

**Department of Health  
FY24 Midyear Status Report**

Item No.	Appropriation / Allocation	Description	Amount / Fund Source	LFD Questions
1	Various	MH Trust: Crisis Now Continuum of Care Grants (FY23-FY26)	\$1,000.0 GF/MH (UGF)	<p>1. Has the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) awarded any grants for the Mobile Outreach and Crisis Response teams yet, or is that expected in FY25?</p> <p>2. Has DBH awarded more grants for Crisis Residential and Stabilization Services providers aside from the program in the Mat-Su?</p> <p>3. What is the status of the training program for organizations seeking to provide 23-Hour Crisis Observation and Stablization services?</p> <p>4. Many of the authorizations for federal funds (e.g. COVID-19, American Rescue Plan Act, and Mental Health Block Grant) will term at the end of FY24. How will the expected loss of federal funds impact these developing services in FY25 and beyond?</p>
<p><b>Agency Response</b></p> <p>1. The Division of Behavioral Health has one active grant related to Mobile Outreach and Crisis Response for a Modified Youth Program in Fairbanks. This grant award went out for partial FY2023 and is active for FY2024. In FY2025, the plan is to utilize ARPA funds for a continuation for this grant in the amount of \$488,805.75 (Substance Abuse \$400,000, and Mental Health \$88,805.75).</p> <p>2. Yes, the Division of Behavioral Health has funded Bartlett Regional Hospital for a youth Crisis Residential and Stabilization program (CSS) in FY2024. Additionally, the plan for FY2025 is to fund this program for a continuation grant in the amount of \$200,000 of ARPA Mental Health funds.</p> <p>3. This project was cancelled due to procurement issues. The travel authorization project for crisis stabilization funds were reallocated to other programs because it was COVID-19 funding that was set to expire on March 14, 2024.</p> <p>4. The ARPA funds are going to be allocated for continuation grants as stated above for FY2025 (they expire September 30, 2025). DBH will need to review existing funding sources and determine where adjustments may need to occur to continue to support crisis services. MHBG funds (5%) are required to be applied towards crisis services and DBH will continue to meet this requirement.</p>				
2	Health Care Services / Medical Assistance Administration	Add Positions to Increase Medicaid Recoveries and Rebates	Total: \$774.2  \$387.1 Fed Rcpts (Fed) \$387.1 GF/Match (UGF) 6 PFT Positions	<p>What is the status of the three new Medicaid Program Specialist 2, one new Program Coordinator 1, one new Medicaid Program Specialist 3, and one new Pharmacist positions? If the positions have been filled, please provide a hire date.</p> <p>If available, please provide a summary of relevant data on the impact of the new positions on various recovery efforts.</p>

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<p><b>Agency Response</b> Of the three new Medicaid Program Specialist 2 positions, two are pending recruitment posting; and one is in the final stage at Classifications and then eligible for recruitment. These will be five-day recruitments with internal candidates interested in promotion. One new Program Coordinator 1 is pending submission of the position description in the Online Position Description database to be eligible for recruitment. One new Medicaid Program Specialist 3 is pending request to post. This will be a five-day recruitment with internal candidates interested in promotion. One new Pharmacist PCN 16-X001 was approved by Classifications and a candidate is currently under consideration.</p>				
3	Public Assistance / Child Care Benefits	Sec 62(e), HB39 - Federal Authority for Child Care Block Grant Discretionary Funds (FY24-FY25)	\$25,000.0 COVID Fed (Fed) MultiYr	Please briefly describe how these funds are being disbursed, the categories of current recipients, and the year-to-date expenditure amount.
<p><b>Agency Response</b> This division has allocated just over \$7M towards the divisions resource and referral program.</p>				
4	Public Assistance / Child Care Benefits	Additional Funding to Support Child Care Block Grant Discretionary Funds for Wage Increases	\$7,500.0 Gen Fund (UGF) IncOTI	<p>Please briefly describe how these funds are being disbursed are the funds disbursed concurrently to provider recipients of the federal child care block grants? What is the year-to-date expenditure amount?</p> <p>Is the Department advising recipients of the intended use of these funds (increasing worker wages) to support child care provider service stabilization?</p>
<p><b>Agency Response</b> \$7.5M Workforce Initiative awarded to Thread for the following: This funding is being distributed as SEED ROOTS Awards. The application period to apply for a ROOTS award is November 27, 2023 – January 15, 2024. If your Alaska SEED Registry application is complete and in review by the Alaska SEED team, you can apply for the Alaska SEED ROOTS Award. Payments for the 2024 Alaska SEED ROOTS Award are expected to be sent starting February 1, 2024.</p>				
5	Public Assistance / Public Assistance Field Services	Medicaid and Public Assistance Program Eligibility Redeterminations (FY24-FY25)	Total: \$17,834.5 \$8,917.3 Fed Rcpts (Fed) \$8,917.2 GF/Match (UGF) 30 TMP Positions MultiYr	<p>How many of the temporary positions for this purpose are currently filled, versus the number of permanent positions? Is the Division experiencing similar turnover rates between the temporary and permanent position types for this work?</p> <p>Out of the approximately 285,000 Alaskans enrolled in Medicaid in FY23, how many redeterminations have been initiated? How many have been completed?</p>
<p><b>Agency Response</b> The division currently has 14 of the 30 LTNP Eligibility Technician 1 filled. The division has been activity recruiting the remaining position however temporary staff are regularly promoting to permanent positions as they become eligible, resulting in difficulties retaining LTNP dedicated to the Medicaid efforts.</p> <p>Of 241,635 total identified renewals, the division has initiated 140,375 redeterminations and completed 60,731.</p>				

