

# HFMA WAAK Conference

## Alaska Legislative Update

April 29, 2024

Jared C. Kosin, President & CEO



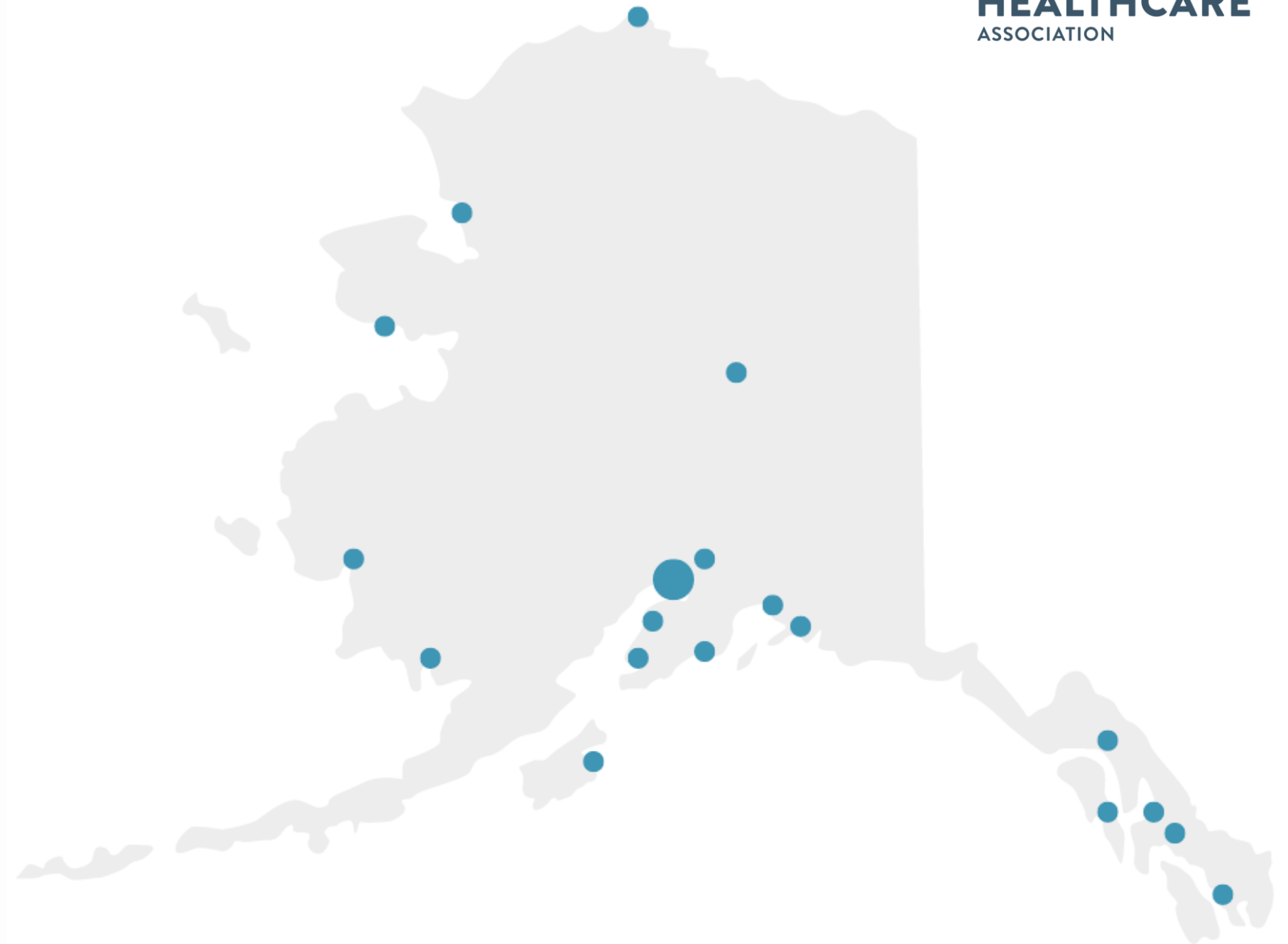
# Advancing Healthcare for Alaska

For over 70 years, the Alaska Hospital & Healthcare Association (AHHA) has served as a non-profit trade association representing Alaska's hospitals, nursing homes, and a growing number of healthcare partners across the continuum of care.

AHHA members play an invaluable role, both as community providers and essential employers, in cities, towns, and villages across Alaska.

