

ALASKA PIONEER HOMES ADVISORY BOARD REPORT



December 2019

Anchorage Pioneer Home
Photo: Karen Copley



*Providing elder Alaskans a
home and community,
celebrating life through its
final breath.*

State of Alaska - Governor Mike Dunleavy
Department of Health and Social Services - Commissioner Adam Crum
Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes - Director Clinton Lasley





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Alaska Pioneer Homes Mission

***Providing elder Alaskans a home and community,
celebrating life through its final breath***



Allan, an Anchorage Pioneer Home elder, is pictured with the Republic of Korea's Minister of Patriots and Veterans Affairs, Governor Mike Dunleavy, and Senator Dan Sullivan, after receiving an "Ambassador of Peace" medal for his service in the Korean War. The ceremony took place at the Delaney Park Strip veterans' memorial across from the Pioneer Home.

Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home administrator, Josh Shaver, and numerous Pioneer Home elders enjoy a recent donation of two-seater quadricycles from the Disabled American Veterans charity.



Sitka Pioneer Home elders enjoy the company of the "Lunch Bunch" students from Mt. Edgecumbe Preschool who join the elders for lunch every Monday.

About the Pioneer Home System

The Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes is part of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). The division manages six assisted living homes known as Pioneer Homes. They are operated in accordance with state statutes (AS 47.55) and regulations (7 AAC 74) pertaining to both assisted living homes and the Pioneer Homes themselves.

Governance

Homes are managed on-site by administrators appointed by Alaska's governor. The governor also appoints the Pioneer Homes Advisory Board (board) (AS 44.29.500). There is a clear distinction between the management functions assigned to the division and the advisory function of the board. The board is the established link between the public and policymakers to provide community feedback. The board meets, at least annually, and tours the home selected for the annual face-to-face meeting. During the tour, board members hold public meetings and gather information. Many board members will also tour other homes and spend time with the elders residing in the homes. The board should conduct annual inspections of the homes. All of the homes have been inspected by at least one board member. However, due to budget cuts, all board members were unable to inspect all homes this year.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Advisory Board Members

Name	Term expiration
Rosemary Hagevig, Chair	6/30/2020
Gordon Glaser – Alaska Commission on Aging Rep	Contingent upon seat as Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) chair
Phil Hokenson – Alaska Veterans Advisory Council Rep	Contingent upon seat as Alaska Veterans Advisory Council (AVAC) chair
Bob Pawlowski	6/30/2021
Gordon Severson	6/30/2021
Brenda Shelden	6/30/2021
Jana Shockman	6/30/2020
Ronald Siebels	6/30/2020



FY2019 Board Members (L to R): Gordon Glaser, Ron Siebels, Phil Hokenson, Bob Pawlowski, Rosemary Hagevig (Chair), Gordon Severson, Brenda Shelden.

General Overview

The Alaska Pioneer Homes provide a wide range of assisted living and pharmaceutical services to qualified Alaskan elders in six communities: Sitka, Fairbanks, Anchorage, Ketchikan, Palmer, and Juneau. The Palmer home is federally certified as a veterans' home. The homes, licensed for 497 beds in total, collectively served 592 Alaskan elders in FY2019, which is an increase of 25 elders from FY2018.

The Pioneer Homes provide a wide range of assisted living services, including: meal preparation; dietary assessments and medically prescribed diets; laundry/housekeeping; emergency call systems and aid; assistance with activities of daily living such as eating, bathing, dressing, etc.; help with medication; health assessments; nursing services; recreational opportunities and programs; social work services; opportunities for spiritual devotion; care during periods of illness not requiring hospitalization; Alzheimer's disease and related dementia care; and pharmacy services.

Since 2004, the homes offered three levels of service. Level I residents were largely self-sufficient. Level II residents received help with medications and activities of daily living, such as dressing.

Level III residents often received a great deal of assistance with eating, toileting, bathing, dressing and mobility over the full 24 hour period.

On September 1, 2019, the Pioneer Homes transitioned to offering five levels of service. This transition allows the Pioneer Homes to more accurately accommodate the changing needs of Alaskan elders. A detailed explanation on the new levels of service can be found under the Pioneer Home rates section on page 11 of this report.

The homes' environment, service delivery and recreational activities are designed to maximize independence and quality of life; with a philosophy for promoting the mental, spiritual and emotional health and well-being of each resident provided in a welcoming home-like environment.

Since 1998, Alaska Pioneer Homes have embraced the Eden Alternative philosophy to sidestep loneliness, boredom and helplessness by creating an environment where elders, caregivers, support staff, family members, friends and volunteers can flourish and grow. A central tenet of this philosophy is that decisions are made by the client, or the people closest to them.

The Pioneer Homes also have a long-term care pharmacy exclusively serving the six homes since 1998. The staff includes two registered pharmacists, three pharmacy technicians and an accounting technician. The pharmacy's formulary (the pharmaceuticals it stocks) reflects the medications most appropriate for senior use. Pharmacy services include packaging medications in doses specific to each elder, screening for drug and food interactions and allergies, and appropriateness for our senior population. A clinical review is conducted every 90 days on each resident's medication regimen by one of the licensed pharmacists. The pharmacy actively strives to balance medical needs with maintaining alertness, to keep residents as mentally engaged and physically capable as possible. The pharmacy participates in quality assurance programs within the facilities and with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to ensure safety standards for medication use.

The homes are inspected by outside state agencies for assisted living licensing (DHSS Division of Health Care Services), Medicaid waiver certification (DHSS Division of Senior and Disabilities Services), and the kitchens are inspected by the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation. The Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home in Palmer is also inspected annually by a combined team of members from the Alaska region of Veterans Affairs (VA) along with a national team contracted by the federal VA.

Despite current budget challenges and with increased rates, the Pioneer Homes strive to continue to cultivate a caring, vibrant, engaging community where elders are the heart of the home. According to the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development population estimates, demand for services in the homes will continue to grow with Alaska's population 65 and over expected to increase by more than 50% over the next 15 years. The homes maintain waitlists for elders ready to move in as soon as a bed is available that meets their required level of care, and for those who would like to move in at some point in the future. Interested elders are encouraged to apply for the inactive waitlist as soon as they become eligible, which will make it easier for them to move into a home when these services are needed. Alaskans are eligible to apply once they are 65 and have been a resident for at least a year. Some active list applicants apply to multiple homes due to their immediate need for care. As of July 1, 2019, 226 elders were on the active list and 5,385 elders were on the inactive list. For further information on the Alaska Pioneer Homes' waitlist, see the Waitlist Data section on page 9 of this report.

