

Health Care Summary

Strengths *Internal attributes that contribute to success*

Businesses, Organizations, & Government

- FNSB is a health care hub, serving both the FNSB and other Interior Alaska communities
- FNSB is home to quality health facilities
- Industry partners generally work well together

Education & Workforce

- Alaskans have access to workforce and education opportunities such as the SHARP program and Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho (WWAMI) programs

Funding & Markets

- Telehealth has been successfully used to increase access to health care and fill priority needs, including expanding access to behavioral health care

Weaknesses *Internal barriers to success*

Natural Resources & Environment

- Poor air quality and groundwater contamination

Businesses, Organizations, & Government

- FNSB has limited public health authority
- Gaps in licensing requirements
- Nursing care is unavailable in the community
- Services for persons experiencing homelessness are insufficient to meet demand

Education & Workforce

- Lack of data to identify employment gaps
- Winters, high cost of living can be a barrier for recruiting and retaining out-of-town health care workers

Funding & Markets

- Duplication of technology that results in underutilization
- Limited services for seniors/Elders; dementia care not eligible for federal funds
- Medicaid, Medicare billing rates are too low to cover costs
- Community sometimes struggles to maintain sufficient behavioral health staffing capacity
- High costs of health care and low rates of insurance coverage

Other

- Disproportionate health outcomes for some populations, including Alaska Natives and people of color

Opportunities *External forces that contribute to success*

Businesses, Organizations, & Government

- Crisis Now model offers new ways of responding to people in crisis in FNSB, creating more effective, efficient methods that will also free up public safety resources and create new job opportunities
- Fort Wainwright conducted a Behavioral Health Epidemiological Consultation (BH EPICON) in response to a series of suicides in the Fort Wainwright community; the EPICON identified recommendations to improve moral and quality of life for troops

Infrastructure

- Continued improvements to telehealth technology

Threats *External forces that could be barriers to success*

Businesses, Organizations, & Government

- Complexity of state and federal reimbursement systems

Education & Workforce

- Cost of living, high housing costs are a barrier for recruitment and retainment of workers
- COVID-19 and ongoing impacts to health, travel, workers
- Nationwide workforce shortages mean FNSB is competing with other facilities across the country

Funding & Markets

- State budget cuts threaten health care and social service program funding

Infrastructure

- Lack of internet access limits telemedicine applications

Where We Are	What measurements can we use to track progress? Where do we want to be in 5 years?	2027 Targets
#6 (2018)	Health Outcomes Ranking , out of 25 Alaska boroughs/census areas; <i>Based on indicators including premature death rate, # of residents reporting poor physical/mental health days, and low birthweight</i>	#3
160:1 (2020)	Mental Health Providers – Ratio of population to mental health care providers. <i>This is higher than the statewide ratio of 200:1, although stakeholder feedback indicates there are still not enough providers to meet the need</i>	TBD*
30.9% (2021)	Turnover Rate – staff turnover rate for Foundation Health Partners, which includes Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, Tanana Valley Clinic, and Denali Center. The 2021 turnover rate was up from 2020, when the rate was 26.6%.	TBD*

Sources: Health Outcomes Ranking and Mental Health Providers comes from the County Health Rankings, tool provided by the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
TBD*: for health partners to identify



“We need better collaboration between providers to share technology. ‘More is not better’ if equipment is being duplicated and underutilized. It can also be challenging to find skilled staff for operations.”

“Telehealth has been helpful and is used extensively, especially by DoD families. ‘Without telehealth we would be in a much worse situation than we are.’”



Health Care Objective – Long term improvements and changes we want to see in five years or more



1. The Fairbanks health care industry has the workforce, tools, and expertise needed to provide quality, affordable, timely care for residents throughout Interior Alaska.

“Workforce challenges have gotten worse, with retirements and departures exacerbated by the pandemic.”

“Retention is a major challenge in the dental industry, too. There are many women working in the industry who have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic (e.g., loss of child care).”

“Crisis Now model will be helping transform the crisis system. Fairbanks is pioneering some of this in Alaska. This will create more effective, efficient ways to support people in crisis. This will help individuals in need while freeing up resources for corrections, EMS, police, etc. There will also be new job opportunities.”

