. The Pacific Health Policy Group's report, supported by funds from SB 61 in 2007, recommended development of an ADRD waiver to enhance federal funds for the Pioneer Home system. The Department of Health & Social Services will examine the feasibility of an ADRD waiver as part of a long-term care study being undertaken in 2008. ([Strategy 2.A.3](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Supports Waiver for Individuals with ADRD. The Pioneer Homes continue to advocate for a Medicaid waiver for seniors with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD). Currently most seniors who are income-eligible for Medicaid and have a primary diagnosis of ADRD qualify for a waiver only in the latter stages of the disease. ([Strategy 2.A.3](#))

(FY 08) ANTHC Plans for HCBS and Array of LTC Services. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is working on a plan for home- and community-based services within the tribal health system that includes the whole array of long-term care services. ([Strategy 2.A.3](#))

(FY 08) LTCO Developing Quality Improvement Plan for Assisted Living Homes. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office is currently emphasizing quality improvement for Alaska's assisted living services. The LTCO has begun an Assisted Living Home Improvement Incentives Project that would rate all assisted living homes in the state and provide a higher reimbursement rate for those that provide good or excellent or outstanding care and services to their residents. A workgroup consisting of the heads of State of Alaska Medicaid Quality Improvement, State Assisted Living Licensing, the LTCO, and the president of the Assisted Living Home Association of Alaska is in the process of identifying measurable standards of care and services that would be used to rate (on a five-star system)

assisted living homes and provide evidence for higher reimbursement rates. ([Strategy 2.A.4](#))

(FY 08) ABADA/AMHBD Collaborate on Senior Behavioral Health Projects. ABADA/AMHBD collaborated with the Alaska Commission on Aging to propose senior behavioral health projects based on the IMPACT and SBIRT models. IMPACT (Improving Mood – Promoting Access to Collaborative Treatment) applies a proven model of depression identification and care for seniors, based in the primary care setting. SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment) utilizes an evidence-based model for reaching older adults with substance abuse issues, also based in community primary care and emergency settings. In addition, ABADA/AMHB and ACoA co-designed a senior tele-behavioral health project which would make it possible to treat seniors in remote rural areas of the state with behavioral health needs. If funding is approved, the projects will begin in FY 10. ([Strategy 2.A.6](#))

(FY 08) ABADA/AMHB Joins Senior Behavioral Health Coalition. ABADA/Alaska Mental Health Board joined a senior behavioral health coalition formed to help design and plan a behavioral health program for Akeela, a non-profit provider agency. The program will focus on seniors with substance abuse needs. ([Strategy 2.A.6](#))

(FY 08) ABADA/AMHB Supports Senior Behavioral Health Outreach Project. ABADA/Alaska Mental Health Board worked with the Alaska Commission on Aging and the Division of Behavioral Health to design the SOAR (Senior Outreach, Assessment and Referral) Project, which the 2008 Legislature funded and which will be implemented by DBH. [This project is now known as the Senior Behavioral Health Project.] The project includes a community gatekeeper component, in which community members who have regular contact with seniors will be trained to help identify those who may need behavioral health intervention. ([Strategy 2.A.7](#))

(FY 08) Senior Behavioral Health a Priority for Southeast Senior Services (SESS). Although AgeNet (of which SESS is a member) did not pursue this issue as one of its priorities in FY 08, enhancing senior behavioral health programs continues to be a priority of Southeast Senior Services. ([Strategy 2.A.6](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Proposes Senior Behavioral Health Project. In combination with Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, ACoA advocated successfully for funding in the legislative budget for the SOAR (Senior Outreach, Assessment and Referral) Project to provide community gatekeeper training and referral services targeting seniors at risk for depression and other behavioral health needs to be administered by Behavioral Health. ([Strategy 2.A.6](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Participates in Comprehensive Mental Health Plan Process. The Alaska Commission on Aging participates in the ongoing development and refinement of the State's Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan along with numerous agency partners. The Comp Plan provides guidance for resource allocation of State funds to improve services for Trust beneficiaries. ([Strategy 2.A.6](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Advocates for Senior Behavioral Health Project. The Alaska Commission on Aging, with the Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and Behavioral Health, developed and advocated for the SOAR (Senior Outreach, Assessment and Referral) Project, which includes a community gatekeeper training component. Funding for the SOAR Project was included in the budget approved by the 2008 Legislature. ACoA worked with Behavioral Health to develop the project design and RFP along with plans for project sustainability. ([Strategy 2.A.7](#))

(FY 08) AgeNet Members Work to Coordinate Community Transportation. Several members of AgeNet have been quite involved in transportation coordination efforts in their communities, although this has not been an official AgeNet priority. ([Strategy 2.A.8](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Encourage MOAs with Local Transportation Agencies. Pioneer Home residents are responsible for arranging their own transportation, however, two of the homes have memoranda of agreement with local transportation agencies which agree to provide residents with the ability to travel to medical appointments, shop, run errands, etc. ([Strategy 2.A.8](#))

(FY 08) Southeast Senior Services Provides Recommendations to Health Planning Council. Southeast Senior Services, through one of its members, Dr. Bob Urata, submitted recommendations to the Health Care Strategies Planning Council in 2007. [The Council's mandate was not extended beyond December 31, 2007; its final report may be found at http://www.hss.state.ak.us/commissioner/legislature/pdf/HCSPC_report.pdf.] ([Strategy 2.A.10](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Provides Recommendations to Health Care Strategies Planning Council. Based on the outcomes of the first State Plan Implementation meeting in November 2007, the Alaska Commission on Aging provided written recommendations and in-person testimony on senior health care priorities to the Governor's Health Care Strategies Planning Council (which sunsetted at the end of 2007). ([Strategy 2.A.10](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Participates in Fairbanks Gap Analysis Project. The Alaska Commission on Aging serves on a task force with the Fairbanks

North Star Borough to conduct a long-term care study that will describe existing senior services and identify those needed in the Borough. ([Strategy 2.A.11](#))

(FY 08) **AgeNet Members Involved with Coordinated Transportation.** Several members of AgeNet have been quite involved with the Alaska Department of Transportation in promoting coordinated transportation in communities with Title III grants. ([Strategy 2.A.12](#))

(FY 08) **AgeNet Seeks Incorporation of Senior Agencies as ADRC Providers.** AgeNet regularly discusses ADRCs in its meetings, wanting senior service agencies to be incorporated as ADRC providers. AgeNet members also testified regarding this matter during the HCBS Strategies recommendation hearings. ([Strategy 2.A.13](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Supports Senior Center Inclusion in ADRC Efforts.** The Alaska Commission on Aging has advocated for inclusion of senior centers along with independent living centers to comprise the ADRC network of care. ([Strategy 2.A.13](#))

(FY 08) **AHFC Supports Regional ADRCs.** All activities related to Alaska's Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) were funded through a federal grant managed by AHFC through September 30, 2008. (At that time the ADRCs will transition to management by Senior & Disabilities Services.) Regional ADRCs continued their linkage with area senior centers where possible. A new ADRC site was created with supplemental funding in FY 08, serving the Southeast Alaska region. ([Strategy 2.A.13](#))

Objective B. Education and public awareness strategies:

(FY 08) **ACoA Advises on ADRC Transition.** The Alaska Commission on Aging participates in monthly ADRC grantee meetings and serves on the advisory council planning the transition of ADRC management from AHFC and the State Independent Living Council (SILC) to the State of Alaska's SDS (Senior & Disabilities Services). ACoA also served on the proposal evaluation committee to award a new ADRC grant, which is a partnership between senior centers and independent living programs. ACoA, with its agency partners, advocated successfully for State funding to support the ADRCs. ([Strategy 2.B.1](#))