Director's Executive Summary

The past year at Alaska Pioneer Homes has brought numerous changes across the division. Our mission, "providing elder Alaskans a home and community, celebrating life through its final breath," continues to be our fundamental philosophy as we strive to provide the best possible service to elders

that live in a Pioneer Home. We continued to focus on planning for the future and using the resources we have efficiently and effectively. The advisory board worked in partnership with the division to develop recommendations for facility needs and reviewed the division's policies and procedures to support the efforts of the Pioneer Homes.

FY2019 saw numerous milestones in the Alaska Pioneer Home system.

- The division continued implementation of our three-year strategic plan. We continued to make progress in our priority areas of high quality standards for resident care, financial sustainability, medication management, staff training and development, community outreach, and facility maintenance.
- The homes served 592 elders, an increase of 25 elders over FY2018.
- The homes celebrated twelve 100-plus birthdays! As of Nov. 1, 2019, the oldest resident is 104 years old.
- The Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home in Palmer successfully converted 12 of their 79 beds to a VA nursing home designation, which has increased VA reimbursement rates for this home.
- The second year of the CNA Dementia Specialty Apprenticeship continued its success with 13 apprentices completing the program and another 15 registering for the FY2020 program term. The apprenticeship is an independent educational training program designed to advance skills and knowledge in dementia care. This registered apprenticeship is a partnership between the Alaska Pioneer Homes, Alaska State Employees Association, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship.
- The homes successfully completed approximately \$1.5 million in key deferred maintenance projects across the system including bathroom remodels, flooring replacement, upgrading call monitoring systems, security system upgrades, backup generator, replacement of aging kitchen and laundry equipment, as well as other mechanical and safety upgrades.
- The Alaska Pioneer Home Pharmacy was relocated to another location in the Anchorage Pioneer Home, which has provided the pharmacy staff with a safer work environment.
- The pharmacy also continued its longstanding partnership with the University of Southern California's School of Pharmacy. Students work in the Anchorage Pioneer Home while completing a six-week internship at the pharmacy and gain experience in geriatric pharmacology. More than 120 students from the University of Southern California, Washington State University and the University of Idaho have completed the program.
- The division successfully transitioned billing for elders into our electronic health record platform, PointClickCare. This has eliminated double entry of data and made communication between the homes and the central office more effective.
- Each Pioneer Home now has two certified Teepa Snow trainers to implement the Positive Approach to Care and help increase the skills of staff working with elders suffering from dementia. Teepa Snow is a nationally recognized leader in dementia care.



Alaska Veterans & Pioneers Home administrator, Josh Shaver, and division director, Clinton Lasley enjoy time with the elders and delicious food during one of the Palmer home's "festive" meals.

- The Pioneer Homes continued to serve as a clinical site for 13 advanced education programs across the state.
- The division collaborated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to secure funding for a staffing analysis of the Alaska Pioneer Homes system. The division received the results of this study in November 2018. Many staff changes have been implemented as a result of these recommendations. The Alaska Pioneer Homes will continue to work towards implementation of some of these recommendations over the next year.



Staff and elders of the Juneau Pioneer Home dress in their coziest attire in celebration of Pajama and Pancake day.

- The division completed a feasibility study to look at contracting out hospitality services across the division to match the long-standing model established at the Juneau Pioneer Home. The feasibility study revealed significant cost savings by contracting out these services. As a result of that study, a Request for Proposals process was implemented and the contract was awarded to NANA Management Services. This transition was completed from July through September of 2019.
- The division continued to work with the Municipality of Anchorage to outline a scope of work required to achieve an occupancy change for the fourth floor of the Anchorage Pioneer Home. This renovation project will allow the division to use this floor for higher acuity needs, as well as serve elders suffering with dementia who exhibit difficult behaviors. The project is in the final design phase with anticipated completion in the spring of 2020.
- In December 2018, the division began exploring adding two levels of service. These additional levels of service allow the division to appropriately place elders in a level of service that meets the needs of each elder we serve. At the same time, the division also starting working on a proposal to increase rates in response to the overall budget deficit faced by the state. After a lengthy public process, the proposed regulations were signed into law on July 31, 2019. The Pioneer Homes began implementing these changes on Sept. 1, 2019.

The division looks forward to continuing our close working relationship with the advisory board. Our vital collaboration assures that we are meeting the mission of the division while maintaining the highest quality of care to Alaska's seniors. Over the coming year we will continue to support one another as we further carry out staffing analysis recommendations, implement the third year of our strategic plan and advocate for one of Alaska's most vulnerable populations.

Board Recommendations

The Alaska Pioneer Homes Advisory Board understands the importance of the Pioneer Home system in serving the needs of Alaska's seniors. The division has made great progress in increasing the occupancy of the homes despite several challenges and the home administrators and employees continue to provide excellent care to elders. In several communities, the Pioneer Homes are the only facilities that offer assisted living for elders. These homes serve as a safety net for the aging population and are a vital part of the continuum of care in this great state. This board makes the following recommendations:

- The degradation of the Ketchikan sewer system has reached a critical level. A failure of this system would threaten the life, health and safety of the elders residing in this home. The board recommends that the state follows emergency procedures to have these repairs completed immediately.
- Increase the funding available to address deferred maintenance. All six of the Pioneer Homes across the state are aging and in need of repair/renovation. Since the downturn of the economy many capital and deferred maintenance needs have not been accomplished. Increasing funding will help avoid critical infrastructure problems that threaten the life, health, and safety of those residing and working in the homes.
- Explore collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer more benefits to the veterans living within a Pioneer Home. In the Alaska Pioneer Home system, veterans comprise 27% of the total population. Potential collaboration should include seeking the ability to designate a portion of every Pioneer Home specifically for veterans, which would allow veterans to receive assistance in paying for their care. The division should also develop a process to better assist veterans with receiving potential benefits.
- Align the payment assistance program with the requirements to qualify for a Medicaid waiver. For example, while the division took steps to match the monthly spousal support of a spouse living in the community, it should also align the asset limitations.
- Conduct a feasibility study on existing state land for repair versus rebuild of the Fairbanks Pioneer Home (FPH) and explore partnerships for outside funding to pay for the study. The FPH was built in 1967 and is situated on 16 acres. Since construction of the home, the health care needs of elders entering the home continue to increase. The home was designed for low-level assisted residential living and is not adequately configured to meet the changing needs of current elders, many of which require our highest level of care. The building is also not energy efficient, leading to large utility bills.
- Replace the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home (AVPH) roof. This project has been on the deferred maintenance list for many years. The federal government has recently funded a significant increase to The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for construction projects across the country. This is an ideal time to explore the federal 65/35 construction match grant to offset cost to the state.
- Consider offering respite care at the Anchorage Pioneer Home, as this service is needed within the greater Anchorage area.
- Work with community partners to provide education around long-term care planning. This would include helping citizens understand the financial implications of long-term care.
- Allow State of Alaska employees to purchase long-term care insurance as part of their optional benefits, rather than waiting until retirement to purchase these plans.
- Make video conferencing available in all of the homes for elders and their families. This technology assists elders in staying close with their families when families are in another location.
- Adjust baseline minimum qualifications to make it easier to recruit entry level positions and find efficiencies to streamline the hiring process.
- Continue implementation of Teepa Snow training for employees. Teepa Snow is often considered the leading educator of dementia care across the nation and her techniques teach people how to use the abilities that those experiencing dementia retain in order to provide more person-centered and dignified care.

