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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Southeast Senior Services honored for proactive support of vulnerable adults
Nonprofit and Adult Protective Services work together to connect seniors with supports

JUNEAU — Alaska's Adult Protective Services unit today presented its Community Commitment Award to Southeast Senior Services for their work supporting older Alaskans in communities throughout Southeast: Juneau, Hoonah, Angoon, Yakutat, Ketchikan, Saxman, Prince of Wales, and Metlakatla.

The award recognizes work done by the Care Coordination Services and Gatekeeper programs of Southeast Senior Services, a division of Catholic Community Services.

Care coordination is offered to Alaskans 60 and older who are frail, at risk, or suffer from memory problems, physical disabilities, medical problems, or dementia related disorders. Employees work with elders and their families and friends to identify their needs, then arrange for services to help the elders live as independently as possible, with dignity.

The Gatekeeper Program teaches community members such as apartment managers, mail carriers, neighbors, bank tellers, police officers, and others to identify changes in elders such as confusion or memory loss, changes in appearance, home disrepair, or financial problems such as not paying bills. For Alaskans 60 and older, the program also offers home visits, information, and referral services.

"The relationships these programs build with elders in their community are so important. Program employees accompany Adult Protective Services workers on visits and help smooth the way for elders to get the support they need to continue to live as independently as possible," said Duane Mayes, director of the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, which houses Adult Protective Services. "The work these programs do has been extremely valuable in improving elders' safety and quality of life, and we thank them wholeheartedly."

The award was presented during a resource fair in the Mendenhall Mall & Library. Presentation topics at the fair included eligibility for Medicaid and other services; homelessness, and power of attorney versus guardianship. A similar fair was held in Anchorage on Sept. 5; another is scheduled in Fairbanks on Sept. 25.

Gov. Sean Parnell designated September as "Vulnerable Adults Month."

Please call Adult Protective Services, 1-800-478-9996 statewide, if you believe a vulnerable adult is being harmed, exploited, neglected or is unable to care effectively for himself or herself. Call 911 if a vulnerable adult is at immediate risk. For more details on Adult Protective Services or the resource fairs, visit dhss.alaska.gov/dsds/Pages/aps.

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