



UNIVERSITY
of ALASKA

HEALTH PROGRAMS



Pathways to Alaska Health Care Careers

May 2007



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May 2007



From the University President

Over the past five years, the University of Alaska has worked strategically to meet the workforce needs of one of our most vital and fastest growing industries - the health and human services sector. UA enrollments in these high demand job areas have grown by 66 percent since 2001. Hundreds of well qualified UA graduates are filling vital positions in nursing, behavioral health, allied health, and other relevant fields.

In order to meet these needs, our University has prioritized state investment in these program expansions. Industry partners have stepped up to contribute time and money as well.

I hope you will find this booklet on the University of Alaska Health Programs useful and enlightening. Some highlights include:

- Nursing education expanded from one to eleven communities and nursing graduates have doubled.
- Eight Alaska hospitals contributed over \$4.1 million dollars in five years to support RN education.
- Enrollment in allied health programs increased by 120 percent with students all across the state.
- The Denali Commission funded critical distance delivery development of allied health programs vital to rural clinics.
- The University formed a strategic partnership with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, which led to numerous Behavioral Health program expansions.
- The Master's in Public Health program grew to attract more than 50 high caliber students.
- WWAMI: Alaska's Medical School, continued as the number one ranked primary care medical education program in the United States

I want to congratulate the many leaders in the University system who have made this effort possible. Working together they have revolutionized the way the University has responded to an important Alaska workforce need. A trained, qualified health care workforce can only lead to a healthier Alaska in the future.

— Mark Hamilton
 President



Mark Hamilton
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From the Associate Vice President of Health Programs

The University of Alaska has a pivotal role to play in meeting the significant health and human service work force needs of Alaska. State labor projections show a continued strong job forecast for virtually every health care profession. Employers report significant shortages in qualified personnel.

Recent studies show that over \$24 million in costs are added to Alaska's health care system from vacancies and the need to import temporary health workers.

The University has responded by producing hundreds of new graduates and creating many new degree programs. Program expansion has been based on a number of principles including:

- Strategic planning and cooperation among all campuses to enhance offerings and eliminate duplication.
- Export of programs, like nursing, to many sites from a centralized center of excellence through use of distance technology.
- "Grow our own" philosophy, which brings articulated career ladder programs to students in rural and urban settings and at mid-career.
- Industry partnerships and statewide dialogue to improve the University's responsiveness.

I hope you will share my excitement about the future of health workforce development as you read this publication.

We have a strong team of health and human services faculty, administrators and staff at the University of Alaska who will continue to push for increasing the quality and quantity of our offerings.

— Karen Perdue
 Associate Vice President of Health Programs



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Distance Learning

Learning where you live

From how to draw blood, to anatomy and physiology, the faculty of the University of Alaska have used new ways to deliver education to students regardless of where they live.

According to Sally Mead, director of the Allied Health Sciences Division at the University of Alaska Anchorage, the challenge was to create an educational system that allows Alaska to grow its own workers, and views people committed to living and working in rural Alaska as an invaluable resource.

“We’ve been very aggressive in using distance education for things that people wouldn’t normally think could be taught by distance,” she said.

Old models of course delivery asked prospective students to travel away from their homes – sometimes for a period of several years – to gain the education necessary to become a nurse, clinical laboratory technician or a social worker.

“Today, we train people in their own communities as much as we can,” Mead said. “The whole philosophy of this expansion is to grow our own. We’re talking about an industry that is growing. The jobs are good, but the industry is paying extra to import workers.”

It cost Alaska’s health care industry \$24 million to recruit and hire health care workers in one recent year reviewed in the study “Status of Recruitment Resources and Strategies,” released in February 2006. That report concluded that it cost an average of \$35,413 to recruit and relocate key health care professionals.

“Experience has shown us that the best people for Alaska’s health care jobs already live here,” Mead said. “Training Alaskans for Alaska’s thousands of good health care jobs is the only long-term solution.”

Enter the Denali Commission. Since its inception, the one-of-a-kind federally funded program has spent about 28 percent of its annual budget on building health care facilities and providing training.

In partnership with the University of Alaska, the Denali Commission invested \$4.21 million from 2004-06 to design and



Sue Miller and Nina Mehegak are limited radiography students participating in an “Elluminate Live” session at the Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Center in Bethel.

develop distance delivery programming in an array of allied health occupations available to residents of rural Alaska.

“We’ve made great strides toward creating educational opportunities that empower Alaskans to stay in Alaska and pursue careers in health care,” Mead said.

The goal is to put an educational system in place that enables rural Alaskans to train at home for health care jobs in rural Alaska, or to advance their skills in existing health care jobs, she said. Since project inception, 50 courses have been developed covering eight occupational areas. By the end of the academic year, some 1,039 individuals had been involved in a variety of training courses and related activities.

Whether learning in a face-to-face environment, or a distance-delivered setting, Alaska students are performing well when compared to national standards. For example, nursing students perform in the same high quality manner on the national exam whether they are enrolled through the remote program or on campus, Mead said.

“Distance is not a barrier to learning,” she said. “It’s the future of its delivery.”

For more information: www.alaska.edu/distance/

Health Distance Education Partnership (HDEP)

Distance education is booming throughout higher education, but nowhere is it more integral to success than in the bid to “grow our own,” according to Mia Oxley, manager of the University of Alaska Health Distance Education Partnership.

In its many forms, distance delivery actually encompasses all kinds of learning experiences in which instructors and students connect across the distances of geography or time.

Oxley said HDEP was launched in 2004 to give health faculty the tools and support to successfully migrate existing courses from traditional face-to-face teaching to distance delivery.

UA health programs currently use a mix of distance technologies. Audio and video conferencing, which have been around for a while, have been joined by expanded use of Blackboard, and other proven Web-based tools like “Elluminate Live.”

