

Alaska Native Health Board

2025 | State Legislative Priorities



REAL ID Access for Rural Alaskans

Ensure equitable access to Division of Motor Vehicle services for rural Alaskans to comply with federal REAL ID requirements and avoid barriers to care.



Tobacco Prevention and Cessation

Align state age to purchase tobacco products with federal requirements to maintain funding for state tobacco cessation and prevention programs and allow for culturally competent cessation services.



Water and Sanitation

Continue to fund the Village Safe Water state match required to receive federal funding for the Alaska Native Village Grant and the Rural Alaska Village Grant programs to support the unmet need, particularly for legacy projects.

Eliminate barriers to funding for small rural and Tribal projects in Alaska, including state revolving fund loans and sustainability matrix criteria.



Medicaid Coverage and Services

Eligibility, Coverage, and Payment - Work closely with the Alaska Tribal Health System when considering any changes to the state Medicaid program to ensure the best possible health outcomes for all Alaskans.

Long-Term Services and Supports - Expand reimbursable services and increase reimbursement rates to make long-term care, skilled nursing facilities, assisted living facilities, and home- and community-based services sustainable and viable.

Medicaid Behavioral Health

- Expand access to integrated behavioral health within the primary care environment.
- Invest in infrastructure and start-up funds for community-based 1115 waiver services, holding other behavioral health funding harmless.
- Support statewide implementation and coverage for Traditional health care practices.



Behavioral Health

Ensure implementation of HB 172 to increase statewide capacity to provide behavioral health care in less restrictive environments, including funding travel for Title 47-hold involuntary patients to avoid unfunded mandates to providers.

Support exemptions for staffing patterns for crisis service facilities.

Build on the legislative intent of SCR 9 recognizing the need for parity in the provision of mental health and substance use disorder medical assistance benefits statewide.



Pharmacy

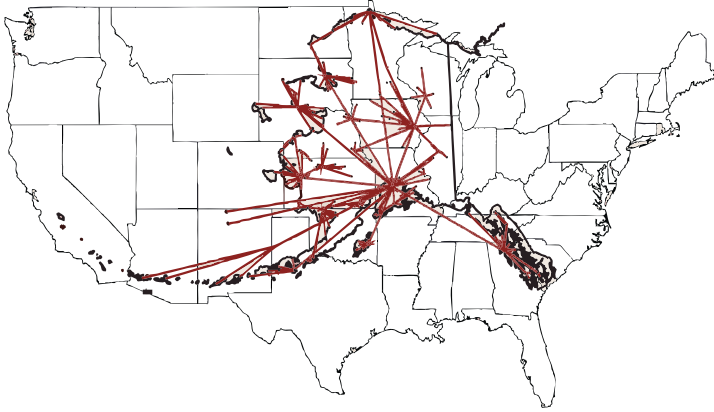
Ensure patient choice and safety while safeguarding Alaska pharmacies by regulating pharmacy benefit managers.

Allow pharmacists to practice at the top of their clinical ability, including independent prescriptive authority in certain circumstances to increase flexibility, choice, and access.



Alaska Tribal Health System

The Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS) is a comprehensive and multifaceted statewide voluntary affiliation of over **30 Tribes and Tribal Health Organizations** providing healthcare across the state. Serving over 180,000 Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) people, the ATHS is comprised of independently owned and operated Tribal Health Organizations that are interconnected via the system's sophisticated patterns of referrals and their common mission of improving the health status of AN/AI people. **In many areas of Alaska, Tribal Health Organizations are the sole healthcare providers serving everyone in the community.**



Alaska Native Health Board

Established in 1968, the Alaska Native Health Board (ANHB) serves as the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues. ANHB's mission is to promote the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being, and pride of Alaska Native people. As the statewide Tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB supports Tribal partners, state and federal agencies to achieve effective communication and consultation. ANHB provides in-depth policy analysis, technical expertise, coordination, and training. In this process, ANHB advocates for the health and well-being of all Alaska Native people.

The ATHS plays a crucial role in Alaska's economy, contributing 7% of Alaska's total GDP.

Supporting communities across the state with health care and employment opportunities, the ATHS generates more than 24,600 jobs for Alaskans and over \$3.7 billion annually for Alaska's economy.

Northern Economics, Inc., *Economic Contribution of the Alaska Tribal Health System (2021)*

State Savings Through Tribal Reclaiming

The ATHS is a cornerstone of the state's public health infrastructure, collaborating closely with the Alaska Department of Health to shape policy and healthcare coverage. In 2016, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued guidance allowing states to secure Medicaid's 100% Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP) for services provided to AN/AI people in non-Tribal healthcare facilities. The purpose of the revised policy was to allow "Tribal facilities to expand the scope of services they are able to offer to their [AN/AI] patients while ensuring coordination of care in accordance with best medical practice standards." This policy change expands the reach of the ATHS, strengthens the fabric of Alaska's healthcare industry, and provides more comprehensive care for patients.

Certain conditions must be met to receive 100% FMAP, including care coordination agreements between Tribal and non-Tribal health providers. The ATHS maintains and secures care coordination agreements and conducts the necessary quarterly referral verification of individual Medicaid beneficiaries referred through the ATHS to non-Tribal providers. Savings to the state are not possible unless Tribal and non-Tribal health providers choose to participate in and establish care coordination agreements.

\$674.6M in GF savings through Tribal reclaiming since SFY17

