



# REGIONAL DATA SCAN: ANCHORAGE/ MATANUSKA-SUSITNA

In state fiscal years 2020 and 2021, the UAA DPHS research team continued its work with The Alliance by engaging the membership in a series of facilitated conversations to identify the current landscape of prevention efforts in Alaska. **Particular emphasis was placed on regional patterns, strengths, gaps, and opportunities for ongoing Alliance support.** Our goal was to identify existing efforts within The Alliance and detail the variety of ways communities and organizations document and share the value of their work.

A key function of The Alliance is to engage communities as partners – to promote individual and community wellness and prevent excessive alcohol use and harms in Alaska. Alliance members are already recognized champions in their respective communities working every day to build a community ecology that supports wellness across the lifespan.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS DATA SCAN IS TO

- provide a flexible structure for organizing and celebrating the work of The Alliance;
- assist with identifying possible modes of community engagement, participation, and outreach in the areas of prevention and community wellness;
- summarize ways communities already collect information to highlight successes and inform action in their respective prevention networks; and
- invite conversation about what we mean by data and what counts as data to organizations as we continue to hold space for communities to engage with questions of meaning, relevance, and usefulness.

This document is not intended to be an exhaustive list of efforts. Rather, **it is a living document The Alliance can use to grow its membership, identify areas in need of additional support and outreach, and learn from member communities** as we work to reduce the harms associated with alcohol misuse in Alaska. While we have specifically focused on regional approaches to prevention, it is important to recognize the limitations in current methodology. Information presented in this data scan is the culmination of several facilitated conversations with Alliance membership through the fall of 2020 and is limited to the people who were present at that particular time. It cannot and should not be interpreted as representative of a particular region or community. For example, groups of people and prevention organizations listed in the introductions of each section are not exhaustive. We recognize that there are many more within each region and others that work across multiple regions and statewide. Similarly, interviews with regional contacts were focused in predominantly hub communities. This is both a gap and an opportunity for future outreach and community engagement.

**Alliance members have told us they would like to build deeper connections to people, organizations, and communities in their regions.** While there is general agreement that it is especially important to engage smaller communities, there is also agreement that those decisions need to be driven by communities themselves. Participation in the prevention landscape means different things for different communities/regions, so next steps will require concerted efforts to continuously hold space for the sharing of ideas, strategies, and interregional exchange that creates tangible and mutual benefit for Alliance members.



## THE DATA LANDSCAPE OF ALASKA BY REGION

# ANCHORAGE/MATANUSKA-SUSITNA

### OVERVIEW OF PREVENTION LANDSCAPE

Southcentral Alaska and the Anchorage/Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) region are the current and ancestral homelands of the Knik and Eklutna tribes and Tyonek across Cook Inlet from Anchorage. The Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) and Mat-Su are two of the largest urban centers in Alaska and are located in southcentral Alaska. The MOA includes Anchorage (pop. ~288,000), Rainbow, Indian, Bird Creek, and Girdwood to the south, and Eagle River, Chugiak, and Eklutna communities to the north. The Mat-Su Valley (pop. ~107,000) is located 35 miles north of Anchorage and is the fastest-growing region of Alaska, and includes Palmer, Wasilla, Big Lake, Houston, Willow, Sutton, and Talkeetna communities. These areas are very diverse in terms of socioeconomic, demographic, cultural, and political factors.

Anchorage and Mat-Su are home to multiple national, state, and local prevention-related organizations including the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Southcentral Foundation (eg., Pathway Home), Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Spirit of Youth, Covenant House, Anchorage Youth Development Coalition, Center for Safe Alaskans, Alaskan AIDS Assistance Association (4As), among many others. The Alaska Native Medical Center (ANMC), run jointly by Southcentral Foundation (SCF) and the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), is located in Anchorage and serves Alaska Native and American Indian people who live locally and across the state. In addition to primary and emergency clinical care, it runs behavioral health programs including the Alaska Blanket Exercise, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM), Domestic and Sexual Violence Prevention Resources, Substance Misuse Prevention, Suicide Prevention, and

Community Reinforcement Approach and Family Training (CRAFT), which helps families access substance misuse treatment. Providence Alaska Medical Center in Anchorage serves all Alaskans with mental and behavioral services, including multiple youth and adult inpatient and outpatient programs. Alaska Regional Hospital, also located in Anchorage, offers inpatient and outpatient services, including an inpatient program named One-Eighty that serves individuals contending with substance misuse. Mat-Su Regional Medical Center is the principal hospital for the Mat-Su Borough, and provides inpatient and outpatient behavioral health services as well.