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6	Public Health / Nursing	Implement Recommendations in the Alaska Tuberculosis Elimination Plan (FY24-FY30)	\$2,760.0 Gen Fund (UGF) IncT	<p>Please provide an update on the Department's efforts to implement the plan's recommendations.</p> <p>Has the Alaska Tuberculosis (TB) Workgroup reconvened during this fiscal year to further direct or prioritize these efforts?</p>
<p><b>Agency Response</b></p> <p>With the support of the Alaska Legislature, the Division of Public Health expanded services to provide additional support in the elimination and control of Tuberculosis (TB) in Alaska.</p> <p>\$1.6 million in grant funds have been distributed to community partners at Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation and Norton Sound Health Corporation to expand awareness, testing, and treatment services.</p> <p>Public Health provides for housing, incentives, and enablers for active TB cases who need assistance while requiring isolation.</p> <p>In the process of expanding to a modernized and enhanced treatment observation methods, including electronic direct observed therapy (eDOT).</p> <p>Additional travel and workforce has been supported to provide screenings in additional high prevalence villages during fall and spring, including incentives for screening and testing. This additional support allowed Public Health to conduct more than twice as many community-wide screenings than last year for Fall.</p> <p>Enhanced staff TB expertise and skills through training.</p> <p>Added a position to assist with TB cases that experience significant barriers to treatment.</p> <p>Modernizing and expanding TB testing capacity by purchasing additional equipment for handling more specimens as well as replacing aging equipment within the laboratory.</p> <p>The division currently has three workgroups/strategic planning to include YKHC strategic planning group, NSRHC workgroup, and the internal workgroup with Public Health Nursing and the Section of Epidemiology.</p>				
7	Public Health / Epidemiology	Implement Efforts to Eliminate Congenital Syphilis (FY24-FY30)	\$4,000.0 Gen Fund (UGF) IncT	<p>Please provide an update on the Department's efforts to address the elevated incidence of congenital and non-congenital syphilis in Alaska.</p> <p>Are there public outreach initiatives underway, aside from the recent advisory letter sent to Alaskan health care providers?</p>

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<p><b>Agency Response</b>            An opt-out testing partnership with Department of Corrections launched during Q4 2023 and has expanded to DOC facilities across Alaska, with testing offered to everyone.</p> <p>Public Health expanded the disease intervention specialist workforce, purchased additional medications, increased testing in public health centers, and expanded its ability to treat patients in public health centers and during investigations. Partnerships between DPH, healthcare providers, and homeless services providers are helping to expand syphilis testing and treatment statewide.</p> <p>Public outreach initiatives include a press release scheduled for this week and associated media availability. A social media campaign coordinated with public health centers across Alaska (including Anchorage) is planned to launch with the press release. Additionally, targeted public outreach initiatives for Alaskans at highest risk have begun, coordinated with public health centers and community partners, especially those working with people experiencing homelessness.</p> <p>Outreach activities currently incorporate information about STI clinics and free testing availability; contractors will begin pop-up clinics in shelters and other areas frequented by high-risk Alaskans as early as this month. Clinics will incorporate rapid testing and treatment; pregnancy test distribution is also planned. We continue to do additional health care provider outreach through professional organizations and presentations such as on Extensions for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHOs).</p>				
8	Public Health / Public Health Laboratories	Increase Fee Collection to Support Public Health Laboratories	\$569.1 GF/Prgm (DGF)	Now that initial public comment on the regulatory modifications has been received/responded to, what is the status of the new fee schedule for the relevant services?
<p><b>Agency Response</b>            The response to public comment initiated edits to the proposed AAC regulation wording to alleviate confusion regarding the definitions of inspection vs. certification vs. vendor support. Once the regulations are reviewed again, there may be another public comment period. Once signed, Public Health is prepared to start collecting annual registration fees for ~2,400 dental devices in Alaska, providing certificates of registration, and inspections on 6-year cycles. In addition to waiting for dental regs to pass, there is another part of the code that will help bring non-dental x-ray device fees up to a level to fully support the Radiological Health Program. Non-dental x-ray fees have not increased in 40 years and this adjustment should help us reach our projected amount. The current AAC regs under review are considered "urgent" by the Department of Law.</p>				
9	Senior and Disabilities Services / Senior and Disabilities Services Administration	Development of Cost Allocation Assessment Tool (FY24-FY26)	Total: \$3,392.3 \$2,744.5 Fed Rcpts (Fed) \$647.8 GF/Match (UGF) 6 PFT Positions MultiYr	Has the Department secured approval and funding from federal partners for the development of the tool?  Has the Department begun development of the assessment tool, either internally or by contracting with an external source?

