

Rep. Thompson,

I wanted to voice my support for funding for UA. I'm a grad student @ the University & have greatly valued my educational opportunity to further my contribution to the State of Alaska.

Please support replacing funding to the University of Alaska budget.

Thank You for your hard work,

Tara Olson - Juneau
UAS Graduate Student

Representative Thompson,
Gunalcheesh for your time &
Consideration of all the testimonies
in favor of keeping \$50 million
with the University of Alaska
budget. I ask you... Who determines
what we value? While you consider
your answer please understand that
our communities value education.

Education is the equalizer. Our
children deserve access to an
excellent education. This access
allows our students to access
Alaska jobs. If the UA budget
is cut anymore we won't be able
to offer top notch training & degree
programs. This action of cutting our
budget will force our children to
go out of state to pursue an
education taught by people who
don't understand Alaska.

Gunalcheesh for your time &
Consideration

Kelene James
Juneau Citizen
Kjames@uas.alaska.edu

9% Plan

9-2 inflation proofing = 7%

State requires 80%

1 $52,800,000,000 \times 7\% = 3,696,000,000$

2 $3,696,000,000 \times 80\% = 2,956,800,000$

3 $739,200,000 - 37,555,000 = 701,645,000$

4 $701,645,000 \div 644,569 = 1,088$ amount of PFD checks

State requires 70%

1 $3,696,000,000$

2 $3,696,000,000 \times 70\% = 2,587,200,000$

3 $1,108,800,000 - 37,555,000 = 1,071,245,000$

4 $1,071,245,000 \div 644,569 = 1,661.95$

State requires 60%

1 $3,696,000,000$

2 $3,696,000,000 \times 60\% = 2,217,600,000$

3 $1,478,400,000 - 37,555,000 = 1,440,845,000$

4 $1,440,845,000 \div 644,569 = 2,235.36$ PFD checks

99% Plan

State Requires 50%

- 1 3,696,000,000
- 2 $3,696,000,000 \times 50\% = 1,848,000,000$
- 3 $1,848,000,000 - 37,555,000 = 1,810,445,000$
- 4 $1,810,445,000 \div 644,569 = 2,808.76$ PFD Checks

State Requires 40%

- 1 3,696,000,000
- 2 $3,696,000,000 \times 40\% =$ ~~2,217,600,000~~ $1,478,400,000$
- 3 $2,217,600,000 - 37,555,000 = 2,180,045,000$
- 4 $2,180,045,000 \div 644,569 = 3,382.17$ PFD checks

State requires 30%

- 1 3,696,000,000
- 2 $3,696,000,000 \times 30\% = 1,108,800,000$
- 3 $2,587,200,000 - 37,555,000 = 2,549,645,000$
- 4 $2,549,645,000 \div 644,569 = 3,955.58$ PFD checks

State requires 20%

- 1 3,696,000,000
- 2 $3,696,000,000 \times 20\% = 739,200,000$
- 3 $2,956,800,000 - 37,555,000 = 2,919,245,000$
- 4 $2,919,245,000 \div 644,569 = 4,528.98$ PFD check

9% Plan

State requires 10%

- 1 3,696,000,000
- 2 $3,696,000,000 \times 10\% = 369,600,000$
- 3 $3,326,400,000 - 37,555,000 = 3,288,845,000$
- 4 $3,288,845,000 \div 644,569 = 5102.39$ PFD checks

State requires 0%

- 1 3,696,000,000
- 2 0
- 3 $3,696,000,000 - 37,555,000 = 3,658,445,000$
- 4 $3,658,445,000 \div 644,569 = 5,675.80$ PFD check



nami

Educate — Advocate — Support

Juneau

National Alliance on Mental Illness

To: House Finance Committee Members

From: Crystal Bourland, Executive Director of NAMI Juneau

For: Written Testimony on Operating and Mental Health Budgets (HB 256/HB 257)

Date: February 29, 2016

Please support behavioral health treatment and services so that more Alaskans can get the help they need to stay out of crisis and costly emergency or institutional care.

NAMI Juneau is the local affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness. As an organization that educates and supports individuals living with mental illness and their family members, I urge you to support behavioral health treatment and recovery grants so more Alaskans get the help that they need.