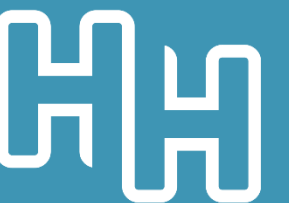
AHHA provides policy and advocacy expertise, leads and hosts opportunities for education and training, and brings together members and stakeholders for collaborative work to share data, resources, and best practices.

***AHHA's mission is to advance the shared interests of Alaska healthcare to build an innovative, sustainable system of care for all Alaskans.***



# Overview

“ During this session, Jared will discuss the **relevance of healthcare** to the state political and legislative process and walk through the **key healthcare issues** being discussed in Juneau during the 2024 Legislative Session. ”



# Alaska's Healthcare System *at-a-glance*



**Hospitals**

**1,491**

acute care beds\*  
(includes 164 ICU beds)

**20%**

beds off the road system

\* bed count does not include  
specialty hospitals

## 13 Critical Access Hospitals (CAHs)

Essential access for rural communities; must have 25 or fewer acute care inpatient beds and provide 24/7 emergency services.

## 3 General Acute Care Hospitals

Short-term, inpatient medical and surgical services and 24/7 emergency care.

## 5 Sole Community Hospitals (SCH)

Primary source of inpatient hospital services within a given geographic area for Medicare beneficiaries.

## 5 Specialty Hospitals

2 military hospitals  
1 long-term acute care hospital  
1 psychiatric hospital  
1 adolescent psychiatric hospital

## Tribal Health System

Alaska has a robust statewide tribal health system:  
8 Tribal Hospitals  
27 Health Centers  
166 Village Clinics



## Senior Care

20 Nursing Homes:  
7 Standalone facilities  
13 Co-located with Hospitals

## IN THE UNITED STATES

24 acute care beds / 10K people  
2.1 psychiatric beds / 10K people  
50 nursing facility beds / 10K people

## IN ALASKA

20 acute care beds / 10K people  
1.4 psychiatric beds / 10K people  
9.5 nursing facility beds / 10K people

## Alaska's Top Industry

Healthcare is a leading economic sector in Alaska, paying out over \$3 billion in direct wages – more than any other sector.

- ✓ Healthcare accounts for 13% of all workforce earnings (> military, natural resource sectors)
- ✓ Healthcare employs 11% of Alaska's entire workforce – 43,000 jobs
- ✓ Projected to add 4,500 new jobs over next 10 years – more than any sector
- ✓ Total economic impact with multiplier effect: 75,400 jobs, \$4.75 billion in total income

