



# Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition

Quality Care • Care Coordination • Social Engagement

Brought to you by **JEDC**

Dear Partners and Advocates,

Across Southeast Alaska, we are facing a moment that demands unified action. The needs of our seniors are rising rapidly, while the systems designed to support them are strained beyond capacity. As members of the Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition, a network of more than 130 providers, advocates, and community partners, we share a responsibility to address these challenges together and to advocate for the strong, sustainable eldercare system our region urgently requires.

## **Senior Needs Are Growing Faster Than Services Can Keep Up**

Southeast Alaska now has the highest concentration of seniors in the state, with more than one in four residents aged 60 or older. **264 seniors** across the region are receiving care, while **256 remain on waiting lists**—a clear sign that demand has already surpassed available services. Families are struggling to find in-home care, dementia support, transportation, and safe housing options. Providers are doing everything they can, but the gap between need and capacity continues to widen.

## **A Workforce Too Small to Meet the Demand**

The workforce crisis is the most immediate challenge to expanding services.

- Social assistance employment in Southeast Alaska has fallen **over 30% since 2015**.

According to the 2024 JEDC Southeast Alaska Eldercare Survey:

- **78%** of providers lost employees in the past two years.
- **100%** report difficulty recruiting and retaining staff.
- **100%** identify the in-home care market as in severe need.

Without a stable, trained workforce, we cannot reduce waitlists, expand programs, or meet the needs of seniors who want to age in place. When choosing projects, workforce development cannot be an afterthought—it is the foundation of a functioning eldercare system.

## **Demographic Pressures Are Accelerating**

Alaska is aging faster than nearly any state in the nation.

- The 60+ population grew **77% between 2010 and 2024**.

- The 65+ population more than doubled, reaching 107,444 in 2024.
- By 2035, the 65+ population will approach **140,000**.
- By 2050, the 85+ population will nearly quadruple, with one in three expected to experience Alzheimer's or related dementias.

These are not distant projections. They are the demographic forces shaping our communities right now. Every year, more seniors require support, and every year the home and community service system falls further behind in their needs.

### **High Costs Are Limiting Access and Straining Providers**

Alaska's health care costs are among the highest in the nation—comparable to major metropolitan areas like Manhattan, NY. In Juneau, Fairbanks, and Anchorage, seniors face some of the most expensive care in the United States. Providers are grappling with rising operating costs, while families face increasing financial barriers to accessing essential services. High costs, combined with workforce shortages and geographic challenges, are pushing care out of reach for many older Alaskans.

### **A Call for Collective Action**

The challenges before us are too large for any single organization to solve alone. They require a coordinated, region-wide effort to strengthen the workforce, expand service capacity, and advocate for the resources and policy changes needed to support Alaska's rapidly growing senior population.

As partners and advocates, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to:

- Elevate the urgency of senior needs across our region and all of Alaska
- Advocate for workforce development and training pathways
- Support expansion of in-home and community-based services
- Promote sustainable funding and policy solutions
- Build a system capable of meeting today's needs and tomorrow's

### **Moving Forward Together**

The Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition is committed to working alongside you to advance meaningful, lasting improvements to the eldercare system. We invite you to join us in strengthening our collective advocacy, sharing data and insights, and collaborating on solutions that will support seniors, families, providers, and communities across Southeast

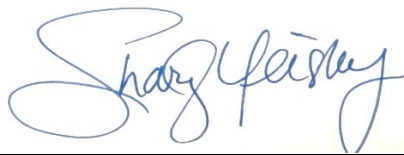
Alaska. Thank you for your continued partnership and dedication. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient eldercare system for generations to come.

Sincerely,



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Erin Walker-Tolles, SREC Steering Committee Co-Chair and Executive Director Catholic Community Service on behalf of the Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition



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Sharyl Yeilsey, SREC Steering Committee Co-Chair, Owner of Wellness Within LLC and Care Coordinator on behalf of the Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition

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[www.jedc.org/SREC/](http://www.jedc.org/SREC/)

Join us in making a difference. Write an email or letter, make a call, or stop by to chat with your local representative on any or all the following issues:

- Movement forward of House Bill 133 and Senate Bill 129 to ensure prompt payments to Senior Services grantees.
- Support funding for non-Medicaid grants which make possible home and community-based services for older Alaskans.
- Protect the \$1,150,000 in the Governor's budget for the Mental Health Trust: Home modifications and upgrades to retain housing.
- Support the Department of Health to implement the Alaska Rural Health Transformation Program with a focus on funding of meaningful projects and providing resources needed by non-profits and tribes when lack of administrative funding is the primary barrier to implementation.
- House Bill 78 State Employee Pensions – defined benefits
- Senate Bill 21 Work and Save: Private sector retirement fund that can move with the worker.

- Passing HB255 Senior PFD Raffle Bill
- Passing SB190 Guardianship / Conservatorship
- SB 86 - Crypto ATM Fraud Protection
- Passing SB124 / HB131 Nursing Licensure Compact
- Increasing Funding to Non-Medicaid Senior Services
- Supporting the Governor's budget for Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Senior Citizens Housing Development Program
- Acceptance of Guidehouse Long Term Support Services (LTSS) Rate Review Recommendations.