(FY 08) **AHFC Supports Regional ADRCs.** All activities related to Alaska's Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) were funded through a federal grant managed by AHFC through September 30, 2008. (At that time the ADRCs will transition to management by Senior & Disabilities Services.) Regional ADRCs continued their linkage with area senior centers where possible. A new ADRC site was created with

supplemental funding in FY 08, serving the Southeast Alaska region. ([Strategy 2.B.1](#))

(FY 08) ADRAA Responds to Increase in Information/Assistance Requests. The Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska saw a 68% increase in the number of requests for information and assistance during FY 08. During that time period they conducted 142 public awareness events that reached 1,737 people. The agency also began offering mental fitness groups at locations throughout the state. ([Strategy 2.B.3](#))

(FY 08) Alaska GEC Sponsors Numerous Training Activities. Among the many training activities sponsored or co-sponsored by the Alaska Geriatric Education Center at the University of Alaska Anchorage were: three ADRD Distance-Delivered Certificate Program courses, a Senior Companions training in Palmer, three Certified Eden Associate Trainings, an Alaska Family Medicine/WWAMI Medical Residency didactic presentation by Dr. Loren Lipson, a three-credit distance-delivered course on "Intro to Dementia," a two-day training in Soldotna ("Alzheimer's Pieces of the Puzzle"), a three-hour presentation by Dr. Peter Lichtenberg ("Recognition and Screening for Depression and Cognitive Impairments in Late Life") at the Behavioral Sciences Conference of the North, a four-hour simulation experiential training for caregivers at the Island Cove Adult Day Center in Kodiak ("Hearing Voices That Are Distressing"), and twelve half-day on-site trainings on "Understanding and Responding to Challenging Behaviors Related to Alzheimer's Disease." (Strategy 2.B.Other)

Objective C. Advocacy activities:

(FY 08) AgeNet Testifies at Community Forums. AgeNet testified during the HCBS Strategies community forums, as the DHSS consultant gathered input on long-term care issues statewide. ([Strategy 2.C.1](#))

(FY08) The Department of Health and Social Services, Medical and Health Policy Unit administers State funds to develop a Long-Term Care Planning Effort. The Medical and Health Policy Unit and its Steering Committee administered funds from SB61 to hire a contractor to perform a study of long-term care services available to existing Medicaid eligible populations in addition to those with emerging needs such as elders with mental illness, people with traumatic injuries and other cognitive disabilities, and the aging population leaving the correctional systems. Interviews with key stakeholders and community forums were conducted to develop a report of recommendations for a three-year action plan of ways to improve the delivery system and achieve sustainability. ([Strategy 2.C.1](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Joins Several Long-Term Care Planning Efforts.

The Alaska Commission on Aging is participating in three long-term care planning activities being conducted by (1) DHSS (to complete a 3- to 5-year planning document focused on those traditionally served by the long-term care system and those with emerging needs such as seniors with behavioral health needs and aging inmates of the correctional system); (2) Fairbanks North Star Borough (to examine the long-term care system in Fairbanks, identify unmet needs, and provide recommendations to enhance services); and (3) a public/private partnership of the Rasmuson Foundation, Alaska State Nursing Home Association, ACoA, the Trust, AARP, and DHSS to develop a long-range 20-year statewide plan for senior services. ([Strategy 2.C.1](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Participates in Long-Term Care Strategic Planning.

The Pioneer Homes are very interested and involved in implementing a long-term care strategic plan for Alaska. SB 61 (in 2007) appropriated funding for a long-term care plan and a contractor was hired to assist in developing one. Key Pioneer Home staff met with the contractor and provided information and input to the process. The contractor has met with other divisions in DHSS, focus groups and other stakeholders, and surveyed consumers and providers of long-term care services. They have developed a flow chart which identifies Pioneer Home processes and a matrix which outlines possible federal funding strategies. ([Strategy 2.C.1](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Supports Higher Medicare Rates. The Alaska Commission on Aging met with staff members of Senators Stevens, Murkowski, and Representative Young, presenting four priority advocacy issues of concern to Alaska seniors. Access to primary health care for older Alaskans was the top priority identified. Alaska's Congressional delegation assured ACoA that access to primary care for seniors and increasing Medicare reimbursement rates for Alaska's physicians was a top priority for them. Amanda Makki, staff member of Senator Murkowski's office, participated in ACoA's legislative teleconference and presented updates regarding the Medicare issue and steps Senators Murkowski and Stevens were taking to increase federal reimbursement rates. Federal legislation ultimately provided for increased reimbursement for providers beginning in January 2009. ([Strategy 2.C.2](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Promotes Community Health Center Funding. The Alaska Commission on Aging, along with its advocacy partners, advocated successfully for additional funding to support Alaska's Community Health Centers, which offer primary care services to Medicare recipients. ([Strategy 2.C.3](#))

(FY08) ANTHC advises the Department of Health and Social Services of long-term care needs of rural elders. The Alaska Native

Tribal Health Consortium is collaborating with the Department to strengthen the home- and community-based continuum of care for rural elders by exploring strategies to promote program sustainability. ([Strategy 2.C.3](#))

(FY 08) **AgeNet Gathers Data to Show Senior Needs.** AgeNet has gathered and contributed data to demonstrate senior needs and to identify barriers. AgeNet collaborates with the ACoA and other groups to arrive at meaningful data which will prove helpful in advocacy efforts. ([Strategy 2.C.4](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Estimates Seniors in Need of Services.** The Alaska Commission on Aging gathers information on the number of seniors in need of various services or, if necessary, estimates such figures using national prevalence data. This information is used to support budget recommendations to the Department of Health & Social Services, the Trust, and the Legislature, in addition to being reported in the DHSS Comprehensive Integrated Mental Health Plan. ([Strategy 2.C.4](#))

(FY 08) **AHFC Supports Regional ADRCs.** All activities related to Alaska's Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) were funded through a federal grant managed by AHFC through September 30, 2008. (At that time, the ADRCs will transition to management by Senior & Disabilities Services.) Regional ADRCs continued their linkage with area senior centers where possible. A new ADRC site was created with supplemental funding in FY 08, serving the Southeast Alaska region. ([Strategy 2.C.4](#))

(FY 08) **ADRAA Supports Increased HCBS Funding.** The Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska worked with many agency partners to advocate for increased senior home- and community-based services funding during the 2008 legislative session. The agency participated in AgeNet's legislative fly-in (where advocates come to Juneau to meet with legislators and staff), and hosted a meet-and-greet with legislators, and met with legislators at their home offices. The effort resulted in a \$1 million increase to the senior HCBS grants budget base. ADRAA will continue its advocacy for funding increases to the senior grants program. ([Strategy 2.C.5](#))

(FY 08) **AgeNet Advocacy Helps Secure More Funding for Senior Grants.** AgeNet joined the ACoA and other groups during the 2008 legislative session to advocate for increased funding for senior home- and community-based grants. The Legislature added \$1 million to the budget base for the senior grants. Increased grant funding to catch up with increased costs and the future funding shift (because of a changing state plan funding formula) is a legislative priority for AgeNet again in FY 09. ([Strategy 2.C.5](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Helps Increase Senior Grants Budget Base. ACoA's FACES (Family And Community Elder Supports) Initiative, included in the 2008 legislative budget and supported by the Trust, the Department of Health & Social Services, AARP, and AgeNet, will provide a \$1 million increment to the operating budget base to support senior grant-funded home- and community-based services. This advocacy effort, which was ACoA's #1 priority for the 2008 session, was presented in budget recommendations to the Department and to the Trust and included preparation of position papers, provider surveys, coordination of agency partners, and grassroots support, meetings with administrative staff and legislators, submission of support letters to legislators and the Office of Management and Budget, among other advocacy efforts. During its February 2008 meeting, ACoA commissioners met with 38 legislators to encourage support for the FACES Initiative. ([Strategy 2.C.5](#))