- The Alaska Pioneer Home Advisory Board also strongly recommends that all state and local elected officials spend time visiting the homes. This will help officials to understand the importance of the Pioneer Homes in serving Alaska's elders.

Division Updates

Hospitality Contract Transition

In 2016, the Alaska Legislature outlined a Legislative Intent finding for the division that stated, "It is the intent of the legislature that the Division of Pioneer Homes work to achieve savings through the privatization of food and janitorial services in all the Pioneer Homes as has been accomplished in the Juneau Pioneer Home." The Pioneer Homes took a very deliberative approach to this process.

After a rigorous review process of the proposals, it was determined that the state could achieve significant cost savings by contracting out the work. The Department of Health and Social Services chose to award the contract to NANA Management Services (NMS), building upon a long history of NMS support in the Pioneer Homes.

The homes and NANA Management Services took several months to complete the transition of hospitality services. The final home completed their transition in September 2019. The home administrators and staff have worked diligently to address concerns as they arose to minimize the impact to elders living in the homes. The anticipated annual savings to the division will be approximately \$2.2 million.

The division was greatly pleased to discover that the majority of State of Alaska employees impacted by this transition chose to transfer with the contract over to NANA Management Services. This has provided astounding continuity in the service provided to elders across the Pioneer Home system.

Waitlist Data

To apply to the Pioneer Homes, individuals must be an Alaskan resident for at least one year and be 65 years or older. There are more applicants than vacancies, so the division maintains waitlists. The date and time of a person's application determines their order of admission into the Pioneer Home system. The length of the lists have increased as Alaska's senior population has grown.

Applicants to the Pioneer Homes choose to be classified as either active or inactive.

The **active waitlist** is for people who want to move into a home within 30 days of being offered a spot that meets their care needs.

Vacant beds are offered to the person on the active waitlist with the earliest application date. At present, most elders on the active waitlist require Level III or Level IV services and there are few vacancies in those levels. Elders on the active list usually wait two to three years before being offered a bed. Some elders will put their names on the waitlist for multiple homes because their need for care is immediate.

As of July 1, 2019, 226 applicants had filed applications to be on the active waitlist and were intently waiting for a place in a Pioneer Home. Applicants have the ability to prioritize their choice of home and therefore often activate themselves on multiple homes waitlists. The



Pioneer Home residents, Jennie and Melba, share a table for a spontaneous picnic lunch on the front porch during a beautiful day in Sitka.

board expects the waitlist numbers to remain high, as the number of Alaska elders continues to surge over the next fifteen years.

The **inactive waitlist** consists of elders who meet the age and residency requirements, and anticipate wanting to move to a home in the future. Their application holds their spot on the waitlist ahead of others who apply later. They submit a waitlist transfer request form when they're ready to change to active status.

As of July 1, 2019, 5,385 individuals had filed to be on the inactive waitlist. As with the active waitlist, individuals can apply for consideration at more than one Pioneer Home. The inactive waitlist continues to grow and has increased from 5,129 in July 2018.

Division Challenges

Funding for the Homes

Pioneer Home rates are set in regulation, by statute, AS 47.55.030 (b): *The Department of Health and Social Services shall adopt regulations establishing a monthly rate for the compensation a resident is to be charged under (a) of this section. The Commissioner of Health and Social Services shall review the rate each year.*

Like many state agencies, the Alaska Pioneer Homes has had a series of budget cuts since FY2015. The downturn in Alaska's economy has required government officials to take an astute look at the ways that programs are funded and what services are essential functions of a healthy and stable state. Between FY2015 and FY2019, the Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes has received \$2.7 million in reduction to its Unrestricted General Funds (UGF). While the cost of deliverables has continued to rise, the division has worked diligently to contain expenditures to not increase the cost of operations. This has been achieved through a reduction in personal services, while not sacrificing the high level of services that our elders deserve.

Due to budget reductions the division cut 23 full-time, seven part-time and seven non-permanent positions between FY2015 and FY2019. The division started FY2020 with 611 employees — 552 full-time, 33 part-time and 26 non-permanent staff — to operate the six homes 24/7, as well as a pharmacy and central office. In FY2020 with the transition of hospitality services to a private contract and cost savings reorganization, the division eliminated 157 staff positions. Of those 157 positions, 50 were vacant positions unable to be filled due to budget constraints and 93 were filled with personnel who transitioned over to Nana Management Services.



Eunave, a Sitka Pioneer Home elder, colors pictures together with a Mt. Edgecumbe preschool student.

The division's FY2020 budget from the State of Alaska Office of Management and Budget (OMB) restructured funding to remove all \$33.2 million (UGF) from the Pioneer Homes component and created a new Payment Assistance component with \$25.9 million in Designated General Funds (DGF). The legislature also added \$2.4 million dollars of Recidivism Funds (DGF) in the Pioneer Homes component to offset some of the reductions.

This left a \$4.88 million gap in previous years' General Fund allocations. At the beginning of FY2020, the division received mandated additional expenditures that will grow the yearly cost of providing services by nearly \$2.9 million. These expenditure increases are a result of the 2019 Nursing Study, FY2020 General Government 3% cost-of-living adjustment, furlough reduction and union health insurance increases.

In response to the overall budget deficit that the State of Alaska has continued to face, and the resulting reduction in General Fund subsidy to the Alaska Pioneer Homes system, the Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes adopted regulations changing the level of care model from three levels to five. The division also implemented rate adjustments to align rates to the actual cost of providing services. These regulatory changes were adopted on July 31, 2019 and became effective Aug. 30, 2019. The new rates were developed based upon the results of the staffing study conducted by an independent contractor (through a collaboration with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority) earlier in the year. The rate increase and the expansion to five levels of service is anticipated to increase revenues by \$4.3 million dollars in FY2020.