HDEP helps keep faculty abreast of such developments because with HDEP, developing distance learning is a collaborative venture. Instructors bring up-to-date expertise in academics and their respective clinical fields. Instructional design teams bring up-to-date expertise in technology and learning theory. Given the hands-on support of instructional design teams, health faculty members are equipped to incorporate distance learning technologies, and the teaching approaches that go along with them. For information contact Mia Oxley at (907) 786-4933 or oxley@uaa.alaska.edu.

UAA School of Nursing first in nation to house an ‘Area Health Education Center’

In September 2005, Alaska’s nursing school became the first in the nation to have an Area Health Education Center (AHEC).

AHEC Associate Director Beth Landon said other similar programs are housed in medical schools. Nationwide, the programs are intended to create formal relationships between universities and community partners to strengthen the health workforce in underserved communities.

The Alaska AHEC is responsible for strengthening the health workforce via collaborations with regional partners in three main areas: encouraging Alaska’s youth to pursue careers in health care; facilitating clinical rotation opportunities in underserved sites; and improving access to continuing education for health professionals in underserved areas.

In its first year, the AHEC Office has contracted with the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corp. and Fairbanks Memorial Hospital to create AHEC Centers within their organizations. In September 2006, the Alaska Family Medicine Residency added an AHEC Center to serve Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough. In subsequent years, two to three more centers will be added to expand services statewide.

In Fall 2005, more than 4,300 students were enrolled in health educational programs throughout the University of Alaska system. Approximately 860 of these, or 20 percent, were enrolled in programs offered in whole or in part through distance education methods.



Sally Mead

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Allied Health

9 of the top 10 fastest growing occupations in Alaska are in health care fields.

Photo by Craig Haver, courtesy of Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Allied health care professionals are 60 percent of health workforce

There are hundreds of professions in health care besides nurses and physicians. In fact, more than 60 percent of the health care workforce falls under the heading of “allied health care.”

They include dental hygienists, medical sonographers, dietitians, medical technologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, radiographers, respiratory therapists, speech language pathologists and many other occupations.

Bernice Joseph, Vice Chancellor, Rural and Community Development at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, said more than 80 professions are part of the field of allied health.



Bernice Joseph

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Alexia Wassilie, Clinical Lab
Assistant student in Bethel

People statewide are increasingly aware of allied health training opportunities and the quality of education that can be provided via distance learning, she said.

In response to a March 2001 comprehensive Alaska Allied Health Workforce Statewide Assessment survey, the university began to expand programs to meet health workforce development needs through its initiative process.

The next year the University of Alaska’s Allied Health Alliance formed. Made up of allied health deans and directors, and Karen Perdue, Associate Vice President for Health Programs, the alliance is a cross-campus planning and coordination group.



Karen Schmitt

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Sue Miller and Nina Mehegak, Limited Radiography students at work at the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation X-ray clinic in Bethel.

As University staff and industry professionals began studying Alaska's allied health needs, Karen Schmitt, Dean of Career Education at the University of Alaska Southeast, said it became clear that allied health vacancy rates were consistently higher in rural Alaska than in urban areas. Torie Foote, Director of the College of Rural and Community Development Health Programs at UAF, said industry, the state and the university worked together to offer new allied health training opportunities to residents of rural Alaska.

"In many instances, local residents can be trained to take these positions," Foote said of the allied health vacancies in rural Alaska.

When the Alliance began, Rick Caulfield, Director of the Tanana Valley Campus, said UAS, UAF and UAA all had some distance-delivered allied health programs in place, but coordination was limited and there was lots of potential opportunity to expand the programs.

Jan Gehler, Dean of the Community and Technical College at UAA, said partners put their heads together at Allied Health Forums in April 2003 and May 2006 to come up with a plan to meet Alaska's need for allied health professionals.



The UAA Dental Hygiene Program class of 2005 ranked #2, out of 254 schools, on the National Written Board Examination for Dental Hygienists.

Between 2000 and 2005, enrollment in allied health programs at UA increased by 120 percent.

Marsha Sousa, program coordinator for Allied Health Programs at the Tanana Valley Campus, said by using a blended distance delivery model, training programs reach students where they live - no matter how remote.

New distance programs include; Medical Billing and Coding; Community Wellness Advocate; Personal Care Attendant/Certified Nurse Assistant; Pharmacy Technician; Limited Radiographer; Dental Assisting; and Medical Laboratory Careers.

Joseph said preparing professionals for Alaska's present and predicted allied health demand is especially tricky since

so many occupations and professions are involved and each one needs a different number of workers.

It is easy to oversupply or undersupply a particular occupation so educational programs must be planned carefully, she said.

Through 2010, the U.S Labor Department predicts that the top 30 fastest growing jobs in the nation will be in the field of allied health.

"Continued, increased and stable funding is essential," Joseph said.

For more information: akhealthcareers.org, www.uas.alaska.edu/healthscience/programs.htm, www.uaa.alaska.edu/ctc/programs/alliedhealth.



Photo by Clark James Mishler

Austin McLeod, Aliasha Christner, Zack Schindler and Mike Oliver log-roll Heather Perry after strapping her to a long spine board as part of an EMT-I class at Kenai Peninsula College. The school's degree-level paramedical program was the first of its kind in the state.



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Allied Health Alliance

University of Alaska's Allied Health Alliance was formed in 2002 using funds from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration.

The Allied Health Alliance is comprised of Karen Perdue, associate vice president of health programs for the University of Alaska, and deans and directors of allied health from campuses statewide.

The mission of AHA is to coordinate and expand health care education course offerings across the university's 16 campuses statewide. One component of this collaborative effort was the development of a database of health career education components accessible by all health care educators, workers, students and potential students/workers. Perdue first convened the Alliance in 2002 to review workforce shortage data and information and outline allied health programs offered by the university.

In 2003 the Alliance met again with industry participants and other representatives and identified the development of distance delivered programming as a high priority for disseminating existing classes statewide.

That same year, the Alliance presented a training proposal to the Denali Commission seeking funding to provide allied health occupational training in support of health infrastructure development in the rural areas of the state.

The group met again in May 2006 at the University Industry Allied Health Forum.