(FY 08) ADRAA Advocates Waiver for Individuals with ADRD, and Medicare Rate Changes to Facilitate Primary Care. The Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska continues to advocate for the establishment of a Medicaid waiver program for individuals with ADRD. The agency met with DHSS staff to share thoughts as to how assessment could be modified or level of care modified to ensure Medicaid coverage for people with ADRD. In addition, ADRAA advocates for increased funding for senior home- and community-based grants, and advocates at the federal level for Medicare changes to benefit Alaska seniors. The Department of Health & Social Services has stated that creation of such a waiver for people with ADRD is one of their 2009 priorities. Also, Alaska's physicians will see a permanent 35% increase in Medicare reimbursement rates as of January, 2009, thanks to changes in federal law. ([Strategy 2.C.7](#))

(FY 08) LTCO Advocates Creation of ADRD/TBI Waiver. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office supports the creation of an ADRD/TBI Medicaid waiver. The Office will continue work on this strategy during FY 09. ([Strategy 2.C.7](#))

(FY 08) AgeNet Prioritizes ADRD Waiver. Support for creation of an ADRD Medicaid waiver was an AgeNet legislative priority during the 2008 session and is one of AgeNet's administrative priorities for FY 09. ([Strategy 2.C.7](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Pushes for ADRD and TBI Waiver. The Alaska Commission on Aging continues to advocate for development of a Medicaid waiver covering individuals with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) and those with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). These individuals are not currently served by existing waivers. In its budget recommendations to the Trust and the Department of Health &

Social Services, ACoA has proposed adding or modifying a waiver to cover these populations. The Pacific Health Policy Group's report, supported by funds from SB 61 in 2007, recommended development of an ADRD waiver to enhance federal funds for the Pioneer Home system. The Department of Health & Social Services will examine the feasibility of an ADRD waiver as part of a long-term care study being undertaken in 2008. ([Strategy 2.C.7](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Supports Waiver for Individuals with ADRD. The Pioneer Homes continue to advocate for a Medicaid waiver for seniors with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD). Currently most seniors who are income-eligible for Medicaid and have a primary diagnosis of ADRD with no other qualifying medical conditions are not covered by the waiver. A waiver for persons with ADRD would provide services to help the individual live at home for an extended period of time and provide support to their family caregivers. ([Strategy 2.C.7](#))

(FY 08) AgeNet Seeks Statewide Geriatric Training. AgeNet supports geriatric training opportunities for home- and community-based services staff but finds difficulty accessing such training outside of Anchorage. AgeNet plans to write a grant to fund some training for Alaska's Adult Day programs. ([Strategy 2.C.9](#))

(FY 08) LTCO Supports Increased Workforce for LTC System. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office supports creating a workforce sufficient for Alaska's long-term care system, including assisted living homes, nursing homes, and home- and community-based services. As part of its Assisted Living Home Improvement Incentives Project, the LTCO is addressing measurable standards to rate ALHs. The standards will include training of administrators and staff at higher levels to warrant higher ratings, if earned, with which consumers may compare quality of homes and which may potentially equate to higher reimbursement rates by the State. The LTCO also provides input as requested to the Mental Health Trust's grant to the UAA Geriatric Education Center, which is developing a Workforce Development model to be used to train current and future caregivers. ([Strategy 2.C.10](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Supports Increment to Senior Grants. The Alaska Commission on Aging supported the addition of State funds to the Senior Home- and Community-Based Grants program to help senior services providers keep up with rising costs such as staff pay, to help improve staff retention and recruitment, directly benefiting seniors. A \$1 million increment was added by the 2008 Legislature. ([Strategy 2.C.10](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Surveys Providers on Workforce Issues. The Alaska Commission on Aging collected data from senior services providers in 2007 regarding employee issues such as salaries, benefits, recruitment,

and retention. Responses revealed difficulty in finding and keeping qualified staff. ([Strategy 2.C.10](#))

(FY 08) Agencies Advocate for Crisis Response Project. The Alaska Commission on Aging and the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education advocated for funding of the Crisis Response Project to provide training for long-term care providers who care for elders and disabled persons with mental illness and other behavioral health needs. An ACoA survey of assisted living homes in late 2007 found that aggressive residents presented a problem for the majority of them, and most wanted access to training that would help their staff learn to defuse these troubling incidents. Few assisted living facilities, including the Pioneer Homes, and most nursing facilities, are not licensed to provide care for persons with mental illness. The project was not funded by the 2008 Legislature. ([Strategy 2.C.10](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Support Efforts to Increase Staff Recruitment/ Retention. As an employer of health care professionals, the Pioneer Homes are very interested in having an adequate pool of qualified candidates from which to hire. Recruitment and retention of these valuable employees is an important issue for the Pioneer Homes. They have advocated for competitive salaries for their staff, obtaining a salary increase for registered nurses in FY 2007. And they have also worked with the University of Alaska and the federal Department of Labor to implement a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) Apprenticeship Program. The CNA Apprenticeship Program is currently in its first year. ([Strategy 2.C.10](#))

(FY 08) Senior Coalition Advocate for Increased Medicare Reimbursement Rates. The Alaska Commission on Aging, AARP, and others have continually advocated for improvements in the Medicare reimbursement rates for physicians and medical providers. Federal legislation passed in 2008 will result in higher Medicare reimbursement rates beginning in January 2009. ([Strategy 2.C.11](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Support Increase in Medicare Rates. Many seniors in Alaska cannot find a primary medical care provider in their community who accepts the rate Medicare pays. Therefore, the Pioneer Homes support an increase in Alaska's Medicare reimbursement rates. Federal legislation passed in 2008 will result in higher Medicare reimbursement rates beginning in January 2009. ([Strategy 2.C.11](#))

(FY 08) ACoA Advocates Person-Centered Care. The Alaska Commission on Aging advocates for person-centered long-term care through its participation in long-term care planning efforts currently underway. ([Strategy 2.C.12](#))

(FY 08) ANTHC Adopts Resident-Centered Care Model for Long-Term Care. The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium supports resident-centered care models for long-term care facilities. They have a contractor doing a financial feasibility study for a nursing home/assisted living home in Anchorage and are requiring that the contractor use the Green House model and two other resident-centered care models. ([Strategy 2.C.12](#))

(FY 08) Pioneer Homes Seek Fast-Track Waiver Approvals. As a provider of residential supported living services under the Older Alaskans Medicaid waiver, Pioneer Homes' management noted that it often takes up to two months after the application is submitted to receive a prior authorization from Senior & Disabilities Services. Since waiver reimbursement does not start until the date of the prior authorization, this time delay results in the loss of hundreds of dollars per application. The Pioneer Homes have made the long-term care contractor aware of this issue. The long-term care contractor intends to recommend an expedited approval process for waiver services. ([Strategy 2.C.13](#))

