

Alaska State Legislature
Health and Social Services Subcommittee

Thursday, March 13, 2014

3-3:20 p.m. * Duration: 20 minutes

MEETING INFORMATION

Location: State Capitol, Room 106
Juneau, Alaska

Teleconference: Yes

RA Staff on site: Aleesha Towns-Bain (970) 209-6565
Jordan Marshall (907) 240-6848

Presenter(s): *Rep. Bob Herron; Jeff Jessee, Chief Executive Officer, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority; Diane Kaplan, President and CEO, Rasmuson Foundation; Elizabeth Ripley, Executive Director, Mat-Su Health Foundation.*

SESSION

Goals:

- *Contribute to awareness building about the Recover Alaska Initiative and its goal to reduce excessive consumption of alcohol;*
- *Prepare Legislature for future advocacy and organizing efforts*
- *Build awareness of chosen Recover Alaska Strategies for the next three years, particularly:*
 - *One Stop Shop for Alaskans*
 - *Positive Social Norms for Youth on Alcohol*

Proposed Format

3:05 PM **Welcome**

Alcohol & Me Video: 3:17 m

<http://www.adn.com/2014/01/04/3258209/alcohol-me-i-guess-i-thought-i.html>

3:10 PM **Recover Alaska**

Talking Points:

Introduction/ Welcome: *Rep. Herron*

PowerPoint Presentation

Diane: Slide 1 - Thank you for allowing us to appear before you today to discuss Recover Alaska.

Slide 2 - RA is a joint initiative to reduce the negative impacts we see tied to excessive consumption of alcohol.

Slide 3 - About four years ago, Rasmuson Foundation convened a broad-based group of people to discuss ways to combat the root causes of alcohol abuse in our state.

Slide 4 – We decided to put our focus on building solutions at a high decision maker level to recover, reclaim, and restore our state.

Slide 5 - It is a joint initiative between Rasmuson Foundation, the Trust, the State of Alaska DHSS and the Mat-Su Health Foundation . We have representatives from judicial, health providers, and other nonprofit organizations serving on a steering committee.

Elizabeth: Slide 6 – Why focus on alcohol? As you are aware, results from the Healthy Alaskans 2020 survey showed that alcohol use and abuse is the top health issue important to Alaskans. We each know that alcohol is pervasive problem in our State and many resources are drained from its impact. There are many, many people and organizations working on this issue and yet we seem to be plateaued in terms of impact. As a result, there is quite a bit of frustration around this issue at every level of government, for funders like us, and even for providers and consumers in the system. Meanwhile the impact on individuals, families, schools, communities, employers and the State continues. We believe this is an issue that affects all Alaskans and we must take it on.

Slide 7 – Alcohol also has an impact on our state's economy. The monetary impact of alcohol and substance abuse to the Alaska economy are approximately \$1.2 billion.¹

Slide 8 - Focus on system changes needed to address what we found and align our efforts.

MSHF just completed a Community Health Needs Assessment for the Mat-Su Borough Community.

¹ The Economic Costs of Alcohol and Drug Abuse in Alaska 2012, Alaska Mental Health Board & Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse.

- Alcohol and substance abuse was ranked #1 or #2 83% of the time
- Child and youth abuse and violence ranked #2.
- The top five health issues in these community rankings were all behavioral health related.
- As a result, MSHF Board selected two new focus areas: a behavioral health focus area and a child trauma focus area. 80% of our 2014 funding will be dedicated to these focus areas.

Jeff comes in at end of slide 9 – We believe aligning efforts is key. The Trust has identified a new focus area on substance abuse. We are working in conjunction with a variety of initiatives including Recover Alaska, Senator Kelly's Empowering Hope and others in the state that are focusing efforts to decrease the harmful impact of substance abuse on children and families.

The Trust efforts will strive to decrease the negative impacts of alcohol and substance abuse on Alaskan families and reduce the resulting long term financial burden on the state and local budgets.

Diane: Slide 10- Strategies

In working on Recover Alaska, we did a deep dive on social change, we found that:

- Social change is indeed possible (seatbelts, smoking, lunch cocktails);
- It is best achieved by working with public and private partners;
- And the work is long-term (For example, RWJF's focus on tobacco spanned from 1991 to 2010.)
- Early wins in social change movements occur within 3-5 years, and lasting change in 10-15 years.
- Rasmuson Foundation has committed \$500,000 for initial efforts and assigned Program Officer Aleesha Towns-Bain.

Active strategies that will focus primarily on environmental prevention, as well as improving access to information about treatment.

- Title 4 Statute Review. We are supporting the work to revise Title 4 statutes that govern the sale, distribution and licensing of alcohol in Alaska. A steering committee is working to develop a strategy for bringing forward statute changes to the legislature.
- A positive social norms campaign aimed at youth to encourage healthy behavior amongst teens and young adults and correct negative perceptions. There is a state-funded campaign started by the Alaska Wellness Coalition that uses this framework and we see that as promising.

- Partnering with the Alaska Children's Trust and others to build awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences Study, a landmark study that links childhood trauma with negative health outcomes.
- Connecting Alaskans to Help; A simple Google search of "alcohol treatment centers in Alaska" brings up a confusing assortment of national treatment referral networks and laundry lists of phone numbers for treatment centers in-state and out of Alaska. For consumers, primary care providers and others, the process of finding help quickly becomes daunting. Recover Alaska proposes a online center that will provide Alaskans with basic information about how to assess their level of alcohol use. We'd like to pair this with recovery specialists that are modeled on patient navigators that have been proven successful in other chronic disease-related care.

Slide 10

Last, we have invested in a project with the Anchorage Daily News. ADN committed full-time reporter Kyle Hopkins and photographer Marc Lester to the project. Series is highlighting both issues and solutions to excessive consumption of alcohol in our state. The series has focused on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder recently. We believe that this is very significant journalism.

Slide 11 - To make a difference in this work, it's essential that we work together. We thank the Alaska Legislature for its interest and leadership and hope we can call on you to support the efforts of Recover Alaska.

Commissioner Streur, Rep. Hughes, and Sen. Ellis may be present and could be asked to add remarks.