Since forming the Alliance has:

- Significantly impacted allied and related health programs statewide.
- Strategically employed distance technology to leverage the expansion and provide greater statewide access to high-demand programs.
- Partnered with industry for direct program financial support and access for student clinical experiences.
- Expanded access to high-demand allied health programs and increased student credit hours in related instruction at all major campus units.
- Partnered with the School of Nursing to expand the instructional design capacity at all campuses via the Health Distance Education Project.

This work has greatly expanded the ability of the University to address the allied health workforce needs of Alaska.



Michelle Konig works at the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corp. pharmacy.



Allied Health Alliance members. Back row: Sally Mead, Rick Caulfield, Joe Cladouhos; Middle row: Torie Foote, Mia Oxley, Karen Schmitt, Marsha Sousa and Jan Harris; Front row: Karen Perdue, Jan Gehler and Bernice Joseph.



Rick Caulfield

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UA enrollments in *all* health programs have grown by 66 percent and graduates have increased by 55 percent in the last five years.

In the same period, enrollment in Allied Health programs has grown by 120 percent and graduates have increased by 71 percent.

Allied Health Vacancies

- Billing/Coding – 9 percent vacancy rate, 37 vacancies.
- Pharmacists – 12 percent vacancy rate, 23 vacancies
- Pharmacy Technician – 5 percent vacancy rate, 9 vacancies
- Radiologic Technician – 9 percent vacancy rate, 18 vacancies.
- Medical Technologist – 9 percent vacancy rate, 13 vacancies.
- Medical Lab Tech – 8 percent vacancy rate, 9 vacancies.
- Community Health Aide Program – 20 percent vacancy rate, 45 vacancies.
- Dental Hygienist – 13 percent vacancy rate, 14 vacancies.
- Dental Assistant – 9 percent vacancy rate, 19 vacancies.
- Certified Nurse Assistant – 12 percent vacancy rate, 137 vacancies.
- Personal Care Attendant – 8 percent vacancy rate, 83 vacancies.
- Community Wellness Advocate – 33 percent vacancy rate, 5 vacancies.
- Physical Therapist – 18 percent vacancy rate, 31 vacancies.
- Occupational Therapist – 30 percent vacancy rate, 9 vacancies

Source: In 2005, 275 organizations responded to a Alaska Allied Health Vacancy survey.



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ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS

	UAA	UAF	UAS
DENTAL:			
Dental Assistant (AAS)	■	■	
Dental Assistant Certificate	■	■	
Dental Hygiene (AAS)	■		
HEALTH INFORMATION/IN PATIENT:			
Health Information Management (AAS) (D)**			■
Healthcare Reimbursement (Certificate)		■	
Healthcare Privacy (Certificate) (D)**			■
Health Information Management - Coding Specialist (Certificate) (D)**			■
Medical Office Specialist (Certificate)(OE)*(D)**			■
MEDICAL OFFICE/OUT PATIENT:			
Medical Assistant (Certificate/AAS)	■	■	
Medical Transcription (Courses)	■	■	
Medical Insurance/Coding (OE)*	■		
Medical Reimbursement (OE)	■		
Medical/Dental Reception (Certificate)	■		
MEDICAL LABORATORY:			
Phlebotomy and Lab Assisting (OE)*(D)**	■		
Phlebotomy (Certificate)	■		
Clinical Assistant (OE)*(D)**	■		
Medical Laboratory Technology (AAS)	■		
Medical Technology (BS)	■		
RADIOLOGY:			
Radiologic Technology (AAS) (D)**	■		
Pre-Radiologic Technology Qualifications (Cert.)			■
Mammographer	■		
Limited Radiographer (OE)*	■		
EMERGENCY SERVICES:			
Paramedic (AAS)	■	■	
Emergency Services	■	■	■
Emergency Services (OE)*	■	■	■
PHARMACY CAREERS:			
Pharmacy Technician (OE)*(D)**	■		
ADDITIONAL ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAMS:			
Community Health (AAS)		■	
Community Health/Practice (Certificates)		■	
Massage Therapy Program (Continuing Education)	■		
Gerontology Minor	■		
Community Wellness Advocate (Certificate) (D)**			■
Project Success (Courses)	■		
Health Sciences (AAS,BS)	■		
NUTRITION:			
Minor in Nutrition	■		
DIRECT SERVICES			
Personal Care Attendant	■	■	■
PCA Bridge to CNA (D)**			■
Certified Nurse Aide/Assistant (D)**	■	■	■

*(OE)-Occupational Endorsement
**(D)-Distance Delivery Available

A recent survey shows that 93 percent of nursing graduates stay in Alaska for their first jobs

Nursing

School of Nursing doubles graduates, more still needed

In 2002, the University/Industry Nursing Education Task Force established the goal of doubling the number of basic nursing graduates (AAS and BS programs) from the UAA School of Nursing by 2006. The capacity of the School has been doubled - from 96 admissions slots in 2002 to 215 slots in this academic year.

Karen Perdue, Associate Vice President of Health Programs, said the University's industry partners were key to the process.

"Without the financial donations of Alaska health care industry partners, and the in-kind contributions of literally hundreds of clinical sites, the School of Nursing would have been unable to expand its programs to better meet industry needs now and in the future," she said.

Industry partners have given more than \$4 million so far in the effort to build a school that graduates sufficient nurses to meet the needs of Alaska's health system.

Jean Ballantyne, Director of the School of Nursing, said the investment helps to address existing and future workforce needs in Alaska and helps to build a workforce that's inclined to stay in the state long-term.

The school doubled its capacity by:

- Expanding the baccalaureate nursing program by increasing the number of students in each admission cohort from 32 to 40, and admitting three cohorts a year, instead of two.
- Expanding the associate degree nursing program to 11 communities in Alaska.
- Adding a master's degree in nursing education to begin "growing our own" faculty.
- Taking the practical nursing program to several distance sites at community request.
- Improving the distance delivery of nursing courses.

By expanding the number of communities where students can enroll in the AAS program, the School of Nursing plans to graduate about 240 to 250 students each year, according to Jackie Pflaum, associate director of the School of Nursing.