Alaska Pioneer Home Rates, 2017-2019

Effective Date	Level I	Level II	Level III	Level IV	Level V
July 2017	\$2,588	\$4,692	\$6,795	-----	-----
September 2019	\$3,623	\$6,569	\$11,185	\$13,333	\$15,000

Levels of service are determined upon entry into a Pioneer Home, where each elder receives a comprehensive assessment to identify her or his appropriate service level. The level of service for each elder is regularly reviewed for continued accuracy. The five levels are described as follows:

- **Level I services** include housing, meals, emergency assistance, opportunities for recreation, and required transportation for recreation.
- **Level II services** include Level I services, medication management, and assistance with up to two activities of daily living. For assistance with activities of daily living, the resident performs the majority of the effort. During the night shift, the resident is independent in performing activities of daily living and capable of self-supervision.
- **Level III services** are services where the resident provides the majority of the effort for assistance with activities of daily living; during the night shift, the resident is generally independent, with occasional assistance with activities of daily living, limited to an average of two times per week. The Level III services include Level I services, medication management, and any one of the following:
 - (A) assistance with up to four activities of daily living;
 - (B) Level II and behavior management, excluding complex behaviors; or
 - (C) Level II and nursing services as described in AS 47.33.020.
- **Level IV services** are services in which assistance provided by a staff member includes hands-on assistance, with the staff member performing the majority of the effort. Services will be provided 24 hours a day. The Level IV services include Level I services, assistance with five or more activities of daily living, medication management, and one of the following:
 - (A) behavior management, excluding complex behaviors; or
 - (B) nursing services as described in AS 47.33.020.
- **Level V services** include all services that exceed Level IV services.

Pioneer Home Elders per Level of Service (November 2019)

	Sitka	Fairbanks	Palmer	Anchorage	Ketchikan	Juneau
Level I	8	11	9	21	2	6
Level II	19	15	14	33	6	14
Level III	9	17	8	17	16	4
Level IV	27	38	37	71	17	24
Level V	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Increased Resident Health Care Needs

- **Need for More Level III and IV Beds**

According to the Alaska Department of Labor & Workforce Development, Alaska's senior population, defined as individuals 65 and older, is rapidly growing. This group of Alaskans currently makes up 11% of the population, with an increase of 53,729 seniors expected by 2030. By 2045, the senior population is projected to expand to 16% of the state's inhabitants. It is expected that the most vulnerable portion of this population, those 85 and older, will see definitive growth; a trend that will impact care providers around the state as it is this age group that most often needs assisted living support. In conjunction with this trend, the Alzheimer's Association also estimates that 44% of Alaskans who are 85 and older experience Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, a statistic that may increase slightly over the 20 years. As such, the demands for the Pioneer Homes' Level III and IV services, including specialized care for those experiencing Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, will continue to increase.

Currently, 53% of elders in the Pioneer Homes require Level III and IV services, as Alaska's strong home- and community-based services enable many seniors to stay at home longer. However, while fewer applicants are seeking Level I and II care, these beds cannot be easily converted to Level III, IV, or V beds to meet increasing demands without significant capital improvements to the homes, such as adding bathrooms and doorways that meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines. In addition to environmental modifications, a higher staffing ratio may be needed to ensure elders' health and safety and maintain the high quality of care for which the homes are known. Based upon established population projections, the demand for Level III, IV and V beds will eventually surpass the Pioneer Homes' current ability to provide these services.



Barbara, a Ketchikan Pioneer Home elder, enjoys the sunset on a drive home from the day's activities.

- **Lack of Alternative Placements for Alaskans with Complex Mental Health Needs**

The Pioneer Homes are experiencing an increase in the number of elders who request services and manifest complex behaviors and/or experience mental illness or substance use disorders. The Pioneer Homes are not licensed to care for residents with some psychiatric illnesses, nor are staff trained to provide comprehensive behavioral health care. It is challenging to find geriatric psychiatric services for residents that have mental health illnesses or dementia-related behaviors beyond the scope that the

Pioneer Homes can manage. Finding alternative placements for these individuals has been difficult or impossible. Continuing to house these residents places other residents and staff at risk of injury. There continues to be a large gap in care for those elder Alaskans that have challenging and complex behaviors and dual or poly diagnosis.

The Anchorage Pioneer Home is actively working towards developing a neighborhood for individuals that manifest complex behaviors. Each Pioneer Home contains several neighborhoods (residential wings arranged by service level and other factors) that enable the homes to create a home-like environment for the elders. Alaska Pioneer Homes hopes to admit elders to this new neighborhood sometime during the spring of 2020, but a definite timeline for the completion of this project is still in development.

Recruiting and Retaining Health Care Personnel

Another ongoing challenge for the Pioneer Homes is the recruitment and retention of qualified health care personnel.

The Alaska Department of Administration conducted a nurse wage study in FY2019. The result of the study showed that the state's wages for nurses and CNAs were not competitive with the private sector. As a result, these employees received raises at the beginning of FY2020. There has not yet been enough time to see if these increased wages will make recruitment and retention of these employees better.

For both direct care and nursing staff it is difficult to cover vacations, family medical leave, workers' compensation and other leave needs with the continued staffing shortage that the division has experienced for the last several years.

The state offers limited recruitment incentives, which can make competing with the private sector difficult in a field that is already highly competitive. For example, local hospitals offer paid relocations and signing bonuses. While allowing employees to attend training and conferences in their area of expertise is one benefit that the state can currently offer to foster retention and keep staff up to date with the latest medical advances, it is difficult to fund such training with the reduced division budget.

The uncertainty of the State of Alaska budget adds to the precariousness felt by prospective employees. It is too early to tell if the wage increases alone will be enough to offset the competitive nature of the shortage of qualified direct care staff in the State of Alaska.

It is imperative that the division continues to partner with the University of Alaska, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, local school districts and other programs for nursing and certified nursing aid (CNA) training to ensure a continuous pool of employees.

Providing employees with avenues for continuing education is an important benefit that can help with both staff retention and maintaining high quality care.

Building Maintenance

Alaska Pioneer Homes have identified capital deferred maintenance projects totaling \$19,365,602.