*Everything we collect is unique to each program.*

### SUMMARY OF REGIONAL CONVERSATION

With many of the regional prevention-related organizations highlighted above, this section will provide a case study of one organization's data collection efforts, and identification of which data are missing in the region. The Volunteers of America (VOA) Alaska offers a program entitled PRIME for Life, which is an evidence-based prevention and intervention program that helps participants decrease their risk of alcohol and substance-related issues through education, self-evaluation, and self-efficacy. At the end of the program, VOA collects surveys from their teenage program participants to measure the successes and impacts of the program. In addition to more traditional



## THE DATA LANDSCAPE OF ALASKA BY REGION

# ANCHORAGE/MATANUSKA-SUSITNA

survey content, VOA also collects testimonials from individuals to capture a more holistic understanding of how the program was received by participants.

In addition to collecting data for PRIME for Life, VOA Alaska collects data for the purposes of grant reporting, providing prevention resources for engaging the community (e.g., videos), and uses data to make sure they are reaching their program objectives: “Everything we collect is unique to each program, so those data look a little different.” The broad definition of data was underlined by the organization taking note of how many Facebook likes, shares, and comments their online town halls and virtual videos inspired in order to gauge public response and engagement. Recent marketing campaigns have also been evaluated to assess name recognition and public knowledge of VOA Alaska.

In addition to the specific example of VOA Alaska’s PRIME for Life and other data-related efforts, a number of areas of missing data were identified. These include more detailed data on mental health, ethnicity, and economic status by neighborhoods or different areas of town. Relative lack of data with respect to faith-based organizations was also discussed, including ACTS 24/7 Recovery Church with locations in Anchorage, Wasilla, and Soldotna, and multiple recovery-related services. **Access to school and student data was identified as another potential area where access to additional data is needed**, especially with regard to grade point averages; whether students work; whether they engage in extracurricular activities or sports; their access to transportation; whether they have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs); and who is available for mentorship. This was deemed especially important for students at the Specialized Academic Vocational Education (SAVE) alternative

high school in Anchorage, which works with juniors and seniors who are significantly behind in academic credits.

### STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE ALLIANCE

Expanding and increasing knowledge of The Alliance arose as a beneficial next step, with an emphasis on building awareness of The Alliance within the prevention community and with the general public. One suggestion for accomplishing this is to **identify The Alliance’s “elevator speech”** and explore additional ways to bring people in, especially by increasing accessibility for people who aren’t necessarily with prevention-related terms and language. **Using more “plain language” in Alliance meetings and programming** was suggested as one way to increase accessibility and retention for potential, new, and existing Alliance members and audiences. **Developing an efficient and clear-cut onboarding process** as part of this effort was also cited as a way to diversify and increase Alliance membership and engagement.

Within the existing structure of The Alliance, facilitating more cross-regional programmatic mentorship and providing easier access to data and methods for program evaluation in order to seek additional funding are other areas of possible growth. Interest was also enthusiastic for this final report and its appendices that demonstrate what type of data are collected and by whom.

# SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES

This data scan is a living resource for The Alliance. In order to build on our efforts, we suggest the following areas of increased action and support. These suggestions were identified by Alliance members and the UAA team itself. This list is not exhaustive, and should serve as a starting point, not an end point, for conversation and planning.

## **INCREASE DATA COLLECTION AND AVAILABILITY IN CERTAIN AREAS**

- Seek more detailed data on mental health, ethnicity, and economic status by neighborhoods or different areas of town in urban areas.
- Seek more data related to faith-based organizations.
- Increase access to school and student-related data.
- Increase access to and collection of data at the local and regional levels.
- Increase capacity for useable data collection for rural communities and smaller, grant-funded organizations.