Strategies & Actions – Activities we will implement over the next five years to accomplish objectives & targets. See Chapter 3 for a detailed action plan.

Icon Key: Capital Project Military-related

1. **Improve Community Health** – Implement the goals and strategies identified in the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP). (Objective 1)

Priority focus areas in the CHNA and CHIP include:

- a. **Mental Health:** Improve access to and sustainability of services and housing for individuals with mental health needs to support safe, stable living in the least restrictive environment.
- b. **Senior Care:** Ensure our rapidly growing senior-age population can live safely in the least restrictive environments for as long as possible.
- c. **Adverse Childhood Experiences/Trauma:** Reduce numbers of Interior Alaskans experiencing preventable trauma and increase numbers of Interior Alaskans with protective factors.
- d. **Physical Health/Healthy Behaviors:** Reduce the incidence and long-term impacts of chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.
- e. **COVID-19:** Interior Alaska prepared to respond to outbreaks of the COVID-19 virus and other emergencies.

See Other Relevant Planning Efforts & Recommendations for housing related recommendations and environmental health recommendations.

See Education & Workforce Development for other health care-related workforce development recommendations.

2. **Increase Collaboration** – Convene health care providers on a regular basis to identify shared priorities. (Objective 1)

- a. Maintain joint planning and cooperation among military and civilian health planners and health and social service providers serving the region. Consider conducting a joint assessment of health needs and resources on a regular basis (from Eielson Regional Growth Plan).
- b. Implement the Open Minds service model to serve consumers with chronic and complex conditions.
- c. Create shared data collection and tracking tools to identify workforce and specialty needs/gaps.

- d. Create a shared recruitment and retention plan to attract health care workers to FNSB. 📌

3. Fill Gaps in Health Care – Identify and address gaps in specialty care. *(Objective 1)*

- a. Address and recruit for known gaps in medical specialty care, behavioral health services, geriatric specialties, dermatology. 📌
- b. Reinstate the dental hygiene program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.
- c. Expand and improve the registered nurse (RN) program statewide.
- d. Establish a licensed practical nursing (LPN) program at UAF.
- e. Increase the availability of senior and elder services, especially for dementia-related disease; advocate for improved reimbursement options to provide senior care.
- f. Expand in-home nursing care options, including certified nursing assistants (CNAs).
- g. Expand 24/7 outpatient care.
- h. Increase secondary school career paths in health care fields.
- i. Advocate for Medicare and Medicaid revisions, including price transparency and reimbursable rates.

4. Support Healthy Families – Support households moving to our community by ensuring there is access to high quality of life in the FNSB community. *(Objective 1)*

- a. Ensure adequate availability of family support services to build on strengths of military families and mitigate risks. 📌
- b. Recruit and retain mental health clinicians and behavioral health providers. 📌
- c. Implement recommendations identified in the Fort Wainwright EPICON to improve quality of life in the community. 📌

See *Recreation, Retail, & Entertainment* for related recommendations.

“We need more senior and elder services at multiple service levels. Especially for dementia-related disease. The lack of current reimbursement options makes this challenging.”



Other Relevant Resources

- **Community Health Needs Assessment.** Foundation Health Partners. 2019. [View here.](#)
- **2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan.** Foundation Health Partners. 2020. [View here.](#)
- **Eielson Regional Growth Plan.** Fairbanks North Star Borough. 2018. [View here.](#)
- **Crisis Now.** City of Fairbanks project webpage: [view here.](#) Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority webpage: [view here.](#)

Health Care Action Plan

See Appendix A for a list of acronyms.

Strategy #1: Improve Community Health – Implement the goals and strategies identified in the 2019 Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) and the 2020-2022 Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP).

