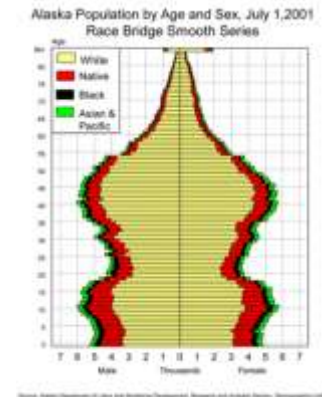


Preparing Alaska's Health Workforce

University of Alaska Perspective
August 19, 2010



Health Workforce Development

▶ Our charge:

- Support youth career exploration and academic and employability skills development
- **Prepare students to enter the workforce to professional/industry standards**
 - **Lifelong satisfying jobs in local communities**
- Strengthen the existing workforce through professional development


▶ Considerations

- 11 of the 15 fastest growing Alaska jobs are in health care
- Training continuum ranges from OJT to PhD; UA provides the full range of training and education
- Shortages exist in many health professions and occupations – retirements expected to escalate
- Alaska population is aging at a fast rate – fastest in the nation

Shortages Overview

Occupation Group	# Vacancies (N=737 Organizations)	Vacancy Rate	Urban Positions and Vacancy Rate	Rural Positions and Vacancy Rate
Physicians	323	13.3%	225 / 6.7%	98 / 28.6%
Physician Assistants	186	15.9%	126 / 7.1%	60 / 35.0%
All Professional Nurses	3725	11.4%	2700 / 11.0%	1025 / 12.4%
Other Nursing Staff	2161	8.3%	1526 / 7.9%	635 / 9.4%
Allied Health Professionals	3569	5.0%	2636 / 3.8%	933 / 8.4%
Behavioral Health Professionals	2917	10.1%	1768 / 9.7%	1149 / 10.8%
Community and Wellness Professionals	613	10.1%	295 / 13.2%	318 / 7.2%


Perennial Challenges

- ▶ How many healthcare workers do we actually need?
 - ▶ How many will we need in five years? Ten?
 - ▶ What changing conditions effect our health workforce picture?
 - ▶ Which occupations /professions are highest priority for investment? Why?
 - ▶ What stands in our way?
 - ▶ How do we pay the costs of preparing healthcare workers in Alaska?
 - ▶ What are the costs of NOT preparing healthcare workers in the state?
 - ▶ Besides money, what else do we need?
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Priorities for Educational Investment

- ▶ Many factors to consider
 - Extent/longevity of shortages
 - Total numbers needed in the state
 - Distribution
 - Criticality
 - Oversight (e.g. pharmacist/pharmacy technician)
- ▶ Recent priority–setting effort
 - Documented in the Alaska Health Workforce Plan

Alaska Health Workforce Plan

- ▶ Industry-led coalition
 - ▶ Strategies to meet health workforce needs in Alaska
 - ENGAGE
 - TRAIN
 - RECRUIT
 - RETAIN
 - ▶ General workforce strategies
 - ▶ Occupation-specific priorities and strategies
 - ▶ Action plans still to be developed
 - ▶ The Plan will help focus our university priorities and strategies for the next several years
 - ▶ Will need to review considering implications of health reform
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Issues

▶ Demographics

- Population
- Distribution

▶ Costs

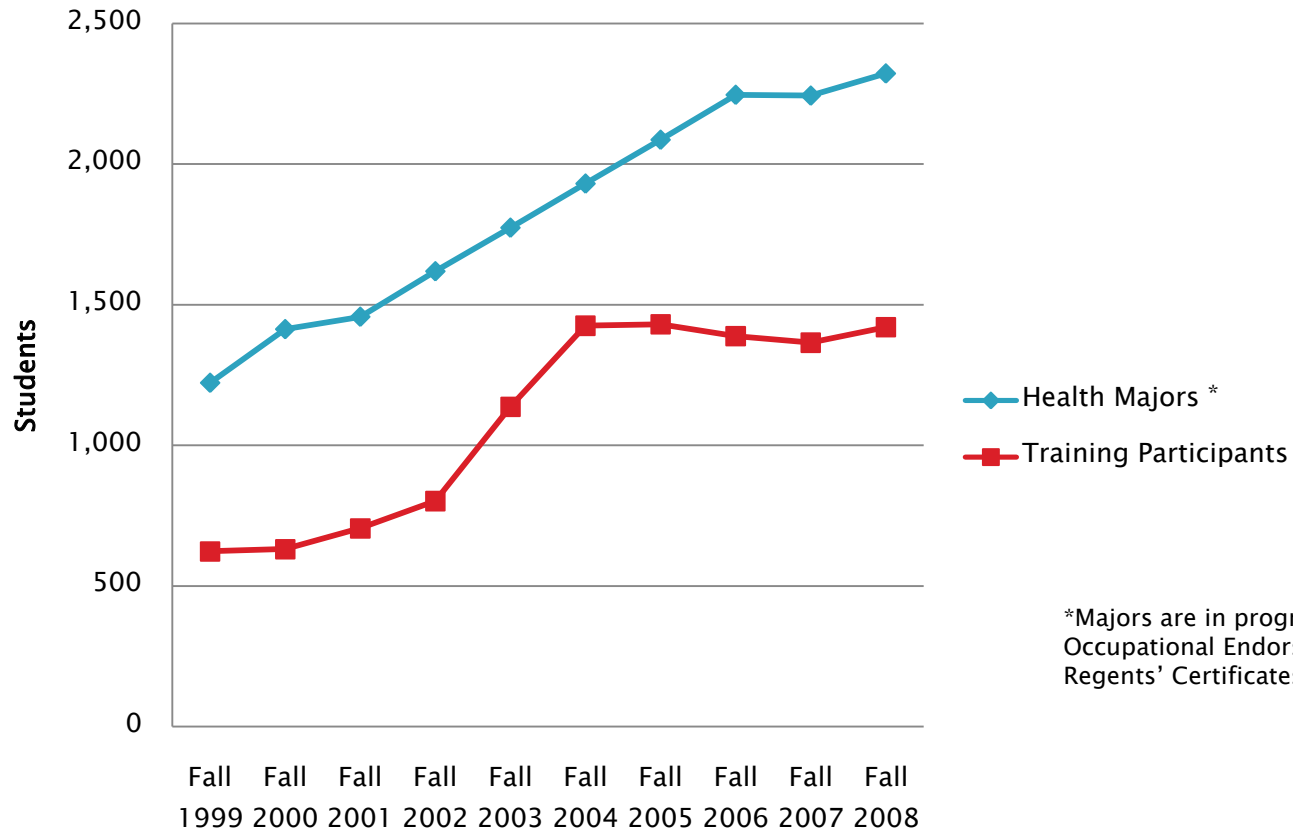
- Costs of educating Alaskans
- Costs of not educating Alaskans
 - Recruitment costs, including “travelers”
 - Cultural/local sensitivity, long-term commitment