(FY 08) SESS Supports Alaska-Focused Changes to Long-Term Care Insurance Plans. Southeast Senior Services staff have inquired of the State of Alaska's Division of Retirement and Benefits and Premier Blue Cross how the long-term care insurance plan for State retirees might be modified so that the types of home- and community-based services offered in Alaska might be covered under the plan. [Adult day programs must have an R.N. on staff to be covered under the plan; however, the small adult day programs in Alaska typically do not have this type of staffing.] AgeNet testified regarding this issue during the HCBS Strategies Community Forum. SESS is also in discussion with several fellow AgeNet members (Kodiak, Serendipity Adult Day, etc.) to have an Adult Day Conference which would include this as one of the topics for discussion and advocacy. ([Strategy 2.C.14](#))

(FY 08) AgeNet Successfully Calls for Higher Reimbursement Rates. During the 2008 legislative session, increased reimbursement rates for Medicaid waiver providers was a top AgeNet priority. The Legislature did provide for an increase. AgeNet's number one priority for the FY 09 session is to obtain automatic rate increases similar to what nursing homes receive by statute. AgeNet has joined with other provider groups in a coalition to advocate for a statute which would review Medicaid reimbursement rates each year and automatically increase rates annually, as is currently done with nursing homes. They are seeking a legislator to sponsor the bill. ([Strategy 2.C.17](#))

(FY 08) ACoA, AgeNet, the Trust, and AARP Support Increase in Medicaid Waiver Rates. This senior advocate coalition advocated for an increase in Medicaid waiver reimbursement rates for senior services

providers during the 2008 legislative session. An increase in rates was approved by the Legislature. ([Strategy 2.C.17](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Advocates for Pioneer Homes Upgrades.** Members of the Alaska Commission on Aging advocated to legislators in support of capital items in the budget for the Pioneer Homes. The FY 09 capital budget contained over \$5 million for the Pioneer Homes' deferred maintenance and equipment. ([Strategy 2.C.18](#))

(FY 08) **Pioneers' Homes Request and Receive Funds for Facility Repair.** Senior Pioneer Home staff petitioned the 2008 legislature for adequate capital and operating funding to continue to provide a safe and secure environment for the residents. The Pioneer Homes received capital funding for FY 09 for repair of the roof of the Sitka home, for a zero-lift program in Palmer, and for deferred maintenance in all the homes. Adequate operational funding was also received. ([Strategy 2.C.18](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Advocates for Increased Provider Rates.** The Alaska Commission on Aging participated in meetings with Myers and Stauffer, a consulting firm hired by the Department of Health & Social Services to review rates for all home- and community-based providers. The Commission also advocated for increased rates during the FY 08 legislative session. ([Strategy 2.C.20](#))

(FY 08) **Pioneer Homes Support Medicaid Reimbursement Rate Review conducted by Senior and Disabilities' contractor.** The Pioneer Homes support a review of the Medicaid reimbursement rates. The Division of Senior & Disabilities Services contracted with Myers and Stauffer to conduct a review of the Medicaid reimbursement rates. The final recommendation will be delivered in early FY 09. ([Strategy 2.C.20](#))

Goal 3: Families are supported in their efforts to care for loved ones at home and in the community.

Objective A. Agency and community partnerships:

(FY 08) **ADRAA Provides Caregiver Support and Services.** The Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska provided a variety of caregiver support services and in-home services for Alaskans caring for a loved one with ADRD. Client surveys found that 91% of caregivers receiving respite services from ADRAA were positively impacted in their ability to care for their family member in the home. ([Strategy 3.A.1](#))

(FY 08) **Funding for Senior Grants Offers Additional Operating Funds to Senior Agencies.** The \$1 million budget increment obtained in response to ACoA's FACES campaign provides additional funding to senior provider agencies which support caregivers' efforts. ([Strategy 3.A.1](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Promotes Network of Care Website.** The Alaska Commission on Aging website provides a link to the Network of Care website, which gives information about services in communities across the state for seniors and others in need of long-term care services. ([Strategy 3.A.2](#))

Objective B. Education and public awareness strategies:

(FY 08) **ADRAA Sponsors Caregiver Education Classes.** The Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska aims to provide caregivers for individuals with ADRD with more information and greater skills to help them care for their family member, through a variety of educational program series such as Savvy Caregiver and ABCs of Caregiving. In FY 08, ADRAA held 142 awareness events statewide, with a total of 1,737 participants. Further, 350 caregivers attended education programs. ([Strategy 3.B.1](#))

(FY 08) **Alaska GEC Sponsors Conference on Caregiving and Depression.** The Alaska Geriatric Education Center sponsored its annual Full Lives Conference, with 2008's theme "Caregiving and Depression." Full Lives is directed toward the training needs of family caregivers and individuals working in direct services to seniors and people with disabilities. ([Strategy 3.B.1](#))

Objective C. Advocacy activities:

(FY 08) **ADRAA Supports Increased HCBS Funding.** The Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska worked with many agency partners to advocate for increased senior home- and community-based services funding during the 2008 legislative session. The agency participated in AgeNet's legislative fly-in (where advocates come to Juneau to meet with legislators and staff), and hosted a meet-and-greet with legislators, and met with legislators at their home offices. The effort resulted in a \$1 million increase to the senior HCBS grants budget base. ADRAA will continue its advocacy for funding increases to the senior grants program. ([Strategy 3.C.2](#))

(FY 08) **AgeNet Advocates for Increased Caregiver Program Funding Through Senior Grants.** AgeNet joined the ACoA and other groups last legislative session to advocate for increased funding for senior grants, including caregiver programs. The Legislature added \$1 million to the senior grants program's budget base. Increased grant funding to catch up with increased costs and the future funding shift (based on a new State Plan funding formula) is a legislative priority for AgeNet again in FY 09. ([Strategy 3.C.2](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA FACES Proposal Adds Funding for Caregiver Support Services.** The FACES (Family and Community Elder Supports) increment proposed by ACoA and funded by the 2008 legislature at the \$1 million level includes funding for services that support caregivers, including adult day, respite, and other caregiver support programs. ([Strategy 3.C.2](#))

Goal 4: A range of adequate, accessible, secure and affordable housing options is available to seniors.

Objective A. Agency and community partnerships:

(FY 08) **ANTHC Prepares Rural Long-Term Care Plan.** The Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is working on a statewide plan for tribal health organizations, identifying the need for assisted living and nursing homes based on current population numbers. ([Strategy 4.A.2](#))

(FY 08) **AHFC Offers GOAL Program to Develop Senior Housing.** Alaska Housing Finance Corporation continues to provide extensive training for developers interested in senior and special needs housing across Alaska. As part of the Greater Opportunities for Affordable Living (GOAL) program, these annual trainings provide the latest information as to program requirements and funding availability. Through the GOAL program over the years, many senior developments have been created, thus making affordable housing an option for more senior citizens. ([Strategy 4.A.3](#))

(FY08) **The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, AHFC, and partner agencies advocate for funds to establish a Housing Trust and increase public awareness about Alaska's homeless.** The Housing Trust aims to provide housing and supportive services targeting homeless persons, of which 17% are age 55 and older. ACoA, the Governor's Council, the Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse and others supported and advocated for the Housing Trust through meetings with legislators, support letters, and other efforts. The Trust and AHFC sponsored a Housing Summit in December 2007 to launch this initiative. ([Strategy 4.A.4](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA, Governor's Council Propose Crisis Response Project.** The Alaska Commission on Aging and the Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities and Special Education have advocated for a Crisis Response Project to provide training for long-term care providers who care for elders and disabled persons with mental illness and other behavioral health needs. ACoA conducted a survey of assisted living home providers across the state regarding their service of mentally ill seniors and their desire for further training to serve this population. The majority of providers indicated that helping staff deal with aggressive clients,

whether or not the clients were diagnosed as mentally ill, was a critical priority for them. Few assisted living facilities, including the Pioneer Homes, and nursing homes are licensed to care for mentally ill persons. ([Strategy 4.A.6](#))