Photo by Clark James Mishler

University of Alaska Anchorage School of Nursing graduates Judy Besh ('82) and Patty Dempsey ('83) use their training as school nurses in the Anchorage School District. "The nursing office is one of the first places kids will come for help," Dempsey said. "They see it as a safe haven."



Jean Ballantyne

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Jackie Pflaum

Associate Director, School of Nursing
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Photo by Craig Haver, courtesy of Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium



Kayleen Evatt, RN, works in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit (PACU) at the Alaska Native Medical Center. She graduated from UAA in 2001.

“That’s the number of new nurses the health care industry in Alaska has indicated it can absorb on an annual basis,” she said.

The Associate of Applied Science in nursing program is offered in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kodiak, Bethel, Juneau, Ketchikan, Kenai, Sitka, Homer, Mat-Su and Kotzebue, using a blended delivery model with online didactic and on-site clinical instruction.

Ballantyne said that sites in Petersburg, Barrow, Nome, Dillingham and Valdez also are being evaluated for future offerings.

What is driving the global shortage of nurses?

- aging population;
- aging nursing population;
- inadequate supply pipeline of new nurses;
- image of nursing as a profession for women;
- a work environment that is not perceived by others as attractive.

With the significant increase in numbers of new graduate nurses, Alaska is still in the midst of a serious and worsening nursing shortage, Ballantyne said.

Even with the expanded program, nursing vacancy rates have held steady at around 8 percent for the past three years, she said, but coming retirements are anticipated to greatly increase the need for nurses worldwide.

By 2020, the Health Resources and Services Administration estimates the U.S. will be short more than 800,000 RNs.

“As far as we have come, we are only at the beginning of the nursing shortage,” Ballantyne said.

Clinical opportunities for students limit how much further expansion is feasible, she said. Through the increased use of patient simulators the university can offset this problem in a limited way.

The School of Nursing has developed a master’s degree in nursing education to begin to “grow its own” faculty, Ballantyne said. The program is fully distance-delivered. The expansion required the school to expand from 25 to 43 faculty over the past four years.

“With the nationwide nursing faculty shortage, we need to prepare the educators of the future, too,” she said.

An executive search firm has been engaged to recruit new faculty.

“The best news for Alaska is our preliminary data shows 93 percent of December 2005 graduates intend to remain in Alaska for their first jobs,” Pflaum said.

As long as the Alaska health care industry can continue to hire our new graduates, university officials expect these numbers to stay up over time. The School of Nursing also is looking ahead by updating its comprehensive strategic plan to address the continued expansion and the development of its programs, while also improving communication, student responsiveness and faculty recruitment, retention and development.

For more information: nursing.uaa.alaska.edu/



Photo by Craig Haver, courtesy of Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium

Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing

Located within the School of Nursing at the University of Alaska Anchorage, the Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing (RRANN) program was created to increase the number of Alaska Natives and American Indians graduating with associate’s of applied science or bachelor’s of science degrees in nursing. Alaska Native/American Indians comprised 16 percent of the state’s population in 1996, but made up only 1.5 percent of the state’s nursing workforce.

Nurses at the Alaska Native Medical Center.

Back-row, left to right, Kayleen Fayer, RN, Day Surgery; Pam Mijjure-Bryson, Clinical Nurse, Day Surgery; Kathy Hillburn, CND; Anita Vogt, Clinical Nurse, Day Surgery. Front-row, left to right, Kristi Rutman, Day Surgery, Intern; Ella Lestenkof, LPN, ANMC Day Surgery; Russelle Wilson, RN, Day Surgery.



Jan Harris

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Since the program began in 1999, 60 Alaska Native and American Indian nurses have graduated from the Anchorage campus. By 2002 Alaska Native nurses represented about 2.4 percent of the workforce.

About 80 students are in their pre-clinical years, preparing to apply for the program. There also are nine RRANN students in Southeast and three elsewhere in the state.

The program offers college preparation counseling, admission planning help, information about the different degree programs and

course requirements, mentoring, tutoring, financial assistance and on-campus housing for eligible students.

RRANN originally received federal grant funding at its inception in 1998 and has subsequently been funded with federal funds earmarked by Alaska’s congressional delegation.

Generous contributions from the Rasmuson Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation provide for continued program activities and for expansion to other areas of the state.

For more information: www.nursing.alaska.edu/rrann/
www.uas.alaska.edu/healthscience/rrann.htm
www.tvc.uaf.edu/programs/health/nursing.html

Academic Year	Nursing Program Outreach Sites	No. of Sites
2000	Anchorage	1
2001	Fairbanks, Kodiak	3
2004	Bethel, Juneau, Ketchikan	6
2005	Kenai, Sitka	8
2006	Homer, Mat-Su, Kotzebue	11

Behavioral Health

Alaska will face a 47 percent increase in the need for behavioral health professionals by 2010.

Alaska's Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative

The growing challenge of recruiting and retaining an effective behavioral health workforce is even more difficult in largely rural states such as Alaska.

According to Cheryl Easley, Dean of the College of Health and Social Welfare at the University of Alaska Anchorage, behavioral health professionals work in a wide variety of fields, such as psychology, human services, rehabilitation, nursing and social work, that provide mental health services to individuals (children and adults), families and communities.

Activities can include prevention and treatment of mental illness and substance abuse, and assistance with solving problems associated with mental or physical disabilities, Easley said.

The President's New Freedom Commission on Mental Health predicts that the shortage of skilled workers will become more severe in the next decade.

Karen Ward, director of the Center for Human Development, said Alaska will need nearly 50 percent more behavioral health professionals by 2010.

Already, mental health and substance abuse counselors are the sixth fastest growing occupations in Alaska, according to Christiane Brems, professor and co-director of Behavioral Health Research and Services.

Karen Perdue, UA Associate Vice President for Health Programs, also said current increased enrollment and graduate trends in UA behavioral health programs aren't sufficient to meet industry's projected demand.