## **REDUCE THE BURDEN OF PREVENTION WORK FOR INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

- Aid in building shared regional identities/ efforts while avoiding uncoordinated duplication of efforts or redundancies.
- Promote cross-regional mentorship.
- Support policies and actions that move activities and services from crisis to prevention.

## **REDUCE EXISTING INEQUITIES IN DATA COLLECTION AND DECISION MAKING BASED ON INEQUITABLE DATA COLLECTION PRACTICES**

- Reduce urban/rural differences and inequities.
- Reduce disparities along racial/ethnic, and other demographic lines.
- Provide a platform for peer-to-peer support that focuses on demystifying data collection and use, building surveys, and conducting other data collection efforts.
- Center communities in prevention-related conversations to identify what they want and need for their own prevention efforts, and how to support those efforts.
- Support the use of alternative sources/ types of data in decision-making processes, and fulfillment of grant-related requirements.



# SUMMARY OF OPPORTUNITIES

## EXPAND ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP AND PARTICIPATION

- Simplify language used within Alliance meetings and in outreach efforts.
- Create and utilize clear and welcoming onboarding procedures.
- Move toward incorporating more in-person meetings/activities for further relationship development.
- Utilize data-related activities as a pathway of recruitment for Alliance members and to encourage engagement with The Alliance.
- Expand the information included in this data scan by contacting individuals and organizations named by regional contacts, including 4As, Center for Safe Alaskans, ASAP, Youth 360, Change 4 the Kenai, Emmonak Women's Shelter, and Bay Haven.

# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: DATA SOURCES BY REGION

Region	Program	Data collection method(s)	Population served	Consequences monitored	Intervening variables of concern	Demographics collected
NORTHERN	North Slope Borough - Prevention Crew	Surveys	Youth/Adults		Community Norms, Social availability/access, Perception of risk, Retail access, Promotion	Age, Ethnicity, Gender
GULF COAST	Mobilizing for Action through Planning and Partnerships (MAPP)	Surveys/Focus Groups	The general public or consumers, Community leaders	Treatment Admissions	Community Norms	Age, Ethnicity, Gender, Education, Income
SOUTHEAST	Alaska Crossings	Surveys	Youth aged 12 to 17			Age, Ethnicity
	Juneau Suicide Prevention Coalition	Surveys	The general public or consumers, Parents, Community leaders			Age, Ethnicity
	Leo's Hope	Focus Groups	Substance misuse prevention/treatment workers		Community Norms	Age, Ethnicity
	Sitka Counseling-HOPE Coalition	Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews	Community organization workers or leaders, The general public or consumers, Young adults age 18 to 24	Treatment admissions, Underage alcohol-related citations, Adult alcohol-related arrests	Community Norms, Individual factors, Social availability/access, Perception of risk, Retail access, Promotion	Age, Ethnicity, Gender Identification, Grade level

# APPENDICES

## DATA SOURCES BY REGION CONTINUED

Region	Program	Data collection method(s)	Population served	Consequences monitored	Intervening variables of concern	Demographics collected
SOUTHWEST	<b>Bethel Housing and Homeless Coalition</b>	Surveys	Young adults age 18 to 24, Adults age 25 to 64		ACEs	Age, Ethnicity, Gender
	<b>Tundra Women's Coalition</b>	Operational Statistics	Children age 0 to 11, Youth age 12 to 17, Young adults age 18 to 24, Adults age 25 to 64	Treatment admissions		Age, Ethnicity
	<b>Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation</b>	Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews, Operational Statistics	Patients	Treatment admissions		Age, Ethnicity, Gender
INTERIOR	<b>Fairbanks Native Association - Family Wellness Program</b>	Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews	Caregivers, Community organization workers or leaders, Children age 0 to 11			Age, Ethnicity
	<b>Tanana Chiefs Conference</b>	Surveys, Focus Groups	The general public or consumers, Youth age 12 to 17, Young adults age 18 to 24	Treatment admissions, DWI Crashes, Deaths, Underage alcohol-related citations, Adult alcohol-related arrests	Community Norms, Individual factors, Social availability/ access, Perception of risk, Level of enforcement	Age, Ethnicity
	<b>Therapeutic Court</b>	Surveys	People in recovery, Adults age 25 to 64, Substance misuse prevention/ treatment workers	Treatment admissions, Adult alcohol-related arrests		Age, Ethnicity, Education