(FY 08) **Pioneer Homes Seeks Solutions for Mentally Ill Seniors.** The Pioneer Homes has been asked to accept seniors with mental illness conditions. They currently provide care for persons with Alzheimer's Disease and other dementias. The Homes are not licensed to care for such a population, and their staff is not trained to provide the specialized care needed. Alaska currently does not have adequate services to care for chronically mentally ill individuals who are age 65 or older. This population is not being adequately served. The Pioneer Homes supports agencies coming together to find a solution to this growing need. ([Strategy 4.A.6](#))

Objective B. Education and public awareness strategies:

(FY 08) **AHFC Incorporates Universal Design in GOAL Program.** Alaska Housing Finance Corporation has incorporated the principles of universal design in the trainings and requirements of GOAL (Greater Opportunities for Affordable Living). Universal design principles are stressed in future developments. Information regarding senior housing options and/or accessibility and public housing availability is maintained on AHFC's website. ([Strategy 4.B.2](#))

(FY 08) **AHFC Refers Individuals and Groups to Appropriate Housing Solutions.** The Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Senior Housing Office makes direct referrals and responds to contacts from advocacy groups regarding individual housing needs and solutions, including accessibility, affordability, and energy assistance. This is a continuing activity of the AHFC Senior Housing Office. ([Strategy 4.B.1](#) and [4.B.4](#))

Objective C. Advocacy activities:

(FY 08) **Agencies Update Adult Protective Services Statutes.** The Alaska Commission on Aging is working with Senior and Disabilities Services Adult Protection Services, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office (LTCO), the Department of Law, the Office of Elder Fraud and Abuse, and others to review the state's statutes addressing the protection of vulnerable adults for purposes of strengthening regulations and making recommendations for statute modifications during the 2009 legislative session. ([Strategy 4.C.1](#))

Goal 5: Alaska supports a stable workforce for senior services and health care, as well as a range of attractive employment opportunities for seniors.

Objective A. Agency and community partnerships:

(FY 08) **Trust Workforce Development Committee Brings Partners Together to Advance Direct Service Workforce.** The Alaska Commission on Aging, along with other agencies, participates in the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority's Workforce Development Committee. The University of Alaska's Geriatric Education Center (GEC) is an important partner in this effort. The UA GEC provides training for direct service workers and health care professionals in senior services. ACoA supports the work of the GEC by submitting support letters for the University's grant applications. ([Strategy 5.A.1](#))

(FY 08) **MASST Program Collaborates to Provide Job Training and Work Experience for Seniors.** The MASST Program increased its coordination and collaboration with other Alaska programs, including ACoA, to provide training and part-time paid work experience opportunities for low-income individuals age 55 and older who desire to enter or re-enter the mainstream workforce. ([Strategy 5.A.1](#))

(FY 08) **Pioneer Homes Partner to Increase Staff Recruitment/Retention.** As an employer of health care professionals, the Pioneer Homes is very interested in having an adequate pool of qualified candidates from which to hire. Recruitment and retention of these valuable employees is an important issue for the Pioneer Homes. They have advocated for competitive salaries for their staff, obtaining a salary increase for registered nurses in FY 2007. And they have also worked with the University of Alaska and the federal Department of Labor to implement a Certified Nurse Aide (CNA) Apprenticeship Program. The CNA Apprenticeship Program is currently in its first year. ([Strategy 5.A.1](#))

(FY 08) **MASST Helps Hundreds of Seniors Enter Job Market.** The MASST Program served 422 participants during FY 08, with participants averaging 203 days in their current assignment, and an average of 164 days in all assignments. Of the 422 participants, 184 were age 60 and older, 364 were below poverty, 102 were at risk of becoming homeless, 49 were displaced homemakers, 106 were veterans or their spouses, and 229 were receiving public assistance. 104 participants entered employment. ([Strategy 5.A.3](#))

Objective B. Education and public awareness strategies:

(FY 08) **Governor Proclaims 'Employ Older Alaskan Workers Week.'** The Alaska Commission on Aging and the MASST (Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training) Program jointly obtained Governor Sarah Palin's Executive Proclamation of "Employ Older Alaskan Workers Week," September 23 – 29, 2007, to recognize the importance and value of

the older worker. This is an ongoing annual activity of the MASST program and ACoA. ([Strategy 5.B.2](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA/MASST Recognize Employers' Support for Older Alaskans.** In September 2007, the Alaska Commission on Aging and the MASST Program sent a joint letter and certificate of appreciation to MASST employers to recognize their support for employment of older Alaskans. ([Strategy 5.B.3](#))

Objective C. Advocacy activities:

(FY08) **Trust Workforce Committee Addresses Problems of Recruitment and Retention for Provider Agencies Serving Trust Beneficiary Populations.** The Trust's Workforce Focus Committee has designated two subcommittees to explore and advocate for sustainable strategies to promote the recruitment and retention of the provider workforce. Such strategies include student loan forgiveness, the Grow Your Own marketing campaign targeting school-age youth, media campaign advocacy efforts, and advocacy for efforts to build the workforce. ([Strategy 5.C.1](#) and [5.C.3](#))

(FY 08) **AgeNet Supports Increases to Senior Grants and Waiver Funding to Maintain Provider Workforce.** In both FY 08 and FY 09, AgeNet has supported increased grant and waiver funding as priorities; these increases to senior programs are critical to help maintain the provider workforce. ([Strategy 5.C.1](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Advocates for and Obtains Additional Grant Funds for HCBS.** The Alaska Commission on Aging's FACES (Family and Community Elder Supports) initiative, to provide increased operating funds to provider agencies under the Senior Home- and Community-Based Grants program, resulted in an addition of \$1 million to the HCBS Grants budget base for FY 09. ([Strategy 5.C.1](#))

(FY 08) **ACoA Supports Federal Legislation for Loan Forgiveness.** The Alaska Commission on Aging submitted a letter of support to the Congressional delegation regarding federal legislation introduced this year which would provide student loan forgiveness for those in health care professions. ([Strategy 5.C.3](#))

Goal 6: Older Alaskans are safe from catastrophic events and protected from personal exploitation, neglect, and abuse.

Objective A. Agency and community partnerships:

(FY 08) **AgeNet Focuses on Community Disaster Preparedness.** At two meetings during the year, AgeNet had a speaker from the national

Meals on Wheels organization, discussing how to begin disaster preparedness activities for homebound seniors and others. AgeNet finds that this issue comes up as various communities become inspired by events elsewhere, but that interest often wanes in the face of the amount of resources needed for planning and preparation. ([Strategy 6.A.1](#))

(FY 08) **Pioneer Homes Create Emergency Plan.** The Pioneer Homes have developed a Continuity of Operations and Emergency Response Plan and implemented it in each home. The plan addresses fire, flooding, earthquakes, volcanoes, plague, and other potential emergencies. ([Strategy 6.A.1](#))

Objective B. Education and public awareness strategies:

(FY 08) **AARP and ACOA Support Consumer Fraud, Identity Theft, and Guardianship Legislation.** In February 2008, AARP and the ACOA submitted multiple support letters for HB 65 and legislative testimony, which offered additional provisions for the prevention of identity theft and consumer fraud, including restriction of the sale and distribution of Social Security numbers, and SB 101, to create several consumer safeguards that are consistent with other states' laws to protect the rights of vulnerable persons and prevent abuse in guardianship proceedings across state lines. Both bills passed and were signed into law. ([Strategy 6.B.5](#))