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
	a. Mental Health: Improve access to and sustainability of services and housing for individuals with mental health needs in order to support safe, stable living in the least restrictive environment.	Foundation Health Partners	Alaska Division of Public Health, Veterans Administration (VA), Assisted Living Facilities, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA), UAF, TCC, Fairbanks Native Association (FNA), Fairbanks Community Mental Health Services (FCMHS), other mental health service providers	Varies	Ongoing
	b. Senior Care: Ensure our rapidly growing senior-age population is able to live safely in the least restrictive environments for as long as possible.	Foundation Health Partners	North Star Council on Aging, Alaska Division of Public Health, FNSB, AMHTA, TCC	Varies	Ongoing
	c. Adverse Childhood Experiences/Trauma: Reduce numbers of Interior Alaskans experiencing preventable trauma, and increase numbers of Interior Alaskans with protective factors.	Foundation Health Partners	Alaska Division of Public Health, TCC, FNSB School District, Alaska Office of Children’s Services, Family Centered Services of Alaska	Varies	Ongoing
	d. Physical Health/Healthy Behaviors: Reduce the incidence and long-term impacts of chronic health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.	Foundation Health Partners	Alaska Division of Public Health, TCC, Interior Community Health Center, DoD, American Lung Association of Alaska	Varies	Ongoing
	e. COVID-19: Interior Alaska prepared to respond to outbreaks of the COVID-19 virus and other emergencies.	Foundation Health Partners	Alaska Division of Public Health, FNSB, TCC, other health care providers	Varies	Ongoing

Strategy #2: Increase Collaboration – Convene health care providers on a regular basis to identify shared priorities.

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
	a. Maintain joint planning and cooperation among military and civilian health planners and health and social service providers serving the region. Consider conducting a joint assessment of health needs and resources on a regular basis.	Foundation Health Partners	FEDC, TCC, DoD, other health care providers	Varies	Ongoing
	b. Implement the Open Minds service model to serve consumers with chronic and complex conditions.	UAF	Foundation Health Partners, TCC, other health care providers	TBD	TBD
	c. Create shared data collection and tracking tools to identify workforce and specialty needs/gaps.	TBD	Foundation Health Partners, TCC, DoD, FEDC	Varies	Ongoing
	d. Create a shared recruitment and retention plan to attract health care workers to FNSB.	TBD	Foundation Health Partners, TCC, DoD, FEDC	Varies	Ongoing

Strategy #3: Fill Gaps in Health Care – Identify and address gaps in specialty care.

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
	a. Address and recruit for known gaps in medical specialty care, behavioral health services, geriatric specialties, dermatology.	Foundation Health Partners, TCC, DoD	Health care providers	TBD	Ongoing
	b. Reinstate the dental hygiene program at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.	UAF	Alaska Dental Society	TBD	TBD
	c. Expand and improve the RN program statewide.	UAA	Health care providers	TBD	TBD
	d. Establish a LPN program at UAF.	UAF	Health care providers	TBD	TBD
	e. Increase the availability of senior and elder services, especially for dementia-related disease; advocate for improved reimbursement options to provide senior care.	Foundation Health Partners	North Star Council on Aging, Alaska Division of Public Health, FNSB, AMHTA, TCC, VA	TBD	Ongoing
	f. Expand in-home nursing care options, including CNAs.	Foundation Health Partners	North Star Council on Aging, Alaska Division of Public Health, FNSB, TCC	TBD	Ongoing
	g. Expand 24/7 outpatient care.			TBD	Ongoing
	h. Increase secondary school career paths in health care fields.	FNSB School District	Foundation Health Partners, TCC, UAF	TBD	Ongoing
	i. Advocate for Medicare and Medicaid revisions, including price transparency and reimbursable rates.	TBD		TBD	Ongoing

Strategy #4: Support Healthy Families – Support households moving to our community by ensuring there is access to high quality of life in the FNSB community.

Capital Project?	Action	Lead	Support	Estimated Resources	Target Completion
	a. Ensure adequate availability of family support services to build on strengths of military families and mitigate risks.	DoD	Foundation Health Partners	TBD	Ongoing
	b. Recruit and retain mental health clinicians and behavioral health providers.	Foundation Health Partners	Alaska Division of Public Health, VA, AMHTA, UAF, TCC, FNA, FCMHS, other mental and behavioral health service providers	Varies	Ongoing
	c. Implement recommendations identified in the Fort Wainwright Behavioral Health Epidemiological Consultation (EPICON) to improve quality of life in the community.	DoD	Foundation Health Partners, Alaska Division of Public Health, VA, AMHTA, UAF, TCC, FNA, FCMHS, other mental and behavioral health service providers	TBD	TBD