



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA PIONEER HOMES
Pioneer Homes Advisory Board

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December 27, 2019

The Honorable Mike Dunleavy, Governor
State of Alaska
PO Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Dear Governor Dunleavy,

On behalf of the Alaska Pioneer Homes Advisory Board (APHAB), please accept this letter to summarize the activities of the APHAB over the past year. In keeping with the APHAB's statutory obligations, this letter is to brief you on the current state of the Division of Alaska Pioneer Homes as well as to provide recommendations that we feel are crucial to the fulfillment of the division's mission, "Providing elder Alaskans a home and community, celebrating life through its final breath."

As a brief background, the APHAB was established in Alaska Statute 44.29.500 to be the link between the Pioneer Home residents, the public, and state policy makers. After months of in-depth meetings with division staff and facility personnel, as well as in-person visits with Pioneer Home residents, the APHAB has formulated the following recommendations for your review.

- The degradation of the Ketchikan Pioneer Home 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 across the Pioneer Home system.
- Explore collaboration with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to offer more benefits to the veterans living within a Pioneer Home.
- Align the payment assistance program with the requirements to qualify for a Medicaid waiver.
- Conduct a feasibility study on existing state land for repair versus rebuild of the Fairbanks Pioneer Home and explore partnerships for outside funding to pay for the study.
- Replace the Alaska Veterans and Pioneers Home roof.
- 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

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benefits, rather than waiting until retirement to purchase these plans.

- Make video conferencing available in all of the homes for elders and their families.
- Adjust baseline minimum qualifications to make it easier to recruit entry level positions and find efficiencies to streamline the hiring process.
- 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.

The Alaska Pioneer Homes have a proud, 106 year history in this great state for serving Alaska's most vulnerable elders. The division helps to fill the large gap in the continuum of care that exists across the state and is committed to providing exceptional service in a fiscally responsible manner. The Alaska Pioneer Homes' Advisory Board is dedicated to its partnership with the division and its continued advocacy of these vital homes and their residents.

Respectfully,



Rosemary Hagevig, Chair

Enclosed: 2019 Alaska Pioneer Home Advisory Board Summary, 2019 Alaska Pioneer Home Advisory Board Report