Objective C. Advocacy activities:

(FY 08) **Pioneer Homes Create Emergency Plan.** The Pioneer Homes have developed a Continuity of Operations and Emergency Response Plan and implemented it in each home. The Pioneer Homes support obtaining more resources to support community emergency preparedness efforts for seniors. ([Strategy 6.C.5](#))

**Goal One:
Alaskan seniors stay healthy, active, and involved in their
communities.**

Objective:

- A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote healthy lifestyles and develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance the physical, mental, economic and social well-being of Alaskan seniors.
-

Agency and Community Partnership Strategies:

- 1.A.1 Partner with State and tribal agencies and local providers to implement statewide health promotion and disease prevention programs that are evidence-based and reduce health disparities. Programs will include nutrition and physical activity education, maintaining a healthy brain, mental health intervention, fall prevention, tobacco use and substance abuse education, chronic disease self-management, and medication management.
- 1.A.2 Strengthen partnerships to increase seniors' access to statewide health screening services in order to identify chronic disease.
- 1.A.3 Encourage development of a comprehensive fall prevention program to assess seniors for risk factors, to help them improve balance and coordination, and to provide environmental design strategies to make homes, businesses, and communities safer.
- 1.A.4 Collaborate with senior care providers to develop and promote wellness education programs that emphasize nutrition and physical activity to prevent chronic disease or minimize its impact.
- 1.A.5 Promote the development of multi-generational programs to encourage healthy lifestyles and social well-being in seniors and young people.
- 1.A.6 Support communities and regional organizations in creating "elder-ready communities" in preparation for the increased senior population expected in the next 25 years.

This goal may include upgrading area housing, senior center, transportation and service infrastructure as well as service workforce development and public awareness efforts to build community commitment to such things as winter maintenance of safe sidewalks and parking lots and planning inter-generational activities.

Objective:

- B. Information and education will be available to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors to encourage the development of healthy lifestyle habits, financial security, and civic and social involvement.
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Education and Public Awareness Strategies:

- 1.B.1 Design and implement a campaign to raise awareness and encourage participation in health promotion and disease prevention programs throughout the state, including fall prevention, nutrition education, chronic disease self-management, physical activity, substance abuse awareness, medication management, and other programs that help keep seniors active and healthy.
- 1.B.2 Support the Division of Public Health and Alaska Commission on Aging’s “Healthy Body....Healthy Brain” campaign to promote lifestyles consistent with decreased risk factors for Alzheimer’s disease.
- 1.B.3 Promote money management classes as well as financial and estate planning classes and consultations which enable older people to make informed decisions about various concerns such as investments, wills, trusts, home sales, long-term care planning, reverse mortgages, and credit issues.
- 1.B.4 Encourage senior participation in a variety of education and support groups targeted to those with or at risk for chronic disease (e.g., diabetes, cardiovascular disease, arthritis), offering information and the opportunity to seek support for concerns.

- 1.B.5 Support health literacy programs for seniors and caregivers to assist them in sharpening reading, listening, math, and system navigation skills to increase their basic health knowledge, in order to help prevent health problems, properly manage chronic diseases, and access the professional care they need.
- 1.B.6 Support lifelong learning for seniors through universities, adult education centers, and other educational organizations.
- 1.B.7 Support programs to teach computer skills and internet information search strategies to seniors, while providing reasonable accommodations (i.e., other forms of information and assistance) to those who prefer not to use computers.
- 1.B.8 Encourage Medicare beneficiaries to take advantage of the Medicare preventive services such as bone mass measurements and screening for colorectal cancer, breast cancer, cervical cancer, and diabetes.

Objective:

- C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that seniors can remain healthy, active, financially secure, and engaged in civic and social affairs.

Advocacy Strategies:

- 1.C.1 Support maintaining or expanding current financial benefits and safety nets for seniors (for example, Social Security, Senior Care, the Longevity Bonus, Energy Assistance, etc.), to enable them to live in their communities without undue financial hardship.
- 1.C.2 Support efforts to increase coverage for health promotion and protection, to safeguard and maintain seniors as healthy and productive members of the community.
- 1.C.3 Support a re-evaluation of state and national health care policies and overall system structure, encouraging a transition to an affordable, accessible system which provides health care for everyone.

- 1.C.4 Advocate for additional funding to provide increased statewide availability of nutrition education and counseling.
- 1.C.5 Support state and federal legislation to maintain the security of employee pensions.
- 1.C.6 Advocate for increased resources for expansion of transportation options in order to expand participation in the RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program), Senior Companion, and Foster Grandparents programs, as well as volunteer positions with the Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office and other civic organizations.
- 1.C.7 Advocate for more resources to support volunteer programs serving seniors.
- 1.C.8 Encourage providers of long-term care insurance to enhance their coverage and to offer coverage matching the services available in Alaska.

Goal Two:

Older Alaskans have access to an integrated array of health and social supports along the continuum of care.

Objective:

- A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of the health and long-term care needs of seniors and to develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance infrastructure development and access to an integrated array of health and social supports along the continuum of care.
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Community and Agency Partnership Strategies:

- 2.A.1 Partner with other state agencies to streamline information and referral, eligibility determination, and access to services for seniors, their caregivers, and service providers by utilizing Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers (ADRCs) in conjunction with senior center information and assistance providers.

- 2.A.2 Develop and integrate a comprehensive array of information, intake, referral and counseling services through the ADRCs by developing a joint Medicaid/Older Americans Act screening, referral, and intake process.
- 2.A.3 Expand community-based services options to meet the needs of high-risk seniors who are not eligible for services under the Medicaid Waiver Program, including individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (ARD), developmental disabilities, behavioral health issues, and physical disabilities.
- 2.A.4 Develop a coordinated quality improvement plan that utilizes best practices in service delivery as a measure for quality across all home- and community-based programs for seniors.
- 2.A.5 Encourage senior centers to become nationally accredited as a way of aiming to provide a higher quality of service.
- 2.A.6 Coordinate with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, other Trust beneficiary boards, the Division of Behavioral Health and other organizations to increase community-based behavioral health care options for seniors.
- 2.A.7 Support neighborhood and community gatekeeper programs to help identify seniors in need of services or health care intervention.
- 2.A.8 Promote innovative efforts to coordinate local transportation services to enhance the mobility and independence of seniors, consistent with federal coordinated transportation systems guidelines.
- 2.A.9 Expand the availability of legal services to older persons through the coordination of private and public sector resources.
- 2.A.10 Provide recommendations to the Governor's newly-formed Health Care Strategies Planning Council, which is charged with advising the Governor and the Legislature on ways to effectively provide access to quality health care and to help reduce costs of health care for Alaskans.

2.A.11 Develop a “gap analysis” for health care, long-term care, and other senior services, to identify those communities and regions lacking access to specific segments of the continuum of care, and work with other agencies as well as consumers and advocates to identify acceptable solutions to these gaps.

2.A.12 Work with the Alaska Department of Transportation to promote coordinated transportation systems communities with Title III grants, and otherwise encourage and support grantees to maximize community or regional resources to meet the service needs of an expanding senior population.

2.A.13 Strengthen relationships between senior information and referral service providers and the Aging & Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs).

Objective:

B. Information and education will be available to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors to locate the health care and long-term care services they need.

Education and Public Awareness Strategies:

2.B.1 Continue to support and develop Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers (ADRCs) to create a single, coordinated system of information and assistance for all persons seeking access to long-term care support programs, including Medicare and Medicaid. The ADRCs will work closely with the information and assistance programs of the senior centers in their regions, providing a statewide online data base for consumers and professionals as well as trained information professionals available through a toll-free phone service, in order to minimize confusion, enhance individual choice, support informed decision-making, and help individuals and families navigate the system of services.