With the guidance of the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, the university responded by convening educators from across the behavioral health fields to discuss how to most effectively address workforce shortages.

From this gathering, the Alaska's Behavioral Health Initiative Partnership (BHIP) was created and funded through a unique coalition, which includes the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the state of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services and the University of Alaska.

In May 2004, more than 100 providers, policymakers and educators attended a two-day summit to develop a strategic plan that addressed the supply of behavioral health workers in Alaska.

Partners committed about \$4.2 million in new funds over four years to:

- increase the supply of workers from certificate to doctoral level,
- improve course and program articulation across university campuses and programs,
- increase cultural competence skills of the existing and new workforce, and
- ensure curriculum reflects new practice trends, especially integration of substance abuse and mental health practices.

Selected projects of the partnership

PhD Program in Clinical/Community Psychology – Doctorate-level program in psychology focused on applied research germane to Alaska with a single curriculum and joint governance and faculty at UAF and UAA.

Master's in Social Work Distance Education Expansion Program (UAA) – admits students who have completed a bachelor's in social work. This will double the number of master's in social work graduates.

Bachelor's in Social Work Expansion (UAF) – Increases the number of bachelor's in social work majors by providing a cohort/intensive degree program for rural Alaska Native students, the majority of whom are employees of health corporations and graduates of the Rural Human Services Certificate and Human Services Associate degree programs.



Bethel man continues family tradition

Guy Daniel Guy is a Yupik Eskimo born in Bethel and raised in Kwethluk. While growing up, Guy was strongly influenced by his grandmother, a traditional healing counselor and one of the first Community Health Aides in Kwethluk. "Her life inspired me to follow in her footsteps and to be in the helping profession" he said.

In 1995, Guy began his career in the helping profession by becoming certified as a substance abuse counselor. He worked with the Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corp. 1995 to 1999. Although he enjoyed working as a counselor for YKHC, Guy felt it was important to get more education. "If you have a degree, people listen to you more and you can be a better advocate for your client(s)." It is this feeling that led him to University of Alaska Anchorage's Social Work program. He currently holds an MSW from UAA.

Human Services (UAA) – The UAA Human Services Department offers both an Associate and Bachelor’s degree in Human Services accredited by the Counsel for Standards in Human Service Education thus providing graduates the option to become nationally certified as Human Service workers. The department also offers a minor in Addictions. Human Service graduates interested in a career in Substance Abuse treatment can, through well planned academic advising and targeted coursework and practica placements, can become certified in the field by the State of Alaska. Additionally, the department offers an Occupational Endorsement in Conflict Resolution.

Human Services (UAF) – Rural Alaska Native students earn an AAS degree in Human Services. Tribal employers support workers to complete the degree and offer incentives with career advancement. The program is offered statewide through two distinct educational pathways including one that is offered totally at a distance, primarily through audio-conferencing, and a second through a cohort program. In this second pathway, cohorts of 20 students form learning communities blending face-to-face intensive courses with distance education instruction. This initiative provides an 85 percent annual student completion rate. Half of the students continue on toward a bachelor’s in social work or psychology.

Residential Aide Certificate (UAA) – Focuses on increasing the skill-level and the number of trained, entry level behavioral health aides employed in residential environments. This effort is targeted to assist state efforts to serve children in need of residential care who are currently in residential services out of state, or the Bring the Kids Home Initiative.

Training Academy for Rural Behavioral Health (UAF) – Provides a range of curriculum options designed to meet the continuing training needs of the behavioral health workforce statewide. Training is eligible for Continuing Education Units.



Statewide Behavioral Health Director Larry Roberts works with students Cecelia Nation and Rosemary Allen.

For more information: www.akhealthcareers.org
www.uaa.alaska.edu/psych ■ www.uaf.edu/psych
www.uaa.alaska.edu/hums ■ www.uaf.edu/arbhta
www.alaskachd.org ■ www.alaska.edu/canhr/
www.bhrs.uaa.alaska.edu ■ www.uaf.edu/crcdhealth/
www.uaf.edu/socwork/ ■ <http://socialwork.uaa.alaska.edu>



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Alaska Natives into Psychology (UAA,UAF)

The Alaska Natives into Psychology program resides in the Psychology Department and began in 1999 to train Alaska Natives as psychologists and other behavioral and mental health professionals. Graduates of the program then provide support to Alaska Native communities in achieving their goal of establishing greater wellness in their villages. ANPsych creates a campus community for students and there is a faculty member for each student receiving a stipend.

The objectives of the ANPsych program are:

- Outreach and recruitment of Alaska Natives and American Indians into psychology and other mental health careers.
- Provide summer enrichment programs.
- Provide stipends, assistantships and scholarships for students to pursue their education and careers.
- Provide competitive research grants for Alaska Native projects.
- Develop affiliation agreements to enhance their educational experience.
- Help utilize existing UAA tutoring, counseling and student support services.
- Employ qualified individuals into the ANPsych program.

Behavioral Health Initiative Partnership

Founded in 2004 by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the State of Alaska, DHSS, and the University this partnership focuses on improving educational responsiveness to Alaska’s behavioral health workforce needs.

Members of the steering committee include Dr. William Doolittle, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA); Delisa Culpepper, COO Alaska (AMHTA); Bill Hogan, Deputy Commissioner, State Department of Health and Social Services; Cheryl Easley, College of Health and Social Welfare; John Pugh, Chancellor, UAS; Jerry Mohatt, professor UAF and Karen Perdue, Associate Vice President, Health Programs UA.

In 2006, the AMHTA expanded its efforts by making workforce developments one of five top priorities

New PhD in psychology offered at UAA, UAF

The new doctorate-level program in clinical-community psychology with rural, indigenous emphasis is delivered and administered jointly by the Departments of Psychology at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and the University of Alaska Anchorage.

All program courses are co-taught across campuses via video conference and all program components are delivered by faculty at both campuses. The student experience is identical whether students are located in Fairbanks or Anchorage. The rigorous training experience requires a student's full-time commitment.

