

SELECTED PROJECTS (CONT.)

Behavioral Health Workforce Development Initiative - UAS is developing a Behavioral Health Aide Certificate focused on residential services. Outcomes include: a) increase the number of trained, entry-level behavioral health aides employed in residential environments; b) increase the demonstrated skill level of the trained employees. This effort is targeted to assist state efforts to serve children in need of residential care who are currently in residential services out of state.

Training Academy for Rural Behavioral Health - UAF is developing a Training Academy in Rural Behavioral Health providing a range of curriculum options designed to meet the continuing training needs of the behavioral health workforce *statewide*. Training will be designed to ensure that professionals requiring CEU's for professional licensure will be able to meet these requirements while attending the Academy.

This initiative was funded through a unique partnership which includes the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, and the University of Alaska.

Behavioral Health Initiative

Review Committee:

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Chair, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

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COMMITTED FUNDING FOR SELECTED PROJECTS

FY05 (Planning)

Mental Health Trust	\$28,000
University of Alaska	\$40,000
State of Alaska	\$10,000

FY06 (Implementation)

Mental Health Trust:	\$500,000
University of Alaska:	\$500,000
State of Alaska:	\$100,000

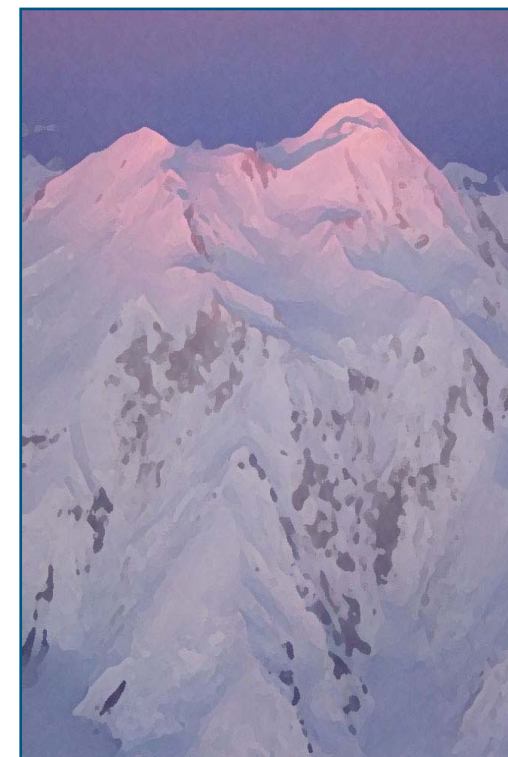
TOTAL FUNDING: **\$1,178,000**



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Alaska's Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative



*Alaska Mental Health
Trust Authority*

University of Alaska

*State of Alaska, Department of
Health and Social Services*

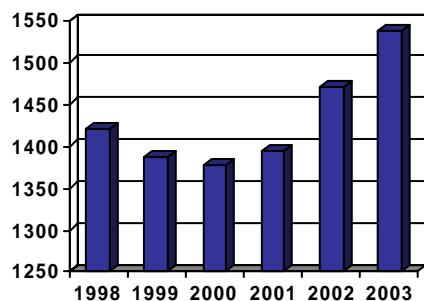
THE SHORTAGES

In largely rural states, such as Alaska, there have been historic difficulties in recruiting and retaining an effective behavioral health workforce. The President's *New Freedom Commission on Mental Health* described in detail the significant problems facing mental or behavioral health systems throughout the country. Indications are that shortages will become more severe in the next decade, and that professionals will need to have new skills to work in a more integrated behavioral health environment.

- Alaska will face a 47.3% increase in the need for behavioral health professionals by 2010.
- Mental health and substance abuse counselors are ranked 6th among the fastest growing occupations in Alaska.
- Current increased enrollment and graduate trends in UA behavioral health programs will not fill the projected demand.

With the guidance of WICHE (Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education), the University of Alaska convened educators from across the behavioral health fields to discuss how to most effectively address workforce shortages. The group examined need, future demand, and current efforts to educate professionals. These efforts led to a funding partnership.

UA Behavioral Health Enrollments:



SOLUTIONS

Several major entities in Alaska have joined together to address current and future demand of behavioral health professionals. Three main partners formed a funding alliance:

University of Alaska: As the State's public university, UA has the responsibility to address state needs through education, training and research.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority: Unique in the nation, the Trust is a publicly endowed authority designed to administer land and assets to fund mental health and other needed services to Alaskans.

State of Alaska, Department of Health & Social Services, Division of Behavioral Health: The state agency statutorily charged to deliver service to those in need of behavioral health prevention, intervention, and treatment.

In May 2004, these partners hosted a two-day summit to develop a strategic plan for addressing the supply of behavioral health workers in Alaska. Over 100 providers, policy makers and educators attended. Policy direction included:

- increase the supply of workers from certificate to doctoral level,
- improve course and program articulation across universities campuses and programs,
- increase cultural competence skills of the existing and new workforce, and
- ensure curriculum reflects new practice trends, especially integration of substance abuse and mental health practices.

In the fall of 2004, the partners committed \$4.178 million in new funds over four years to address these strategic goals.

SELECTED PROJECTS

Ph.D. Program in Psychology - This PhD program provides a single curriculum with joint governance & faculty at UAF / UAA focusing on applied research germane to Alaska.

Masters in Social Work Distance Education Expansion - The UAA Distance MSW expansion admits students who have completed a BSW. This will result in doubling the number of distance MSW graduates from the current 15 students to a total 30 graduates.

Bachelors in Social Work Expansion - The UAF expansion of the current BSW provides a cohort/intensive degree program for rural Alaska Native students, the majority of whom are employees of health corporations and graduates of the Rural Human Services Certificate and Human Services Associated degree programs. This increases the number of BSW majors by 15 students annually.

Human Services (UAA) - Human Services is expanding its collaboration with, and enrollment of, RHS certificate students. Expanding the practicum section offerings, coordination and student placement will allow 22 additional students to complete practicum each year, increasing the annual graduates by 15%.

Human Services (UAF) - Rural Alaska Native students earn an AAS degree in Human Services (HSV). Tribal employees support workers to complete the degree and offer incentives with career advancement. Cohorts of 20 students form learning communities blending face-to-face intensive courses with distance education instruction. This initiative provides an 85% annual student completion rate. 50% of the students articulate to BSW or psychology degrees.