2.B.2 Support classes and other educational materials to help older adults identify and access ways to pay for needed long-term care services, with an emphasis on offering

information on long-term care planning, examining the options available under Medicare, Medicaid, and long term care insurance.

2.B.3 Develop outreach campaigns through a wide variety of organizations such as community groups, workplaces, senior housing facilities, and places of worship to inform families, caregivers, and service providers of available services and how to locate them.

2.B.4 Streamline access for consumers to long-term care services through the development, expansion, and coordination of the Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers in Alaska.

Objective:

C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that seniors have access to the health care and long-term care services they need at each level along the continuum of care.

Advocacy Strategies:

2.C.1 Take the lead in a collaborative process to create a long-term care strategic plan for Alaska to guide the development of services to meet the projected needs of seniors through 2030 and eliminate fragmentation of care through a cooperative effort to design, develop, and implement an integrated long-term care delivery system.

2.C.2 Research and advocate for incentives (e.g., higher reimbursement rates for physicians) and other solutions to encourage physicians and other health care professionals to provide primary care to Medicare recipients.

2.C.3 Identify strategies to address the needs of the medically underserved and reduce health disparities, especially among rural seniors who do not have access to specialists, seniors without health insurance, and seniors who do not have access to Medicaid services.

- 2.C.4 Gather and maintain data on the number of seniors in need of various services and the barriers that prevent them from accessing those services.
- 2.C.5 Advocate for stable funding of senior programs as well as a steady increase in the state funding base for home- and community-based services to parallel the predicted increase in the state's senior population.
- 2.C.6 Support cross-cultural awareness training for medical staff, including the incorporation of health practices from other cultures where appropriate.
- 2.C.7 Support the addition of Medicaid waiver coverage for the care of individuals with Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (ADRD) as well as those with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).
- 2.C.8 Conduct surveys of consumers and residents regarding their perceptions of senior services in their communities, and propose a quality assurance program that encourages seniors and others to provide ongoing feedback on the quality and types of senior services offered in their communities, and includes confidential measures for filing complaints (already in place within the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services) and a tracking system for resolutions.
- 2.C.9 Promote geriatric training for health professionals and paraprofessionals, and encourage state-approved PCA training for all those who provide assisted living care or home- and community-based services.
- 2.C.10 Support efforts to create adequate levels of workforce for long-term care facilities, assisted living homes, and home- and community-based services.
- 2.C.11 Partner with other organizations to develop incentives (including appropriate legislation) designed to attract and keep medical providers in Alaska communities.
- 2.C.12 Support the application of resident-centered models to long-term care facilities.

- 2.C.13 Advocate for reduced wait time for provision of services to seniors (create a “fast track” system of eligibility) and for payment to service providers under the Medicaid waiver program.
- 2.C.14 Support a long-term care benefit plan for State of Alaska and other employees and retirees that adequately covers the home- and community-based services available in Alaska.
- 2.C.15 Seek systems-change options for funding long-term care which are affordable and accessible for seniors at all income levels and circumstances.
- 2.C.17 Support adequate reimbursement to providers for services paid for by Medicare, Medicaid, and third-party insurers.
- 2.C.18 Support appropriate facility upgrades and additional qualified staff as needed to accommodate the increasing number of Alaska Pioneer Home residents with ADRD.
- 2.C.19 Utilize the toolkit developed by the Federal Transit Administration and the Administration on Aging to assess the transportation needs of older Alaskans and to coordinate transportation services for elderly individuals in communities across the state.
- 2.C.20 Encourage a re-examination of the freeze on Medicaid reimbursement rates and its impact on the services available to seniors, and advocate for reimbursement rates that keep pace with the rising cost of care.

Goal Three:

Families are supported in their efforts to care for their loved ones at home and in the community.

Objective:

- A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of family caregivers’ issues and to develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance the well-being of caregivers.

Agency and Community Partnership Strategies:

- 3.A.1 Support family caregivers in their efforts to care for older Alaskans by continuing to provide assistance through a variety of programs, such as family caregiver support, senior in-home services, and adult day care.
- 3.A.2 Coordinate with the ADRCs to increase information and access to services for family caregivers of older Alaskans.
- 3.A.3 Increase support programs for grandparents raising grandchildren and family caregivers age 60 and over caring for developmentally disabled or mentally ill adult children.
- 3.A.4 Identify the needs of working caregivers, and increase services designed to make it easier for family caregivers to continue working while caring for an older family member in their home.

Objective:

- B. Provide information and education to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors regarding programs and activities targeted to the needs of family caregivers.
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Education and Public Awareness Strategies:

- 3.B.1 Increase family caregivers' awareness about Alzheimer's disease and related disorders (ADRD), and provide educational opportunities for them.
 - 3.B.2 Create a public awareness campaign to highlight the benefits and needs of unpaid family caregivers, including those raising grandchildren and those who work outside the home.
 - 3.B.3 Increase awareness of caregiver support programs by health care providers, family caregivers, grandparents raising grandchildren, the workplace, and the general public.
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Objective:

- C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that unpaid family caregivers are recognized and supported in their role as primary care providers for seniors in need.
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Advocacy Strategies:

- 3.C.1 Support the creation of selected federal tax credits other fiscal incentives for family caregivers.
 - 3.C.2 Support increased funding for expansion of caregiver programs throughout the state.
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Goal Four:

A range of adequate, accessible, secure and affordable housing options is available to seniors.

Objective:

- A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of senior housing needs and to develop policies, programs, and developments aimed at providing a greater number of affordable, accessible, appropriate housing options for Alaskan seniors across the state.
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Agency and Community Partnership Strategies:

- 4.A.1 Assemble a statewide senior housing work group along with other state and private agencies to study, support, and develop housing policies and programs that meet the needs of seniors across the state for increased housing options.
- 4.A.2 Support incentives (financial and other) to profit or non-profit organizations to construct, remodel, and operate assisted living and nursing care facilities, especially in rural areas, for the growing population of Alaskans who will need supervised care.

- 4.A.3 Assist the private sector in planning and seeking development funds for the creation of long-term care facilities based on innovative resident-centered models by providing supportive services where appropriate.
- 4.A.4 Support partnerships and incentives to profit and non-profit organizations to create a range of independent and supported housing options for seniors, including cottage housing, senior condos and apartments, cooperative housing, and retirement communities, as well as assisted living facilities and supportive housing, with a priority on development of housing options for seniors in rural and remote communities.
- 4.A.5 Support and encourage professionals within the building and real estate industries to pursue and obtain professional designations providing them with specialized knowledge of the unique housing needs of older Alaskans statewide.
- 4.A.6 Work with state agencies and service providers to identify residential solutions for chronically mentally ill seniors who have also developed dementia, as they are unable to be placed in most assisted living homes, including those licensed to serve the mentally ill and those licensed to serve those with dementia.

Objective:

- B. Provide information and education to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors about housing options and the supports available to assist them in developing additional senior housing in their community; and provide information about senior housing needs and preferences to building trade groups.
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Education and Public Awareness Strategies:

- 4.B.1 Include access to information about senior housing options in all information and assistance programs funded by the State.

- 4.B.2 Educate developers and promote public awareness about Universal Design principles, including the advantage of increased retention of value.
- 4.B.3 Create an information campaign to publicize the definitions and characteristics of various housing types such as independent living, assisted living, supported housing, multiple use supported housing, resident-centered models, cottage housing, continuing care retirement communities, etc.
- 4.B.4 Provide links to and information about federal and State funding sources for pre-development efforts and the development of senior housing.