Plumbing and heating systems may not lend themselves to heart-warming photo opportunities, but reliable building infrastructure is a vital part of a safe, functional home. The age of the Pioneer Homes' buildings



Fairbanks Pioneer Home elder, Betty, taps into her artistic talents during one of the home's craft events.

and continued funding short-falls together create many maintenance challenges and an increasing workload on facility personnel.

All six Alaska Pioneer Homes have aging boilers, from 49 to 23 years old, that have been refurbished but will soon need replacement. Other projects the homes' maintenance team have identified include leaking roofs, the need to modernize the HVAC systems to incorporate direct digital controls (DDC), fuel tanks and sewage lift stations that need replacing, among numerous other needs.

Facilities staff encountered a number of large and unexpected issues for the past year, including an estimated \$1 million sewer line failure in the Ketchikan Pioneer Home. Dealing with these issues impacts the quality of life and care for the residents of the Pioneer Home system. This could potentially undermine the healthy margin of safety that is our goal for residents.



Above Left: SPH residents, Brenda, Ruth, and Neva, play balloon toss with Mt. Edgecumbe students during one of their weekly visits.

Above Right: KPH resident, Norma, receives a Valentine's Day note from local students during the Elizabeth Peratrovich day celebration at the home.



Left: The 4th annual summer music festival at AVPH was a great success with a mix of professional and very talented amateur musicians providing wonderful music to the homes elders and the general public.

2019 Home Updates

This section gives a brief overview of the history, capacity and waitlist status of each home, as well as selected achievements in 2019. For more details on the Alaska Pioneer Homes' history, please see Appendix A.

Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home

Number of Licensed beds: 79

Square footage: 71,667

Replacement Costs: \$52,715,850

Active Waitlist: 74 as of July 1, 2019

Inactive Waitlist: 1,973 as of July 1, 2019

Address: 250 E. Fireweed Ave., Palmer AK 99645

Phone: 907-745-424



Overview:

The Palmer home is Alaska's only state veterans' home. It was certified by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs in 2007, when it became the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home (AVPH). The Palmer and state veteran communities have been warmly welcoming to AVPH residents, as can be seen in the following examples. Twice a year local parades are routed through the home's parking lot for the residents to enjoy. During the annual Colony Christmas Celebration, the home is used as a display site for some of the award-winning gingerbread houses. Also during the Christmas season, Vista Realty hosts an annual Christmas party for the home's residents and provides each with a gift. The Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home also serves as a site for numerous veterans' recognition functions throughout the year. Thanks to the partnerships developed with organizations like the Quilts of Valor program, local chapters of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, local Lions Clubs and various state agencies, this facility serves as a hub for veteran and community vitality.

Accomplishments:

- A poignant success was seen in the completion of the long-awaited conversion of the home's Homestead neighborhood to a Veteran's Administration (VA) skilled nursing wing. The project took over a year of intense work, time and coordination from multiple agencies but the expansion of services that this wing now provides is a crucial resource for Alaska veterans who reside at AVPH.
- The November 2018 7.1 earthquake was a great opportunity for the home to practice disaster preparedness. The greatest impact was the excitement among the elders, many of whom experienced the 1964 earthquake. Staff did immediate room checks ensuring every elder was safe, facility maintenance did a thorough building check and the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PC) provided a follow-up survey.
- In recent months, AVPH has met and maintained the division's goal of maintaining a 95% occupancy. AVPH also surpassed the state veteran home requirement of ensuring 75% of residing elders are veterans.

- The AVPH facility continued to partner with a wide variety of organizations to serve as a nursing, certified nurse aid, and food service program training site. Partner organizations included the University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA), Job Corps, Mat-Su Career & Technical High School, and more.
- The home received high marks during its yearly federal and state inspections. The state veteran home re-certification inspection was conducted by the Veteran's Administration, and the State of Alaska inspected the home for recertification of its assisted living and commercial kitchen licenses.
- The 4th annual summer music festival was a great success that featured a mix of both professional and talented amateur musicians.
- AVPH had one CNA apprentice graduate from the CNA Dementia Specialty Apprenticeship Program.

Challenges:

In addition to the division wide challenges, AVPH experienced some unique challenges.

- The facility roof and roof frame have been identified for some years as needing critical repair. In 2019 a matching grant application was submitted with the federal government that would provide 65% of the estimated \$5 million needed to complete the repair.



Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home resident, Dave Brown (center), being recognized at the Veterans memorial wall in Wasilla.



U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert Wilkie visited the home in July and presented 103 year old Navy veteran Hallie Dixon with one of his coveted Commanding Officer coins in honor of her World War II service.

Anchorage Pioneer Home

Number of Licensed beds: 168

Square footage: 149,197

Replacement Costs: \$111,897,750

Active Waitlist: 42 as of July 1, 2019

Inactive Waitlist: 2,557 as of July 1, 2019

Address: 923 W. 11th Ave., Anchorage AK 99501

Phone: 907-276-3414

Overview:

The Anchorage Pioneer Home (APH) is the largest of the six Alaska Pioneer Homes and opened in 1977. From its prime location in downtown Anchorage, a majestic view of Denali can be seen to the north, along with Mt. Susitna ("Sleeping Lady") and the ever changing Cook Inlet to the west, and the surrounding peaks of the Chugach mountain range to the east. The dedicated staff work hard to make the Anchorage Pioneer Home a hub of activity and an integral part of the community.



Accomplishments:

- APH has begun the development of a new, nine-bed neighborhood dedicated to elders who experience dementia with extremely challenging behaviors. The combination could make them unsafe in other living conditions or in larger and more populated neighborhoods within the home. This neighborhood would be the first of its kind in the Alaska Pioneer Home system and would have a higher staffing ratio to assist these elders to live their best lives possible. The Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes is developing this neighborhood with input from multiple community partners including the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman, Alaska Mental Health Trust, Alzheimer's Resource Agency of Alaska, Municipality of Anchorage, DHSS Division of Senior and Disability Services, DHSS Division of Behavioral Health and PCR Alaska (an agency providing dementia care staff training and resources). Construction of this new neighborhood is tentatively planned for winter 2019. Once construction is complete, APH will be requesting an increase in its licensed beds count by nine through the states assisted living licensing.
- A complete upgrade of the call monitoring system for the home was successfully completed. With the large size of the home, the call system is an integral piece of the staff's ability to provide quality care. The upgrade included a new server, client machines and monitoring point transmitters.
- The home continued its partnerships with the Masons of Alpha Lodge 1, Jack White Realty, Anchorage Museum, ConocoPhillips, BP, GCI and the Anchorage Master Gardeners to bring high quality activities to the residents of APH. A small sampling of the amazing events these organizations donated included the annual Christmas party for the home's residents thrown by Jack White Realty; the annual Mother's and Father's Day celebrations and the Beach Lake elder BBQ sponsored by Masons 1; and the Master Gardeners helped to make the grounds the envy of downtown Anchorage.
- Two staff members successfully completed the CNA Dementia Specialty Apprenticeship Program.