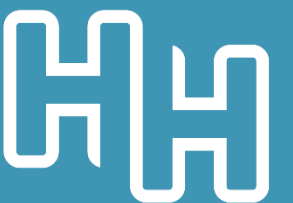


# The Workforce Problem

## Healthcare Worker Shortage

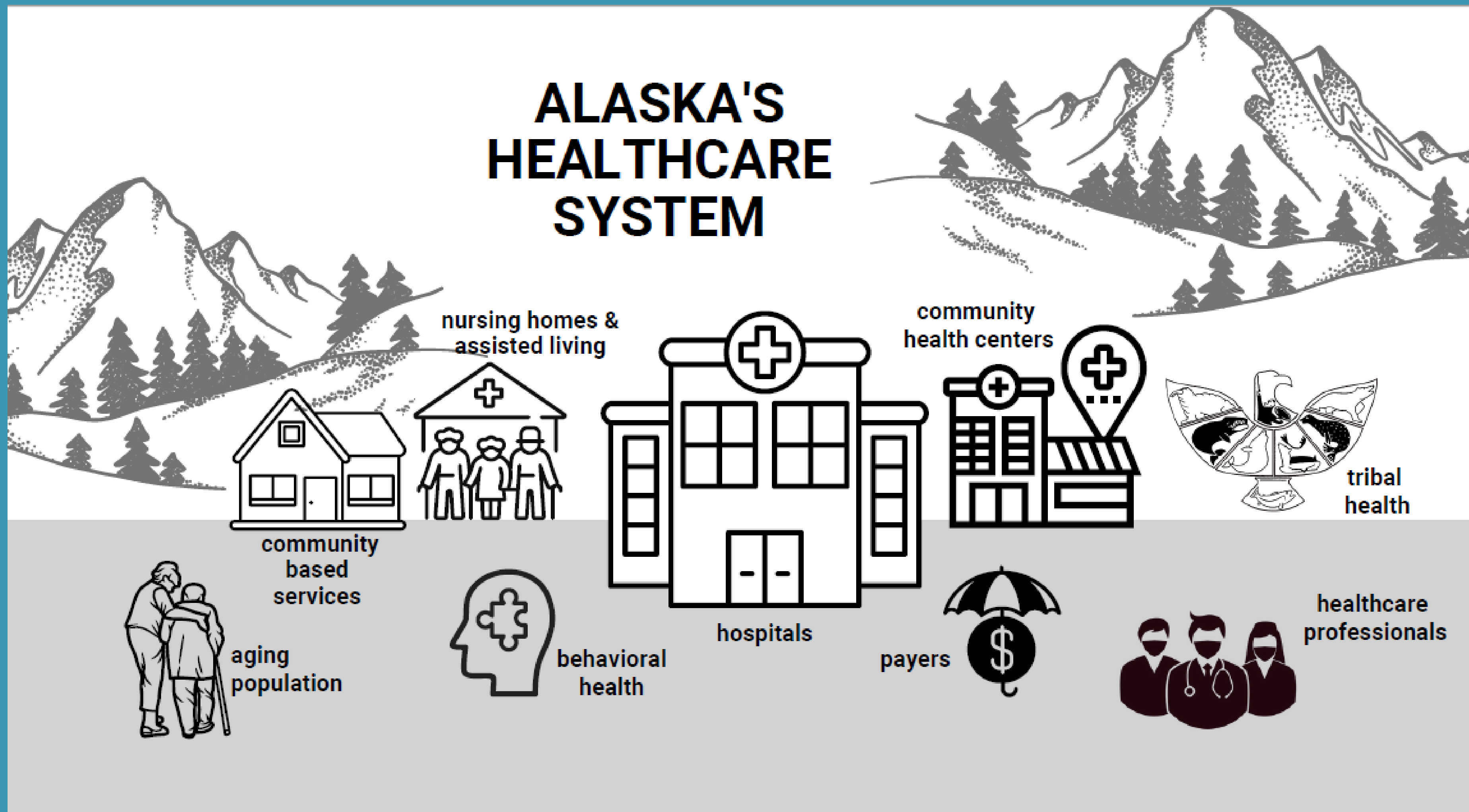
**There are too few Alaska healthcare workers to fill current service demands and vacancies are increasing. Alaska is projected to have the most significant shortages of any state moving forward.**

- Approx 8,000 new healthcare workers needed in Alaska every year (churn + growth)
- Includes a need for nearly 1,400 new RNs
- Alaska training programs graduated less than 900 healthcare workers, including 324 RNs
- 21% nurse vacancy rate in Alaska hospitals; 118-day avg to fill a position
- Travel nurses earned an estimated 57% more on average than non-traveling RNs in Alaska





# ALASKA'S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM



# Healthcare Issues in Juneau

## Legislation

- HB 268 Medicaid Budget; SB 121 PBMs; HB 187 Prior Authorization; SB 8 CON Repeal; HB 149 / SB 130 NLC; SB 149 SNAP Eligibility; SB 115 PA Scope of Practice; HB 115 Naturopaths; HB 260 Catastrophic Medical Assistance Repeal; HB 242 Senior Benefits Program; HB 237 Temp Permit Lapsed Nurses; HB 57 EMS Peer Review; EO 125 Council on Emergency Services; EO 130 Direct Entry Midwives; SB 45 Direct Health Agreements; SB 91 Telehealth Care Teams; HB 52 Hospital Visitation; SB 53 Competency Restoration; SB 28 Workplace Violence; SB 24 Mental Health Education; 80<sup>th</sup> Percentile Repeal; SB 74 PT Compact; SB 75 Speech Therapy Compact; SB 83 Temporary Licenses; SJR 10 Medicare Reimbursement; HB 285 Insurance Coverage; SB 235 CNA Training; HB 343 School-Based Medicaid; HB 371 Medical Review Orgs; SCR 9 Mental Health Parity; HB 175 Board of Licensed Midwives; HB 285 Coverage of Mammograms; SB 241 Medicaid Demonstrations; HB 381 Provider Tax; HB 363 Psychiatric Hospitals; HB 366 RPTCs; SB 153 Healthcare Overtime; HB 191 Medical Major Emergencies; HB 57 EMS Review Orgs; SB 191 Telehealth; SB 28 Workplace Violence Protection Orders; HB 29 Insurance Discrimination