▶ Other resources

- Faculty
- Space
- Clinical experiential opportunities – a balancing act
 - Patient safety/comfort
 - Staff acceptance/productivity
- Positions for new graduates

Despite the Issues...

University of Alaska Health Students



More than **80** programs state wide: allied and behavioral health, emergency services, health management, medical office, nursing, primary care, public health and wellness, therapies. About half are all or partially distance delivered.

University Health Programs Milestones

- ▶ 1998 – Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Natives into Nursing ([RRANN](#))
- ▶ 1999 – Initiative funding for new health programs
- ▶ 2000 – [Radiology Technology](#) program; available at 6 sites
- ▶ 2001 – [Medical Laboratory](#) career ladder
- ▶ 2002 – Nursing Education Task Force Report; plan for expansion (double by 2006 and distribute)
- ▶ 2002 – Allied Health Alliance
- ▶ 2003 – Denali Commission funded [Rural Allied Health Training](#) – focus on distance delivery
- ▶ 2003 – [Distance Master’s in Social Work](#)
- ▶ 2003 – Bachelor’s program in Medical Technology
- ▶ 2004 – [Health Distance Education Project](#)
- ▶ 2004 – [Distance Pharmacy Technology](#) program
- ▶ 2005 – Alaska Area Health Education Centers ([AHEC](#))
- ▶ 2005 – [Behavioral Health Initiative Partnership](#)
- ▶ 2006 – [Nursing graduates doubled](#) to ~200 per year; AAS program to [14 locations](#) by January 2011
- ▶ 2006 – Joint [PhD in Clinical–Community Psychology](#)
- ▶ 2006 – Alaska [Physician Supply Task Force](#) Report
- ▶ 2007 – [Medical student admissions doubled](#) to 20
- ▶ 2007 – Health Academic Plan developed and adopted
- ▶ 2008 – [Clinical Simulation](#) Task Force
- ▶ 2008 – University/Trust/DHSS MOA re shared position and behavioral health workforce development
- ▶ 2008 – Legislature funded Phase I of Health Sciences Building
- ▶ 2008 – [Occupational Therapy](#) program in Alaska – partnership with Creighton University
- ▶ 2009 – Integrated Sciences Building opened at UAA
- ▶ 2009 – [Physician Assistant program admissions doubled](#) to 20; full program offered [in Alaska](#)
- ▶ 2009 – [Nutrition/Dietetics](#) bachelor’s degree programs – distance format
- ▶ 2009 – Pharmacy Education consultant’s report
- ▶ 2009 – [Distance Master’s in Public Health](#) program accreditation; over 100 students
- ▶ 2009 – Construction start for Health Sciences Building
- ▶ 2009 – [Base funding of Family Practice Residency](#) (through UAA)
- ▶ 2010 – [Alaska Health Workforce Plan](#) completed by Coalition; approved by Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB)

Help from the Community

- ▶ Financial donations to programs
- ▶ Provision of clinical experiences
- ▶ Adjunct faculty
- ▶ Coalitions / partnerships
- ▶ Advocacy



Current Major Focus Areas

- ▶ Program Development
 - **Professions:** Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Medicine, Advanced Practice Nursing
 - **Emerging Fields:** e.g. Health Information Technology
 - **Multidisciplinary Focus:** Transdisciplinary Education, Teamwork Skills, Quality Improvement and Evidence-Based Practice
 - **Health and Biomedical Research**
- ▶ Graduate Medical Education
 - Residencies
- ▶ Health Sciences Building
 - Phase I – Fall 2011