- The home staff and elders responded to the large November 2018 7.1 earthquake with great success. While the building rocked and rolled (literally, as it was built on rollers) – the staff responded quickly, accounting for all elders within minutes and promptly implementing the home's disaster plan. Some nerves were shaken, though there were no injuries and the building, which experienced some minor cosmetic damage, was promptly inspected by the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities and passed without concern.

Challenges:

In addition to the division wide challenges, APH experienced some unique challenges.

- The home's biggest challenge over the last year has been to meet the division's 95% occupancy goal. In the wake of the recent rate increases 13 elders moved out of the home between February and September citing the rate increases (or potential increases) as the reason. Between Anchorage and the Mat-Su Borough there are four new large, long-term care facilities in various stages of completion. This is providing much-needed living options for Alaska's seniors.



Left: The Alaska Button Box Gang provided opportunities for music and dancing during the Anchorage Pioneer Home's Father's Day celebration.



Right: Milo shows off his handy work during one of the home's pottery activities.



Right: Carmen enjoying a recent visit to the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum.

Fairbanks Pioneer Home

Number of Licensed beds: 91

Square footage: 61,735

Replacement Costs: \$45,308,000

Active Waitlist: 71 as of July 1, 2019

Inactive Waitlist: 2,183 as of July 1, 2019

Address: 2221 Eagan Ave., Fairbanks AK 99701

Phone: 907-465-4372



Overview:

The Fairbanks Pioneer Home (FPH) has been serving older Alaskans since July 1967 and has been a vital part of the Fairbanks community ever since. The home sits on 16 acres filled with trees, flowers, and rhubarb. It is centrally located within the city of Fairbanks which makes it a convenient location for families and volunteers. The Fairbanks Pioneer Home is committed to serving its residents and their families in a safe and loving environment.

Accomplishments:

- The annual satisfaction surveys conducted in May yielded positive feedback from elders and families.
- Two staff members are currently enrolled in the CNA Dementia Specialty Apprenticeship program. Previous graduates of the program have been regularly sharing new knowledge gained with other CNAs in the home and have been acting as mentors and trainers for oncoming staff. The apprenticeship program has proved highly beneficial for FPH.
- Using resident feedback and suggestions, the home has been expanding their monthly activity calendar with successful and anticipated activities.
- The home has begun a fruitful endeavor to revamp the weekly meal menus to diversify away from repetitive meal offerings. Both food service staff and residents have embraced this undertaking and have offered well-loved family recipes for incorporation into the menu cycle. This has been a wonderful and beneficial opportunity for elders and staff to showcase their family heritage.



Fairbanks Pioneer Home nurse, Tamami, and elder, Rose, play the piano together.

Challenges:

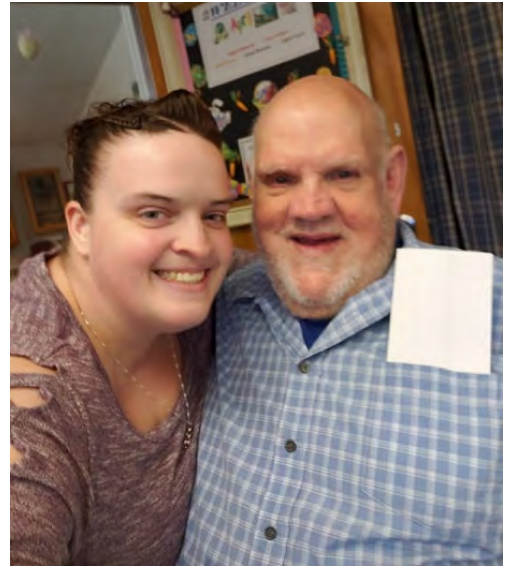
In addition to the division wide challenges, FPH experienced some unique challenges.

- The Fairbanks home continues to struggle in the area of direct care employee recruitment. The home is hopeful that the salary study for these job classes leads to more applicants for our long-term vacancies. Due to the recruitment challenges, FPH has had to invoke mandatory overtime at a greater rate than ever before to ensure safe staffing levels are maintained.

- The demand for Level III and IV services continues to increase, but Level I and II rooms cannot be easily converted into Level III and IV rooms due to the physical layout of the building. The care needs of individuals living in the home when it first opened were significantly less than the needs of the current elders.



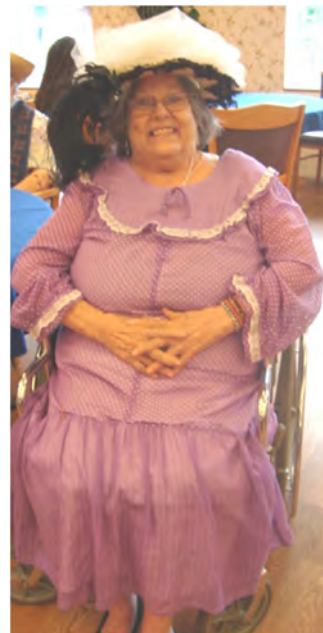
Left: Doris, FPH's "Queen of Puzzles", shows off her latest masterpiece.



Right: Jenni, home staffer, and elder Pete share a hug.



Left: Renowned Fairbanksan, centenarian and FPH elder, Urban Rahoi, shows off his many lifetime awards on display at the home.



Right: FPH elder, Donna, shows off her Golden Days finery during this year's celebration.

Juneau Pioneer Home

Number of Licensed beds: 49

Square footage: 42,444

Replacement Costs: \$31,833,000

Active Waitlist: 71 as of July 1, 2019

Inactive Waitlist: 2,079 as of July 1, 2019

Address: 4675 Glacier Hwy, Juneau AK 99801

Phone: 907-780-6422



Overview:

The Juneau Pioneer Home (JPH) was the most recent home to open when it began accepting elders in 1988. The home is nestled in the wetlands along Juneau's Egan Drive, with breathtaking views of nearby mountains, Gastineau Channel and a wide variety of wildlife from bears and herons to deer, bald eagles and more.

