

ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

— SHARP I and SHARP II: sustainable programs to increase access and capacity —



OVERVIEW

Alaska's Supporting Health-care Access through Loan Repayment Program (SHARP) provides recruitment and retention services for Alaska's health care workforce. The purpose of SHARP is to recruit and retain health care professionals to serve in DHSS-designated health care service shortage areas in exchange for the repayment of qualifying education loans and/or payment of direct incentive. Participating clinicians work in a broad range of medical, dental and behavioral health occupations. The first participants in SHARP began service in June 2010.

THE NEED

The health care industry employs roughly **33,800 individuals** and pays wages totaling **\$1.8 billion** annually.

Forty-seven of Alaska's 50 fastest-growing occupations are in the health care sector, and the Alaska Health Workforce Coalition Plan is leading to job growth while other sectors shrink.

“SHARP is definitely an important component of providing quality care to our state's less advantaged folks.”
SHARP participant

Medicaid redesign will bring 4,000 new jobs to the State of Alaska.

In 2013, the Alaska health care industry realized a **21.8 percent turnover rate**. This high turnover rate paired with the industries exponential growth rate limits patient's access to care and impedes continuity of care.

As of January 2016, **5 of 10 full-time psychiatrist health positions** at Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) are vacant. Psychiatry vacancies

remains the most impactful workforce shortage for the hospital.

Tribal health organizations are constantly recruiting and training Master's-level mental health clinicians. **The retention rate for these positions is approximately two years.**

It takes an average of 14 months and \$31,000 to recruit a primary care provider to the Alaska Tribal Health System.

For more information, Contact DHSS SHARP Council
Phone: (907) 465-4065
Email: sharp.council@alaska.gov
<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/HealthPlanning/Pages/sharp>



SHARP Impact

Since the program's inception, **194 practitioners** have been awarded SHARP service contracts.

71 percent of the total SHARP awardees work in rural/remote locations where they are the only provider in the clinic, to large urban center hospitals where they are providing specialized care to patients facing some of the rarest illnesses.

100 percent of employers have paid the 25 percent match for their SHARP participants. An average of **40 employers** participate in SHARP each quarter.

From State fiscal year **2014 to 2015 patient visits to SHARP providers increased 28.8 percent**. SHARP providers are seeing more patients each year, improving the health of Alaskans.

From State fiscal year 2014 to 2015, **the number of patients seen by SHARP providers increased 23.4 percent**. Practitioners in SHARP are providing a substantial and growing amount of health care to our most vulnerable, priority populations.

"This program has indeed solved a huge problem for me and has indeed been a wonderful incentive to continue to serve in Alaska. I strongly believe it must be preserved to help attract future medical service talent to the state. Alaska, due to its small population simply cannot/does not provide medical, dental and advanced nurse practice training within the borders. Therefore, they are dependent upon motivating people to move here. That is no small challenge for the recruiters and those of us who choose to move. ... I am sincerely grateful for all that you, your staff and this program have done for me." – SHARP participant



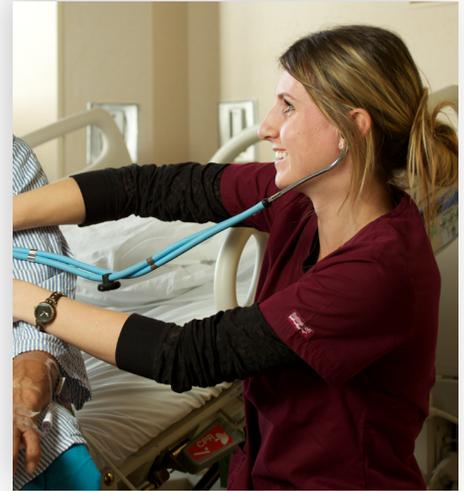
Medicaid Redesign

Improve Health: It is difficult to find providers who are well versed in Primary Care Case Management. SHARP will offer training to recipients in Primary Care Case Management to help ensure they are providing the best-possible whole-person care.

Optimize Access: SHARP providers are required as part of their contract to provide services to Medicaid and Medicare patients and provide a sliding fee scale to low-income Alaskans.

Increase Value: A primary care doctor brings approximately \$1.4 million in revenue, improving the health of a community.

Contain Costs: SHARP recipients largely work in locations where health home eligible patients would receive care. SHARP recipients provide direct patient care to many Alaskan's with chronic illness.



SHARP Support-for-Service Programs

SHARP-I: based on a federal HRSA partnership grant

- Available to primary care staff (Medical, Behavioral Health, & Dental).
- Awardees work in federal "Health Profession Shortage Areas" (HPSAs).
- Practitioners receive a two-year service contract.
- Service contracts include a strict no-default clause.
- Awardees receive loan repayment.
 - » **Tier-1:** \$35,000 per year; Very Hard-to-Fill \$47,000 per year.
 - » **Tier-2:** \$20,000 per year; Very Hard-to-Fill \$27,000 per year.
- More than **111 clinicians** to-date have received service contracts to date.

SHARP-II: based on Alaska statute, AS 18.29

- A wide range of occupations are eligible, in addition to primary care.
- Awardees work in a wide variety of settings and geographic areas.
- Awardees must sign a three-year service contract.
- Awardees may receive loan repayment and/or direct incentive.
 - » **Tier I:** \$35,000; \$47,000 for very hard-to-fill positions.
 - » **Tier II:** \$20,000; \$27,000 for very hard-to-fill positions.
- Part-time positions are calculated at 50 percent of the above amounts.
- More than **84 clinicians** have received service contracts to date.