**February 17, 2021**

**SDS E-Alert:  State of Alaska’s Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency expired 2/14/2021**

As of February 14, 2021, the State of Alaska’s Declaration of Public Health Disaster Emergency (DD), which was in place to manage its response to COVID-19, expired. While certain authorities under the DD have expired, the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is making every effort to minimize potential disruption to interactions between Alaskans and DHSS as we transition out of the DD.

Accordingly, until further instructed by the Governor or the Alaska Legislature:

1.     DHSS will continue to operate its COVID-19 response under the same guidance and direction that had previously been provided, which includes all prior waived or suspended statutes and regulations.

2.     DHSS will continue to manage its Medicaid program under the federal authorities outlined in the federal blanket waivers, the 1135 Waiver, and the Appendix K approvals, since those authorities are tied to the federal public health emergency and are not dependent on a state declaration.

3.     DHSS will continue to work with our federal partners to ensure a smooth transition for vaccinations, therapeutics, and other critical services that DHSS had been managing under the Declaration.

4.     All mitigation efforts for the health and safety of state employees will remain in effect.

The end of this disaster declaration does not mean the virus is gone and we can stop taking measures to keep ourselves and others healthy and safe. DHSS’ primary concern remains the health and safety of all Alaskans, and we will continue to consider that paramount concern in our decisions as we navigate the next phase of the state’s response to COVID-19.

**The Division of Senior and Disabilities Services recognizes there are additional questions about specific flexibilities and will be offering further guidance in the coming days.**