



## Relevant Alaska Facts<sup>i</sup>

### State Medicare Information

- There are **95,483** total Medicare beneficiaries in the State of Alaska, which represents **12.94** percent of the total population.
- Alaska Total Annual Medicare Spending equals **\$741 million**.

### Documented Shortage of Primary Care Health Professionals

- According to the Health Resources and Services Administration , Alaska has **85** total primary care Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSA).
- More than **105,032** residents of Alaska (**14.24** percent) live in a primary care HPSA. The national average is only 12 percent.
- There are **20** licensed Audiologists in Alaska who can help.

### Hearing Loss Statistics

- Of the more than 36 million Americans who experience hearing loss, 30 percent are 65-74 years old and 47 percent are 75 years old and older.
- Alaska has **147,488** residents with some degree of hearing loss, which represents **20** percent of the state population.
- Untreated hearing loss results in a greater occurrence of other physical and mental conditions in elderly patients, substantially reducing the quality of life for older adults and increasing Medicare spending. Treated hearing loss enhances the quality of life and reduces health care costs.

### National Data on Older Adult Falls

- Every 18 seconds, an older adult is treated in an emergency room for a fall.
- The average hospitalization for a fall costs \$30,000 and the direct medical cost for falls in 2015 was \$50 billion.
- Among older adults (those 65 or older), falls are the leading cause of injury death. They are also the most common cause of nonfatal injuries and hospital admissions for trauma.
- Elderly falls are preventable as are their associated financial and societal costs. Audiologists reliably diagnose and treat the vestibular disorders and help prevent older adult falls.

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### Sources

Medicare Beneficiaries by State <https://www.kff.org/medicare/state-indicator/total-medicare-beneficiaries/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

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Medicare Spending <https://www.kff.org/medicare/state-indicator/medicare-spending-by-residence/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D>

Bureau of Health Workforce, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Designated Health Professional Shortage Areas Statistics: Designated HPSA Quarterly Summary, as of December 31, 2018.

Audiologists by State <https://www.bls.gov/data/>

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Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. Accessed August 5, 2016. Burns EB, Stevens JA, Lee RL. The direct costs of fatal and non-fatal falls among older adults—United States. *J Safety Res* 2016:58.

Safety of audiology direct access for Medicare patients complaining of impaired hearing (Zapala, 2010), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20701834>;

Screening for vestibular disorders: A study of clinicians' compliance with recommended practices (Polensek, Sterk, Tusa, 2008), <http://www.medscimonit.com/download/index/idArt/855748>