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<p><b>Agency Response</b>            The department has been working hard preparing documents for CMS and internal IT and Procurement partners. A meeting will be scheduled with CMS in the coming weeks for a review of the completed project charter which will inform the PAPD (Planning Advanced Planning Document) for CMS. The division is planning to submit the PAPD to CMS for review by early February.</p> <p>No, the department has not begun the development of the assessment tool; it is still in the preplanning stages and getting CMS approval. The department is not in a formal process to procure software yet, but it has requested demonstrations of the InterRai software that other states are using. These demonstrations have helped to inform the department of some system needs it will have when the procurement process begins.</p>				
10	Departmental Support Services / Commissioner's Office	Establish the Office of Health Savings	Total: \$1,046.2 \$523.1 Fed Rcpts (Fed) \$523.1 GF/Match (UGF)	Please provide an explanation of office's purpose, the status of the office's implementation, and any applicable positions working in this office.
<p><b>Agency Response</b>            The Commissioner's Office received an increment in FY2024 to establish the Office of Health Savings. This office will be responsible for developing savings opportunities as well as identify and build out new health savings programs. To support this work, an Associate Director and two Project Coordinators are currently being created.</p> <p>The Associate Director position will work with the Department of Law to evaluate opportunities to expand third-party liability revenue, support the department to increase tribal reclaiming in the Medicaid program, identify opportunities to realize additional federal funding through the development of processes and systems to leverage Medicaid system and enterprise federal match. The Office of Health Savings will focus on strategic initiatives to evaluate and identify additional savings through improved program efficiencies, pharmacy program savings, expanded fraud detection, and automated systems. In support of these efforts, the Department of Law has filled a paralegal position and an additional full-time attorney position is out for recruitment.</p>				
11	Departmental Support Services / Commissioner's Office	Recruitment and Retention of Health Professionals to Alaska	\$150.0 Gen Fund (UGF)	<p>Is the Department partnering with private providers and institutions to better leverage this effort? What is being done to increase the recruitment and retention of health care service providers who are State employees?</p> <p>What is the dedicated position in the Commissioner's Office responsible for this coordination, and is the position filled?</p>
<p><b>Agency Response</b>            These funds are supporting the SHARP program within the Division of Public Health. SHARP is a recruitment and retention tool to support health care workforce recruitment and retention of healthcare practitioners in medical, dental, and behavioral health disciplines through student loan repayment and direct financial incentives. The goal is to increase the availability of health care services throughout the state, especially to rural and underserved populations.</p>				

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12	Departmental Support Services / Information Technology Services	Invest in Line of Business Information Technology	Total: \$1,560.5 \$72.0 Fed Rcpts (Fed) \$1,488.5 I/A Rcpts (Other) 10 PFT Positions	Have the ten new information technology positions of varying type been filled? If so, please provide a hire date and any relevant updates to the support services these positions are intended to provide.
<p><b>Agency Response</b>  <u>PCN, Position Class, Date Filled or Status</u>            16-8004, A/P 1/2/3/4, Actively Recruiting            16-8005, DB Spec 1/2/3, Actively Recruiting            16-8003, Spec 1/2, 8/22/2023            16-8008, Tech 1/2, 8/29/2023            16-8007, SysProg 1/2/3, 12/11/2023            16-8009, SysProg 1/2/3, Actively Recruiting            16-8001, SysProg 1/2/3, 10/16/2023            16-8006, SysProg 1/2/3, 10/30/2023            16-8002, DPM 1, 12/4/2023            16-8012, Business Sys Analyst, 12/21/2023</p>				
13	Medicaid Services / Medicaid Services	Required Medicaid Rate Rebasing for Developmental Disability and Personal Care Services	Total: \$15,000.0  \$7,500.0 Fed Rcpts (Fed) \$7,500.0 GF/Match (UGF)	What is the status of the intended rate rebasing for direct service providers in these sectors?  Is the Department advising providers of the intended use of these funds (increasing worker wages)?
<p><b>Agency Response</b>            This funding was included with an inflationary increase on 7/1/2023. The inflation adjustment was 3.7% and the legislative adjustment added an additional 4.2%, for a total rate increase of 7.9%.             The Department shared the intent of the funding with provider associations throughout the state.</p>				