Objective:

- C. Advocates will seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that an adequate number and variety of senior housing options are available as the number of seniors in Alaska increases over the next 25 years.
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Advocacy Strategies:

- 4.C.1 Advocate for adequate levels of management oversight for seniors living in independent and assisted living facilities in order to ensure their safety and well-being, particularly in those facilities serving multiple groups of individuals with special needs.
- 4.C.2 Develop a list of senior preferences and recommendations to guide both public and private developers of senior housing.
- 4.C.3 Advocate for broader access to and increased funding for home modification programs to help make seniors' homes safe and accessible in order to allow them to continue to live independently within their communities.
- 4.C.4 Support low-cost home repair services for seniors in order to minimize in-home hazards to health and safety.

- 4.C.5 Encourage the creation of incentives for private and/or public organizations to develop assisted living and nursing facilities to meet regional needs.

Goal Five:

Alaska supports a stable workforce for senior and health care services as well as a range of attractive employment opportunities for seniors.

Objective:

- A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote a stable senior services and health care workforce and appealing employment opportunities for seniors, and will develop policies, programs, and activities to work toward these goals.

Agency and Community Partnership Strategies:

- 5.A.1 Continue to partner with state agencies, university, tribal government, health care and provider groups to increase the recruitment, retention, compensation, and training of direct services workers.
- 5.A.2 Develop innovative methods for recruiting and retaining workers in the villages to meet the need for in-home workers in remote areas.
- 5.A.3 Increase coordination and collaboration with the MASST (Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training) program, which provides training and part-time paid work experience opportunities for low-income individuals age 55 and older who desire to enter or re-enter the mainstream workforce.
- 5.A.4 Continue to support seniors in or re-entering the workforce by providing specialized case management, job search assistance, appropriate job training, and placement.
- 5.A.5 Strengthen awareness of and opportunities for business sector partnerships which will benefit senior workers.

- 5.A.6 Encourage comprehensive, coordinated systems at federal, state, and local levels for streamlining access to a wide range of program benefits for seniors seeking work.
- 5.A.7 Develop networking opportunities for older job seekers to locate employment openings.
- 5.A.8 Enhance the focus on training for older job seekers, with more employment outcomes.

Objective:

- B. Provide information and education to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors, as well as to educational institutions and employment agencies, about how individuals can access opportunities to become part of the senior services workforce and how seniors can find jobs in their communities.

Education and Public Awareness Strategies:

- 5.B.1 Develop and maintain a website in conjunction with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development to offer seniors a range of employment resources and alert them to job opportunities.
- 5.B.2 Promote the value of older workers and dispel misconceptions about older workers' capabilities.
- 5.B.3 Highlight employers that recognize the contributions and value of older workers, and highlight the accomplishments of older workers themselves.
- 5.B.4 Coordinate services with the aging network, providing information for seniors on finding and keeping employment.

Objective:

- C. Seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that a stable senior services workforce is in place as increasing numbers of Alaskans join the senior population, and to promote the employment of seniors.

Advocacy Strategies:

- 5.C.1 Advocate for grant funding and Medicaid reimbursement rates adequate to pay a living wage to workers in the senior services field, particularly in remote areas.
- 5.C.2 Support efforts to eliminate age discrimination practices by employers.
- 5.C.3 Support the creation of programs to offer scholarships, reduced-cost loans, and/or loan forgiveness to those who commit to working in health care or direct services jobs.
- 5.C.4 Support an increase in the minimum wage on the federal and/or state levels, sufficient to provide a living wage for all Alaskan workers, including seniors.

Goal Six:

Older Alaskans are safe from catastrophic events and protected from personal exploitation, neglect, and abuse.

Objective:

- A. Agencies and organizations will partner to promote awareness of risks to seniors' safety and security, and to develop policies, programs, and activities to enhance the safety and security of seniors in their communities and in their homes.
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Agency and Community Partnership Strategies:

- 6.A.1 Collaborate with state and municipal agencies charged with disaster preparedness and planning for catastrophic events, to ensure that seniors – including those with special needs - will be safe and protected to the greatest extent possible in the event of a natural disaster, infectious disease epidemic, or national security emergency.

6.A.2 Work with the legal community and Adult Protective Services to expand the availability of legal services to older persons, including help with conservatorships, guardianships, and other services targeted to the prevention of exploitation.

6.A.3 Support the activities of the Office of Elder Fraud and Abuse within the Office of Public Advocacy.

Objective:

B. Provide information and education to seniors, their families and communities, and organizations serving seniors to encourage awareness of risks to safety and security as well as knowledge of how to respond and who to turn to in the event of such a threat.

Education and Public Awareness Strategies:

6.B.1 Support education and awareness classes and activities that will provide seniors with self-empowerment skills to protect themselves against exploitation and abuse.

6.B.2 Gather and disseminate data from law enforcement, hospitals, public health and other data bases to track crimes and injuries affecting older Alaskans, and encourage better data collection techniques as needed.

6.B.3 Continue to support efforts to provide public awareness and education activities on types of elder abuse and how to report it.

6.B.4 Increase education and awareness of legal services available to seniors on matters such as conservatorship, guardianship, durable power of attorney, and the tools for planning ahead for health care emergencies and end-of-life issues.

6.B.5 Provide support for improved and expanded services to older people for guardianship, conservatorship, health care power of attorney, and other services to safeguard their rights and resources.

6.B.6 Encourage seniors and their families to learn about local emergency preparedness plans, to have recommended supplies available in their homes, and to practice a locally-approved evacuation procedure.

6.B.7 Promote health literacy among health care consumers.

Objective:

C. Seek support for policy changes, programs, and activities needed to ensure that the safety and security of seniors are protected.

Advocacy Strategies:

6.C.1 Advocate for sufficient Adult Protective Services and Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office staff and regional presence to ensure follow-up to reports of elder abuse within 48 hours.

6.C.2 Advocate for a stable funding mechanism for legal services and advocacy for older Alaskans.

6.C.3 Advocate for continuation of the adult mediation program (for families who are guardians for an adult member) provided through the Office of Public Advocacy and funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

6.C.4 Advocate for policies that address ageism and other prejudices among health care professionals (which may result in lower quality health care for seniors).

6.C.5 Advocate for additional resources to assist State and federal agencies, communities, senior centers, families and individuals to prepare for a variety of emergencies, including earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, storms, infectious disease epidemics, and national security emergencies.

**General Information, Education and Advocacy Strategies
Covering Goals 1 through 6:**

- (1) Continue to provide Alaska Commission on Aging statewide legislative teleconferences during the legislative session to update seniors, service providers, and the public on the progress of legislation of interest and concern to seniors.
- (2) Continue to publish an Alaska Commission on Aging newsletter alerting seniors to relevant news about health care, consumer advice, legal issues, program activities and other matters of interest.
- (3) Provide updated and regular information about senior demographics and emerging issues affecting older adults on the Alaska Commission on Aging's website.
- (4) Continue to support the Alaska Aging Advocacy Network by supplying advocacy tools, offering a discussion forum, and providing other materials to assist Network members to advocate on behalf of seniors on a variety of issues.
- (5) Seek support and funding to host an annual gathering of interested organizations to create an implementation plan for the coming year based on the goals and objectives in this state plan.
- (6) Publicize the Alaska Commission on Aging's quarterly meetings, encouraging attendance and public comment by seniors and caregivers.