Accomplishments:

- In response to the continued high demand for placement at JPH, the home successfully added an additional bed, bringing the licensed bed count to 49. From 2014-19, the home has added a total of four beds to the original licensed bed count of 45.
- The home continued to maintain and/or exceed the division's target of 95% occupancy.
- Several construction projects were successfully completed including a tub room remodel for the Mountainside and Waterside neighborhoods and flooring replacement in elder rooms and common areas.
- Four staff members graduated from the CNA Dementia Specialty apprenticeship program and four more have enrolled.
- An outside physical therapist has started visiting the home and uses the JPH physical therapy room for appointments with elders. This arrangement has greatly benefited numerous JPH elders.
- The home has continued the expansion of physical activities available for elders, including the addition of Zumba Gold to complement the existing Tai Chi, yoga and "Rise and Shine" exercise programs.
- A full schedule of external events was arranged for the residents including whale watching trips with Allen



The long-running weekly music session, Singing with Jack & Jacque, is beloved by all and brings joy to many more.



Marine Cruises and Alaska Coach Tours, a day at Glacier Gardens, a visit to the Douglas Island Pink and Chum hatchery (DIPAC), and more. In-house, the activities continued with the wildly popular annual Senior Prom; monthly “Happy Hour” with live bands from the community, appetizers and apple-cider-on-the-rocks; the Java Music and Music & Memory programs where elders have personalized playlists; along with carnivals, and holiday meals with families.

- The home continued its partnership with the University of Southeast Alaska as a clinical site for their CNA program and with local high schools to provide various volunteer opportunities. Additional partnerships were continued with various community organizations like the Parkinson’s support group, Hula dance group, Juneau Garden club, Pioneers of Alaska, Juneau Symphony, and Salvation Army.

Challenges:

In addition to the division wide challenges, JPH experienced some unique challenges and opportunities.

- While the restructuring and relocation of the health practitioner I position from the Juneau Pioneer Home to the division’s central office is a positive achievement for the division it came with growing pains as JPH is working to conduct internal nursing staff and workload adjustments to compensate for the loss of that position.
- As a result of budget cuts to head-start programs, the Juneau home lost the presence of the on-site Tlingit and Haida preschool program, which provided vital intergenerational contact between the children and elders.



Two JPH elders enjoy the scenery during a visit to the Douglas Island Pink and Chum Hatchery.



Juneau Pioneer Home elders mingle with the tourists as they stop for a visit of the Mendenall Glacier.

Ketchikan Pioneer Home

Number of Licensed beds: 45

Square footage: 37,787

Replacement Costs: \$23,840,250

Active Waitlist: 47 as of July 1, 2019

Inactive Waitlist: 1,417 as of July 1, 2019

Address: 141 Bryant St., Ketchikan AK 99901

Phone: 907-225-4111



Overview:

The Ketchikan Pioneer Home (KPH) was constructed in 1981 and is licensed to care for 45 full-time residents, many of which are Alaskan pioneers who have spent their lives living and working in Southeast Alaska. The home is situated on a garden hillside that neighbors Alder Park and is across the street from the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Terminal. As a result, the home acts as a central hub for community groups and senior programs that brings beneficial interactions and social opportunities to all involved. It is renowned for its fresh-baked pastries and soups made from scratch that fill the halls with the mouthwatering aromas of home. Since 2005, a point of pride for the staff and residents continues to be the Fawn Mountain Elementary Indian Education Preschool program which is located on the second floor and has continued to fill the halls with the joy-filled activities and effusive energy that only children can provide.

Accomplishments:

- Increased community and public awareness through outreach set an annual record for private donations to the resident council and the KPH Foundation. This included a grant award of \$1,000 through the Holland America Princess Cruise agency, \$4,800 awarded through the Rotary Interact fundraiser on behalf of the elders, \$13,000 Rotary commitment for second floor carpet replacement and preschool playground fencing, and \$8,200 in annual garage sale receipts. These community donations are instrumental in providing the needed funds to maintain services in the home.
- To date, a total of six staff members have participated in the CNA Dementia Specialty apprenticeship program.
- Several major construction projects have been completed around the home, including Phase 1 of the water infiltration project; chiller for refrigeration and cooling needs; kitchen and laundry equipment replacement; a security camera equipment upgrade; exterior light upgrades; and emergency exit and landscaping improvements.
- Vital partnerships were continued with various community organizations including the Ketchikan Indian



Diego, a KPH staffer's dog, visits one of the home's elders, Erika, for some cuddles.

Community summer youth-to-work program, PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center, and the University of Southeast Alaska CNA program as a practicum site.

- The KPH Foundation remains active and a strong advocate for the home's elders. Through their fundraising efforts they have provided equipment, art and services beyond what the home's operating budget allows. One such innovative effort includes the CNA scholarship program that helps the home recruit in an otherwise highly competitive industry.

Challenges:

In addition to the division wide challenges, KPH experienced some unique challenges and opportunities.

- The age of the Ketchikan Pioneer Home facility has generated a considerable list of deferred maintenance projects that will require substantial capital funds. Many of these projects affect life and safety of elder and employee alike and will need to be addressed to continue occupying the current building. The most pressing current concern is a deteriorating sewer line.



Above Left: Preschool students from Fawn Mountain show off their Cat-In-The-Hat projects to Ketchikan Pioneer Home elder, Elinore, during their Dr. Seuss Day celebration.



Above Right: KPH elder, Jane, and longtime home staffer, Allan, toast their approval of the new patio furniture.



Left: KPH elder, Nancy, and her Fawn Mountain student partner prove that science is full of surprises.

Sitka Pioneer Home

Number of Licensed beds: 65

Square footage: 84,121

Replacement Costs: \$59,407,107

Active Waitlist: 27 as of July 1, 2019

Inactive Waitlist: 1,774 as of July 1, 2018

Address: 120 Katlian St, Sitka AK 99835

Phone: 907-747-3213



Overview:

In 1913, the first legislature of the territory of Alaska appropriated \$10,000 to establish a home in Sitka for the purpose of housing pioneer prospectors and others who were no longer able to care for themselves. Over the years, the home has undergone many transformations including various construction projects and other renovations in the early 1930s, the late 1940s and the mid-1950s. The Sitka Pioneer Home (SPH) is on the National Register of Historic Places, with visitors from around the world coming to view the grand building with its beautiful grounds and browse the gift shop filled with items made by residents and other local artists. The residents of the home continue to keep the pioneering Alaska spirit alive as the state continues to support Alaskan elders, treating them as resources of state history and honoring them through the provision of the Pioneer Homes.