# Concentration of Control

**Senate HSS:** Chair David Wilson (Wasilla)

**Senate L&C:** Chair Jesse Bjorkman (Nikiski)

**Senate Maj Leader:** Cathy Giessel (Anchorage)

**House HSS:** Chair Mike Prax (North Pole)

**House L&C:** Chair Jesse Sumner (Wasilla)





# The Final Sprint . . . 16 days to go



## Where AHHA Started

- 5 Focus Areas for 2024
  - ✓ Workforce - **NLC**
  - ✓ Admin Burden - **Prior Auth; Price Transp**
  - ✓ Behavioral Health - **Systems Change**
  - ✓ Access - **Medicaid Budget**
  - ✓ Transparency - **Preserve CON**

## Score Card

- **NLC** → Union battle
- **Prior Auth** → Major momentum, stressed out insurers
- **Price Transparency** → So close, HB 57
- **BH** → Progress: parity resolution
- **Medicaid Budget** → Flat funded (0.7% GF increase YOY)
- **CON Repeal** → Resting





# Looking Ahead

## November Election

- ✓ Swing to the Right v. Left

## Agenda Planning 2025

- ✓ Nurse Tech
- ✓ NLC
- ✓ Inability to Discharge





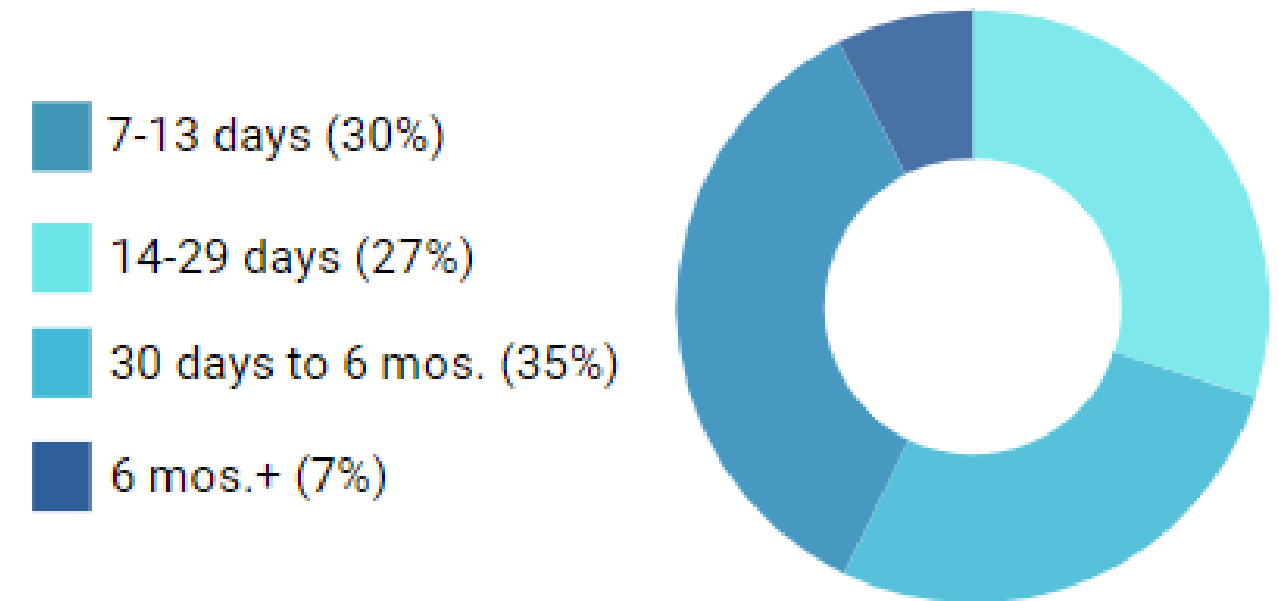
# Delayed Discharge

In March 2024, acute care hospitals across the state reported close to 150 patients awaiting discharge for 7 or more days to post-acute care settings. **This equates to 10% of the total bed capacity in Alaska.**

## Top three barriers to discharge reported:

- Skilled Nursing bed not available
- Lack of guardianship or healthcare proxy
- Insurer coverage issues

Patients by Length of Time Awaiting Discharge



“

*"This Sunday, we will have had a patient in house waiting for long-term care for a full year."*

*- Case Manager from an Alaska Hospital*

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ALASKA

**HOSPITAL &  
HEALTHCARE**

ASSOCIATION

[alaskahha.org](http://alaskahha.org)