# APPENDICES

## DATA SOURCES BY REGION CONTINUED

Region	Program	Data collection method(s)	Population served	Consequences monitored	Intervening variables of concern	Demographics collected
ANCHORAGE/ MATANUSKA- SUSITNA	Anchorage Alliance for Violence Prevention	Surveys	The general public or consumers, Youth age 12 to 17, Young adults age 18 to 24			
	Boys & Girls Clubs Alaska	Surveys	Children age 0 to 11, Youth age 12 to 17		Community Norms, Individual factors, Social availability/ access, Perception of risk	Age, Ethnicity, Income
	CITC Partnerships For Success Second Order Change project		Community organization workers or leaders, Educators: teachers, school staff and leadership		Youth serving adults' emotional intelligence skills	Ethnicity
	Healthy Voices Healthy Choices	Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews	Youth age 12 to 17, Young adults age 18 to 24, Adults age 25 to 64	Treatment admissions, Underage alcohol-related citations	Community Norms, Social availability/ access, Perception of risk	Age, Ethnicity, Education
	Set Free Alaska	Focus Groups, Interviews	People in recovery, Adults age 25 to 64, Substance misuse prevention/ treatment workers			Age, Ethnicity, Income, Education



# APPENDICES

## DATA SOURCES BY REGION CONTINUED

Region	Program	Data collection method(s)	Population served	Consequences monitored	Intervening variables of concern	Demographics collected
ANCHORAGE/ MATANUSKA- SUSITNA	Spirit of Youth Anchorage Coalition	Surveys	Youth age 12 to 17, Substance misuse prevention/ treatment workers		Community Norms, Individual factors, Awareness of prevention and intervention strategies regarding the matter of bullying that are readily employed in the community	Age
	United Way - Youth360	Surveys	Youth and Parents		Community Norms	Grade, Gender
	University of Alaska Anchorage - Alcohol, Drug, and Wellness Education/ Health Promotion	Surveys	Young adults age 18 to 24, Adults age 25 to 64			
	Volunteers of America Alaska	Surveys, Interviews	Caregivers, Youth age 12 to 17, Substance misuse prevention/ treatment workers	Treatment admissions, Deaths, Adult alcohol-related arrests	Social availability/ access, Retail access, Price	Age, Ethnicity, Income



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX B: STATEWIDE DATA SOURCES

Alaska Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/brfss/default.aspx>

Alaska Childhood Understanding Behaviors Survey (CUBS)

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Pages/mchepi/cubs/default.aspx>

Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development

<http://laborstats.alaska.gov/>

Alaska Health Analytics and Vital Records

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/VitalStats/Pages/default.aspx>

Alaska Indicator-Based Information System for Public Health (IBIS)

<http://ibis.dhss.alaska.gov/>

Alaska Injury Data Resource Guide

<http://anthctoday.org/epicenter/healthData/AlaskaInjuryDataResourceGuide.pdf>

Alaska Opioid Data Dashboard

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Director/Pages/opioids/dashboard.aspx>

Alaska Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS)

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/wcfh/Pages/mchepi/prams/default.aspx>

Alaska Public Health Data Sources - Data Dictionary

[https://safealaskans.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-Data-Dictionary\\_-\\_Alaska-Public-Health-Data-Sources.pdf](https://safealaskans.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/2018-Data-Dictionary_-_Alaska-Public-Health-Data-Sources.pdf)

Alaska School Climate & Connectedness (SCCS)

<https://education.alaska.gov/schoolcounselbhlhth/scc>

Alaska Section of Epidemiology

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Epi/Pages/default.aspx>

Alaska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Chronic/Pages/yrbs/yrbs.aspx>

Healthy Alaskans 2020 Scorecard: Alaska Native Edition

<https://public.tableau.com/profile/alaska.health.sandbox#!/vizhome/HA2020AlaskaNativescorecard/Scorecard>

Indian Health Service Alaska Area Office

<https://www.ihs.gov/alaska/>

Informed Alaskans Initiative

<http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/InfoCenter/Pages/ia/default.aspx>