I have seen what happens when individuals do not have access to adequate services such as inpatient and outpatient mental health and substance use disorder treatment, medication management, peer support, individual and group therapy, and case management for adults experiencing serious mental illness. NAMI Juneau's members benefit immensely from community behavioral health centers so they can manage their illness, live independently, and maintain employment. When community-based services are reduced, the most vulnerable Alaskans are at risk for revolving through expensive emergency rooms, psychiatric hospitals, jails, prison or other institutional care.

The behavioral health system is essential to realizing the savings expected from justice reinvestment. Criminal justice reform will only be achievable if we have adequate community-based services to support individuals reentering Alaskan communities and their families. Community-based services are critical to a functioning behavioral health system.

The proposed cuts in the House Finance Committee will affect vulnerable Alaskans. I urge your support of behavioral health treatment and recovery grants by not reducing more than the Governor's proposed budget. Continue to invest in community-based services now, rather than expensive institutional care later.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony.

Telephone: (907) 463-4251 Fax: (907) 500-9914 Email: namijuneau@gmail.com

Mailing Address: 9000 Glacier Hwy, Suite 201, Juneau, AK 99801-8032 Website: www.namijuneau.org

Dear Members of the Finance Committee,

I am writing on behalf of my friend Carrie, who I also assist by being her guardian. We wanted to advocate for maintaining state grant services for those experiencing disabilities.

Carrie is a delightful woman who experiences Down syndrome. She currently receives grant services from the state and is on the wait list (registry) for waived services, but because she lives with my husband and I and has stability in her life the likelihood of ever receiving waived services is very low. The number of individuals being pulled for waived services has dropped from 200 per year to 50 and those pulled are likely in some type of crisis.

The only state services Carrie receives come from the grant and these supports enable her to have opportunities for socialization with her peers, supported volunteerism, expression and learning classes such as art, drama, cooking, community navigation. These minimal supports enable Carrie to safely participate in community activities.

We are very aware of the state fiscal crisis and want to do our part to contribute through the use of the PFD and taxes.

But we know it's important to see the faces of those whose lives will be diminished as services are cut and to know how much these services mean to those using them.

Carrie was born in a day where doctors told families to "put their disabled children in institutions". Carrie's parents refused -resulting in Carrie always having a place in community.

The grant services provided by the state are life supporting and so impactful for Carrie and others like her needing support to lead a full life in the community.

It's a priceless and cost effective investment, and one we encourage you to continue.

We hear so much about cutting the "waste of government". I can assure you supporting Carrie is not wasteful- but the right thing to do.

Thank you!

Michele Girault

907-223-8401



Written testimony for HB256 hearing March 1, 2016

Cut the budget, real cuts and substantial cuts. Reduce the state budget to about \$3 billion. Tax the oil companies. Eliminate all tax credits. Repeal SB21 and impose a production tax on all oil. Stop pitting Alaskans against each other. Hands off the permanent fund. No income tax.

Thanks so much.

Jimmy Rice
PO Box 4063 Soldotna 99669
9072621540

March 1, 2016

RE HB256/HB257

I realize that Alaska has a fiscal problem; however, the budget reduction for Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery grants will devastate Alaska's substance abuse treatment programs. Alaskan's will be waiting longer to enter residential treatment, some program may close as Treatment and Recovery grants funds have been reduced for the past several years. I am aware that the Department of Health and Social services is expanding Medicaid, to cover substance abuse programs. However, this expansion will not cover several residential programs, and these programs operate on grants. This reduction will directly affect these programs. The number one health and social problem in the State of Alaska is Substance Abuse, the proposed cuts will increase other areas of the budget due to lack of substance abuse programs.

Please restore the 3 million reduction to Behavioral Health Treatment and Recovery grants, Alaskan's lives depend on these funds.

As a family member of a resident in the Pioneer homes I would request that the proposed cut of \$741,000, be restored. The Pioneer Homes assist in keeping families together and keeping a very important generation in Alaska.

One suggestion to helping with the budget is to look at state employees contract and at the salary increase they receive every year.

It is time to look at an income tax, Alaska were far-sighted when they voted to eliminate our state's income tax, I was one who voted not to eliminate the tax knowing that it would be hard to reinstate if needed. The PFD was not designed to be a social program; it was designed to put funds aside that would be needed in the future due to decline of oil. With the current price of oil, the state should exam using the PFD to help balance the state budget.