The program is on the forefront of creative and enriching knowledge dissemination that is locally relevant; focused on public service; sensitive to the unique environments of Alaska; and concerned with acknowledging, fostering, and celebrating diversity. It was recently selected by the Annapolis Coalition as an innovative national practice.

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

	UAA	UAF	UAS
PSYCHIATRIC NURSING:			
Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner (MS)	■		
SOCIAL WORK:			
Social Work (BSW/BA)	■	■	
Social Work (MSW)	■		
PSYCHOLOGY:			
Clinical/Community Psychology (PhD)	■	■	
Clinical Psychology (MS)	■		
Community Mental Health Services (Certificate) - In Development	■		■
Psychology (BA)	■		
Psychology (BS)		■	
HUMAN SERVICES:			
Human Services (BHS)	■		
Human Services (AAS)	■		
Conflict Resolution (OE)*	■		
Rural Human Services (Certificate)		■	
DISABILITIES SERVICES:			
Disabilities Services - Learn as you Earn (Certificate/AAS)	■		

*Occupational Endorsement



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Medical Education

WWAMI, Alaska's medical school, is ranked No. 1 in U.S. News and World Report's 2007 list of America's Best Graduate Schools for the 13th consecutive year.

WWAMI - Alaska's medical school

Each year a handful of Alaska students are accepted into one of the best medical education programs in the nation – a multi-state school known as WWAMI. The University of Alaska is one of 6 universities in this collaborative medical school that is administratively centered at the The University of Washington School of Medicine. WWAMI stands for the participating states – Wyoming, Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho.

Each year 10 qualified Alaska residents begin medical school in WWAMI. Their first year medical school classes are at the University of Alaska Anchorage, and students can elect to complete nearly three years of the four-year curriculum in Alaska.

The WWAMI program has been rated as the No. 1 Primary Care Medical School by U.S. News and World Report's rankings of America's Best Graduate Schools for 13 consecutive years. But, the program is being challenged to train physicians fast enough to keep up with demand, said Dennis Valenzano, Director of the Alaska WWAMI Biomedical Program at UAA. Alaska already is in the midst of a shortage of physicians in both rural and urban communities. In the next decade, predictions suggest Alaska will need more than 100 new physicians per year. But national projections predict a growing physician shortage in the next 10 years and an aging state and national population which requires more medical care.

"The best strategy is to train Alaskans to fill Alaska's need," Valenzano said.

Perdue said a Physicians Supply Task Force was appointed by UA President Mark Hamilton and Commissioner Karleen Jackson, Alaska Health and Social Services, to study the problem and propose solutions.

"We're continuing to look at ways to attract and retain physicians in Alaska," Perdue said. In 2005, nearly 80 qualified Alaskans applied for the 10 positions in the program. Only Hawaiian applicants were statistically less likely to gain

acceptance to a U.S. medical school in 2004. Valenzano said that more seats for Alaska medical students are desperately needed.

"Increasing class size would help with Alaska's physician shortage and provide in-state opportunities to Alaska's best and brightest," he said. WWAMI physicians already practice throughout the state in communities such as Homer, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan, Palmer, Soldotna, Tok and Wasilla. At least 50 percent of Alaska's WWAMI graduates return to the state to practice medicine, Valenzano said. Overall, more than 70 percent of WWAMI graduates, from all WWAMI states, choose to practice in Alaska, he said.

In its infancy, WWAMI students could only complete their first year of medical school in Alaska. Now students only have to leave the state for 56 weeks during the four-year medical school program.

Just prior to the printing of this booklet Governor Sarah Palin signed a bill that increases Alaska WWAMI class size to a minimum of 20 entering students.

For more information, visit <http://biomed.uaa.alaska.edu/>.



WWAMI Entering Class of 2005
Back Row (L-R): John Heimerl, Evan Jones, Hans Tulip, Thomas Quimby, A. Michal Stevens.
Front Row (L-R): Janelle Dubbins, Sarah Murphy, Elisha Gionet, Mackenzie Slater, Erin Lester



Dennis Valenzano

Associate Dean, Director, WWAMI Biomedical Program
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PA Completion Program

UAA's Bachelor of Science in Health Sciences Physician Assistant Track provides Alaskans an entry into PA training and offers currently practicing PAs an option for degree completion. The program is a collaborative effort with the University of Washington MEDEX Northwest Physician Assistant Program. It was developed in response to community need for rural and underserved practitioners. The physician assistant is among the top 10 fastest growing job markets in the United States.

The University of Washington MEDEX Physician Assistant Program admits up to six students from Alaska annually, in accordance with the joint selection process established in the collaborative agreement between the two universities. Applicants are evaluated on their previous clinical experience and their commitment to practice in Alaska, particularly in underserved areas, in addition to overall academic performance in the pre-physician assistant curriculum. Students accepted into the MEDEX program spend the first year of the PA program at one of the University of Washington training sites (Seattle, Spokane or Yakima), where they receive intense clinical and didactic instruction. The senior year takes place in Alaska, consisting of practicum placement. The Alaskan MEDEX graduates who do their clinical year in Alaska are returning here to practice at a rate of 78 percent.

Employment opportunities are expected to be good for physician assistants, particularly in areas or settings that have difficulty attracting physicians, such as rural and inner city clinics and in occupational medical settings that will provide health care for workers on the proposed Alaska gasline. Physicians and institutions are expected to employ more PAs to provide primary care and to assist with medical and surgical procedures because PAs are cost-effective and productive members of the health care team. Physician assistants can relieve physicians of routine duties and procedures. Telemedicine - using technology to facilitate interactive consultations between physicians and physician assistants - also will expand the use of physician assistants. The program director is John Riley, PA.

For more information: www.health.alaska.edu/bshs/

MEDICAL PROGRAMS

	UAA	UAF	UAS
WWAMI Medical School Program	■		
Physician Assistant Completion Program - Health Science (BS)	■		

Left: After completing medical school through the WWAMI program, Peter Adams returned to Alaska in 1994. He is a staff obstetrician and gynecologist at Providence Alaska Medical Center and the Denali OB-GYN Clinic. He was chief of staff at Providence Medical Center in 2003 and remains active in medical leadership.