Accomplishments:

- The home maintained its partnership with the University of Alaska Southeast's CNA program to act as a practicum site. A new class began in October of 2019.
- Successful collaboration with the Brave Heart Volunteers organization continued that provides individual companionship and end of life support to Sitka Pioneer Home elders. In 2018, Brave Heart volunteers logged 3,956 fun-filled visiting hours with elders and an additional 416 hours of end of life support.
- The continued partnership with Mt. Edgecumbe Preschool saw another successful year. The students visit the home several days a week for story time, singing and craft projects, as well as, joining the elders for lunch in the main dining room.
- Several major projects were completed, including the replacement of the main walk-in refrigerator; extensive repair to the main walk-in freezer; and the successful closure of a Myers & Stauffers audit of the home's 2014 Medicaid billing.
- The home housed two AmeriCorp Volunteers who spent time with the elders. One of the volunteers produced a short documentary with the 14 Miles nonprofit organization, which featured residents of the Sitka Pioneer Home. The documentary video



SPH elders, Melba and Jennie, visit with Alaskan artist, Able Ryan, as he carves a traditional style mini-mask. Able visited the home through the Sitka's Friends of Sheldon Jackson Museum – Artist in Residency program.

can be viewed here: <https://vimeo.com/335033242/dbe29c4656>

- A group of Sitka Pioneer Home elders joined a community senior walking program at the local Hames gym. The group meets weekly in winter to keep seniors moving when the weather outside becomes inhospitable.

Challenges:

In addition to the division wide challenges, SPH experienced some unique challenges and opportunities.

- The home experienced three influenza outbreaks during last year's flu season. In response, the home followed CDC guidelines for flu outbreaks.



Left: SPH elder, Jack, demonstrates his delicious omelet making skills.



Right: SPH elder, Iris, and a Mt. Edgecumbe preschool student team up to play bingo.



Left: SPH elder, Martha, asks for a few puppy kisses from Mister the Great Dane, who was only happy to oblige.



Right: SPH elder, John, picks red huckleberries from the home's backyard bush.

Appendix A: History of the Homes

The **Sitka Pioneer Home** was the first home. Its rich history is woven into the state and territorial story of Alaska. The home's story begins in a log barracks that was built by the Russians in the 1800s. A contingent of the U.S. Marines was stationed in Sitka in 1879, and until 1892 the men were quartered in the Russian-built barracks. Buildings were added in subsequent years. The base had expanded, but was closed in 1912 and the buildings stood idle. The people of Sitka were anxious to have a home for the increasing number of pioneers, prospectors and others who were no longer able to care for themselves.

Alaska became a territory in 1912 and in August of that year a bill was introduced by Sitka's representative, Arthur G. Shoup, to appropriate \$10,000 to establish the Alaska Pioneer Home in Sitka. The Navy Department gave permission to use the old barracks for that purpose and the home opened in September 1913.

Only indigent men were admitted to the home in the early years. By the early 1930s, in addition to being something of a fire trap, the buildings were becoming dilapidated and expensive to maintain. Congress enacted a law granting the former naval reserve to the Territory of Alaska. It was at this time that the present concrete building was constructed.

The new building housed 170 men but there were no facilities for women. The 1949 Legislature provided funds for a women's home, and a former church, adjoining the Pioneer Home, was purchased for that purpose. The arrangement was not wholly satisfactory and in 1956 the new North Wing was added to the main building. It housed women and married couples at first, and later was occupied by single men and women, as well.

The **Fairbanks Pioneer Home** was the second of the six Pioneer Homes to open. It began serving the community at the time of the large Chena River flood of 1967. The floodwaters were so dangerous that residents, along with many other Fairbanksans, were evacuated to higher ground up the hill at the University of Alaska Fairbanks campus. After the floodwaters receded and the cleanup was completed, operations normalized and new residents became part of the Pioneer Home community.

The **Palmer Pioneer Home** was built in 1971 on the former site of the Alaska State Fairgrounds. Nestled in the heart of downtown Palmer, the home is surrounded by beautiful views of the Chugach and Talkeetna mountain ranges, as well as, the massive Knik Glacier. In 1999 the home became registered as an official Eden Alternative home. In May 2004 the Alaska legislature approved development of the state's first veterans home. After extensive remodeling and upgrades to meet U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs requirements, the facility was renamed the **Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home** in 2007. To maintain VA certification, the home is required to keep an occupancy rate of 75% veterans and 25% non-veteran residents. Certification also allows qualifying veteran residents to be eligible to receive per diem from the VA, providing additional income and reducing their monthly amount owed to the state.

The **Anchorage Pioneer Home** is the largest of the six homes. It was constructed in stages, beginning with the five-story tower that opened in 1977. The home was completed in 1982, when the north building addition opened. The home is located in the heart of the largest city in Alaska in the historical community core. Dedicated employees work hard to make the Anchorage Pioneer Home a hub of activity and an integral part of the community. With its prime location right next to the Park Strip and beautiful grounds covered in flowers in the summer and sparkling white lights in the winter, the home is an attraction for visitors and neighbors. The home is an important component of the local community and hosts not only activities which are fun for the whole family such as concerts and parties, but also business meetings such as local homeowners associations, and also serves as a voting station.

The **Ketchikan Pioneer Home** opened its doors to residents in November 1981. It's licensed to care for 45 full-time residents with one additional bed for transitional or respite care. Situated on a garden hillside that neighbors Alder Park, the home is across the street from the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Terminal. Resident rooms are located on the two upper floors of the three-story building and are divided into three neighborhoods based on each individual's care needs.

Since 2004, a point of pride for the staff and residents continues to be the Fawn Mountain Elementary Indian Education Preschool program which is located on the second floor and has continued to fill the halls with joyful activities and effusive energy that only children can provide.

The **Juneau Pioneer Home** is the newest location, opened in 1988 with 45 beds. In response to a very long waitlist, the division expanded the home's capacity to 48 beds in 2014. The home's capacity was again increased to 49 in 2019.

Nestled in wetlands, it has breathtaking views of nearby mountains and the Gastineau Channel. Living in the heart of a true wilderness provides elders the opportunity to view wildlife such as black bears, eagles, ravens, blue herons, kingfishers, porcupines, deer, and squirrels.

The home's four long hallways have been setup in small neighborhoods that act as mini-communities. Each community is supported by a team made up of elders, caregivers, support staff, family members, friends and volunteers. The team members sustain each other and individuals are encouraged to be creative in the development of a caring, loving home environment. The neighborhood concept allows for elders with dementia to live in the same neighborhood with other elders who do not have any memory impairment. This mixed neighborhood is instrumental in building an atmosphere where elders who have dementia or other memory impairment can feel safe and appreciated.