

Department of Health and Social Services

Organizational Changes

Several organizational changes are being made within the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). We are always looking at how our department can change with the times to best achieve our mission to promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans.

These changes will take effect on January 1, 2009 and include the following:

DHSS Boards and Commissions previously under the Deputy Commissioner for Family, Community, and Integrated Services will be aligned under their respective division. We have many boards and commissions within DHSS and in recent years, they were organizationally located under the Office of the Commissioner.

Unfortunately, that organizational placement frequently resulted in the isolation of the board from the day-to-day activities of the programs serving the same clientele. In order to better support the activities of the Boards and to promote cross-communication and collaboration, the boards and commissions will move under the division most closely aligned with the constituent groups represented by the board or commission. This change will help integrate and strengthen the complementary advocacy efforts that the boards and commissions are engaged in, with the program efforts of their divisions.

Boards and Commissions in the Division of Public Health and under the Chief Medical Officer will not be involved in the proposed realignment.

Certification and Licensing will be separated, with Certification of Health Facilities moving to the Division of Health Care Services under the Deputy Commissioner of Medicaid and Health Care Policy. Licensing of Assisted Living Homes and Residential Child Care Facilities, and the Background Check Unit will remain in the Division of Public Health. The purpose of this move is to align Medicaid/Medicare health facility compliance efforts with the overall Medicaid/Medicare health care services, and provide uniformity with policy and planning. These changes will not affect how the public interacts with DHSS to receive these services.

For more information on Certification of Health Facilities, please go to <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/cl/> or call 907- 334-2482; and for Licensing of Assisted Living and Residential Child Care facilities and the Background Check Unit, please go to <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/cl/ALL/> or call 907- 269-3640.

Health Planning and Systems Development (HPSD) will move from the Division of Public Health to the Division of Health Care Services. Their work focuses on

health care services, financing, workforce, and facility planning. They also conduct statewide health planning to help sustain an organized and efficient health care delivery system. By housing the Planning and Certificate of Need programs with Policy, Rate Review and the entity overseeing all enrolled facilities, it will make for a more seamless, "one stop" approach for the provider/facility community. HPSD will continue to consult with the Chief Medical Officer on medical aspects of their work.

Oversight for Health Planning and Systems Development will shift from the Director of Public Health to the Deputy Commissioner of Medicaid and Health Care policy.

To view the new DHSS organizational chart, please visit us on the web at hss.state.ak.us and click on the "organizational chart" link on the left of the page.