Master's in Public Health

First Master's of Public Health students graduate nearly a year ahead of schedule

The Master's of Public Health in Public Health Practice at the University of Alaska Anchorage is a multidisciplinary program that focuses on prevention as a tool to protect the health of the whole community.

Chair and program coordinator Rhonda Johnson said the program enhances health in Alaska's diverse communities and the circumpolar north by preparing leaders to identify, prevent and solve community health problems.

Since its inception in 2003, the distance-delivered program has attracted more than 50 high-caliber graduate students from across the state. The first two students graduated in Spring 2005 – almost a year ahead of schedule. Ten more students had finished by December 2006.

The degree draws students from backgrounds as diverse as the natural sciences, social sciences, business, health care, education and law, Johnson said. Most students are early to mid-career professionals interested in expanding their professional scope.

“Our graduates are physicians, nurses, health educators and microbiologists,” Johnson said. “It's a very diverse professional opportunity.”

Johnson is also an associate professor of public health in the UAA's Department of Health Sciences.

Because the entire program is taught via distance education, students can pursue the master's degree with minimal disruption to their professional or family life, Johnson said.

The program's costs, including two, full-time faculty, and a part-time administrative assistant, are funded through a 50 percent surcharge on usual tuition.



A 2006 travel grant from the National Institute of Health and Fogarty International Center sent these four master's in public health graduate students to the International Congress of Circumpolar Health in Novosibirsk, Siberia. From left to right, Vanessa Hiratsuka, Dr. Kerry Pride, Virginia Walker and Stacey Kelley, all MPH students at UAA.

UA created its own graduate program after Hawaii and Loma Linda closed their programs, leaving a huge demand in the state for master's training, Johnson said.

The MPH, or its equivalent, is often a requirement of supervisory and leadership positions in public health and is generally considered the terminal degree in the practice of public health, she said.

The degree is an excellent springboard for a doctoral degree and is often essential to career advancement, a position in management, or a desired career change for mid-career professionals.

Johnson said the graduate degree program focuses on Alaska and circumpolar public health issues. “We use Alaska examples for everything.”

Public health also is recruiting for a Presidential Professor in Public Health. The Presidential Professor will collaborate to help shape the future of this academic program and Alaska's professional public health practice.

For more information: www.health.uaa.alaska.edu/dept/mph/



Rhonda Johnson

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New physical education leadership program produces first graduates

Implemented in 2004, the new bachelor of science in physical education with emphasis in health and fitness leadership degree program produced its first graduates in May 2006. This career pathway has more than 50 active majors and prepares students for employment in hospital-based health, education and fitness programs, fitness facilities, corporate wellness programs, further education in physical therapy or other health areas.

For more information:
<http://edit.uaa.alaska.edu/ctc/programs/physicaled/undergrad/bspe.cfm>

Facilities

Health care facilities expansion necessary to meet industry need

Infrastructure is one prong of a three-part strategy designed to meet the needs of Alaska's health care workforce.

“There is no doubt as we look at the overall health portfolio that facilities are a big part of the need,” said Cyndi Spear, UAA's associate vice chancellor for facilities and campus services. “We've stretched the current space as far as we can. In order to take the next step, we need to add facilities.”

Work has begun on a 120,000 square-foot Integrated Science Building that will open in 2009 at a cost of \$87 million – the largest capital project in UAA's history.

UAA Chancellor Elaine Maimon said the new building will position the University of Alaska on the leading edge for integrated science curriculum, study and research.

Spear said the science building is the first new building to go up at UAA since 1978.

“We had just been shuffling space and remodeling what we already had,” she said.

The next step is to provide a home for UAA's rapidly growing health programs.

The 2008 fiscal year budget includes a funding request for a \$40 million Nursing and Allied Health Building, which has been in the planning stages since 2002.

The building will sit on the corner of Providence Drive and Piper Street and will provide office and clinical space for the School of Nursing, as well as other health programs.

The science building and the health building are part of UAA's master plan, Spear said.

“From radiology technician to certified nursing assistance to physician's assistant – UA has a wide variety of health programs,” she said. “There is something for everyone.”

The proposed nursing and allied health building would consolidate programs that are currently spread out across Anchorage.

Additionally, UA has added pre-nursing labs in Kodiak and Homer and has money to finish a lab in Kenai and add new facilities in Valdez and Mat-Su College.

“University projects are an investment in Alaska's future,” Spear said. “If we don't get a head of the pipeline, costs will soar and we won't be able to get our buildings built.”

An artist's rendering of the proposed Nursing and Allied Health Building. The 2008 budget request \$40 million to begin the project, which has been in the planning stages since 2002.



Work has begun on the largest capital project in UAA's history – the 120,000 square-foot Integrated Science Building set to open in 2009 at a cost of \$87 million.



Facilities limit program growth

The Allied Health at the UAF Tanana Valley Campus provides education and training for employees in health care professions. Marsha Sousa is the coordinator of the programs. The department offers Nurse Assistant and Phlebotomy training; four certificate programs in Dental Assistant, Medical/Dental Reception, Medical Assistant, and Healthcare Reimbursement; and two associate of applied science degrees in Medical Assistant and Dental Assistant. TVC is also in the initial stages of applying for an accredited Dental Hygiene AAS program. The campus offers programs in Nursing and Radiologic Technology through the University of Alaska Anchorage.

While the number of programs and number of students has grown in the past several years, additional program growth is limited without facilities expansion, Sousa said. All Allied Health programs feature a mix of classroom learning, laboratory practice, and clinical experiences to ensure students are fully prepared for careers in the health care industry, she said.

For example, Alaska needs dental hygienists and the demand is expected to grow. But Sousa said the program won't be accredited until the program space is expanded to include a patient reception and secure records filing area. "Dental hygiene students must work on patients under the supervision of a licensed dental hygienist and a dentist while they are in training," she said. "Because of that requirement, we will be opening a hygiene clinic in our Allied Health Regional Learning Center."

The phlebotomy, nursing and medical assisting all are limited by available lab facilities. "Medical assistants cannot train adequately in a nursing lab; they need exam tables rather than beds. We want to create exam rooms similar to those at your local physician's office so that our students learn to work with all the tools they will find when they enter the workplace."

Funding requested in the Fiscal Year 2008 budget includes a request to remodel the Allied Health Regional Learning Center on the fourth floor of the Tanana Valley Campus Center to add a reception and patient records area for the dental hygiene program, add labs for phlebotomy, medical assisting programs, and nurse assistant programs. Currently the nurse assistants train across town in an old elementary school across town, Sousa said. "They don't even have a proper sink to learn hand-washing," she said.

Expansion adds nursing skills classrooms on Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka campuses

The University of Alaska Nursing Program's expansion into Southeast has enabled UAS to remodel and equip three nursing skills classrooms on the Juneau, Ketchikan and Sitka campuses.

Each campus in the region now has a high-quality training facility where nursing students, certified nursing assistant students and patient care assistant students learn and practice their care-giving skills.

After preparing in the classroom, students move into a community-based clinical training site to apply their skills in the work environment under supervision of their instructor and practicing health care professionals.



Photo by Clark James Mishler

Naomi Rice and Liz Parson use the state-of-the-art SimMan Mannikin to practice a full cardiac arrest scenario. They start by using CPR and basic airway management techniques, and then move into advanced level skills, such as intravenous placement, intubation, manual defibrillation and medicine administration.

SimMan gives students realistic emergency experience

Chuck Kuhns, University of Alaska Fairbanks' Tanana Valley Campus coordinator, started the emergency medical services program about four years ago to prepare students for entry level paramedic positions.

In October 2006, the program added a \$50,000 SimMan patient simulator to help students gain more realistic emergency experience.

"We have a manikin that can simulate a real person," Kuhns said.

The manikin is linked to a computer, which can be programmed to exhibit hundreds of patient symptoms from allergic reactions to chest pains. The next step is to add modular units to the classroom that simulate an emergency room or the back of an ambulance so students have the full simulator experience, he said.

"We want to put SimMan in a real environment where all the student has is a patient saying 'Man, my chest hurts. Help me,'" Kuhns said.

Right now, only three students at a time can work with the simulator at once. The emergency medical services program needs at least two more SimMan simulators and another model called the SimBaby, Kuhns said.

The goal is to give students experiences that are as similar as possible to what they will experience when they join the workforce.

"It doesn't take long after the manikin starts talking to you before you start to feel like you are treating an actual person," Kuhns said.

Demand for educated, competent paramedics with college degrees will continue to increase in Alaska and throughout the world in the coming years, he said.



The Nikiski Fire Department donated one of its surplus ambulances to use as a training tool for students in Kenai Peninsula College's Paramedical Technology program, which began in 2005.

The Kenai Peninsula College's Paramedical Technology program- training Alaskans

There were roughly 40 open positions for paramedics in Alaska when the Kenai Peninsula College's Kenai River Campus added its associate's degree in Paramedical Technology to the University of Alaska system.

Paul Perry, a 22-year paramedic and the new program's primary instructor, said Alaska's shortage is part of a nationwide need for paramedics and other health care professionals.

But in the Last Frontier, the challenge of recruiting and retaining professionals is compounded by cold, dark winters that stretch half the year, he said.

Gary Turner, KPC director, said talks with the emergency services community on the Kenai Peninsula suggested a solution: train Alaskans in emergency medicine.

Previously, people seeking degree-level paramedical training had to leave the state, he said.

Now the tide has turned and Alaskans are returning home to complete their paramedic training.

One student in the first class moved his family to Alaska from Oregon, thanks to the opportunity to complete an associate's degree in paramedical technology in state, Perry said.

Another classmate heard about the program in Delaware and called Perry to ask about enrolling. He filled the last slot in the first-year class.

Working with partners like Central Emergency Services and the Nikiski Fire Department, the college purchased a state-of-the-art SimMan Manikin. High-tech training tools such as this manikin, which includes features like blood pressure, lung sounds and 2,500 different cardiac rhythms, are helping students get hands-on experience in new ways.

For more information: www.kpc.alaska.edu.

Financial Partners

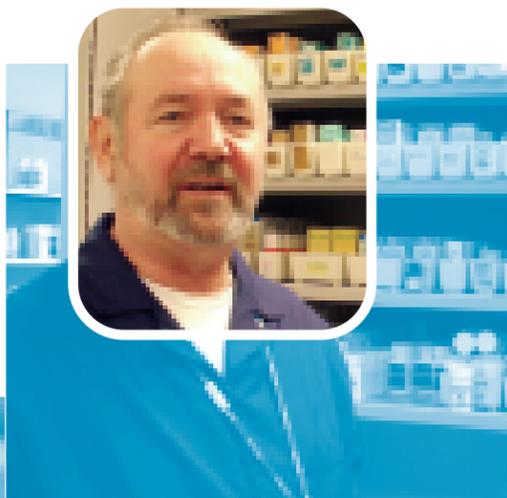
Staff across the University of Alaska system have worked hand in hand with health care industry partners for the last six years to craft health care programs that educate Alaskans for these in-demand careers. With the aid of \$8 million in gifts from our financial partners, this statewide effort increased enrollment in health majors and pre-majors by 66 percent in five years. Many thanks to our financial partners, without whom this success would be impossible.

- Denali Commission
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
- Alaska Regional Hospital
- Bartlett Regional Hospital
- Central Peninsula General Hospital
- Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
- Ketchikan General Hospital
- Providence Health System in Alaska
- Mat-Su Regional Hospital
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Alaska Dental Society
- State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
- Rasmuson Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- Norton Sound Health Corporation
- Bristol Bay Health Corporation
- Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation
- Maniilaq Health Corporation
- Council of Athabaskan Tribal Governments
- Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium
- South Peninsula Hospital

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