Karen Nugen-Logan
P. O. Box 875273
Wasilla, AK 99687
907 232-4356

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee:

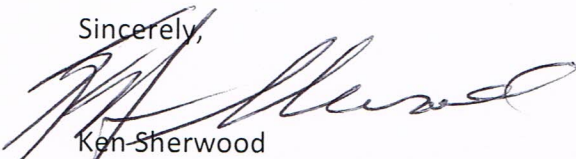
I recently learned of proposed cuts to the Plant Materials Center. I'm a big fan of the Plant Material Center. The PMC is a good example of a government entity that actually does what it was intended to do and does it well. The PMC really does promote the agricultural industry in Alaska through the work and research of the staff. The Staff at the Plant Materials Center in Palmer is providing practical, useful expertise and services in areas that will benefit local farmers.

The potato program at the PMC is critical to Alaska potato growers and local citizens who rely on a local seed potato source. With the loss of the program commercial farmers will have to import seed potatoes from the Lower 48. Our retail store sells exclusively certified, disease free, locally grown seed potatoes to our customers. Our customers do not want to buy seed potatoes grown elsewhere.

Our commercial operation also supplies locally grown native grass seed developed and promoted by the Plant Materials Center. We've been involved in that business for almost twenty years. Local farmers produce native seed for construction and highway projects throughout the State. The PMC makes the seeding recommendations and promotes the use of seed grown in Alaska. The program has been very successful.

Cutting successful programs is short sighted. Raise some revenue. There are some very good proposals in Juneau to raise revenue and solve the budget crisis without destroying valuable programs and productive State agencies.

Sincerely,



Ken Sherwood
CEO

To: Heather at LIO
From: Pat Branson

Public Testimony on FY17 Operating Budget

My Name is Pat Branson and I am the Executive Director of the Senior Citizens of Kodiak as well as the Mayor of the City of Kodiak.

I would like to encourage you to save funds in invest in the Senior Community Based grants which provide many home and community based services such as home delivered meals, transportation, respite, chore and adult day which keep seniors living int heir homes and out of nursing home care which is mostly paid for by Medicaid funds. Senior grants provide the lowest cost of services: \$20,100 per senior versus in Kodiak a cost of over \$400,00 a year for Medicaid paying for nursing home care. Senior grants are a win for the state in being cost efficient and keeping seniors in our State.

The second item I would comment on is to encourage you to maintain the Governor's proposal for community revenue sharing funds especially for the smaller rural communities. These funds are truly an investment in local government and their being able to provide needed services whether it be fire and police, roads, nonprofits or other services which keep communities open and residents continuing to live all over Alaska.

Thank you for your work. This is a difficult year with the budget but many senior service providers and municipalities have had to deal with budget cuts and increased costs for a number of years. We are all in this together and look for resolutions for Alaska's future.

My name is Gordon Kruse. I am the Director of the Fisheries Division of the School of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. I am located at the Juneau Center and a member of house district 33.

To begin, thank you for your past support for the university.

The House Finance Subcommittee proposes to reduce the university budget by \$50 million from FY16, not counting fixed cost increases that the university must absorb. ***Such deep cuts risk serious, long-term damage to the university.***

I'd like to make three points:

- 1) ***The University's success in securing external research funding should be celebrated.*** Every \$1 million of state funding for research brings in ~\$4 million in external research grants and a total of about ~\$6 million in total economic activity. ***This is an excellent investment.***
- 2) ***We research issues that matter to Alaskans.*** For example, in my program we research into declines in Western Alaskan salmon, which threatens the very way of life in those impoverished communities, and the causes of stunted halibut, which results in low halibut catches, and more importantly, what to do about it. These are just two of examples.
- 3) ***Our Fisheries Program has a huge impact on Alaskan fisheries. For instance:***
 - a) We train Alaska's fisheries workforce; ***65% of all our fisheries graduates are employed in Alaska***
 - b) 25% of the science advisors to the North Pacific Fishery Management Council are UA faculty. ***If we lose these faculty, which outsiders would you rather have set catch limits for our multi-billion dollar fisheries?***

Finally, it is critically important to diversify our state revenues now. I strongly support:

- 1) A sustainable plan to use Permanent Fund earnings reserve in perpetuity,
- 2) A modest income tax that includes the large non-resident workforce in Alaska,
- 3) A tax on mining, just like we tax the fishing industry, and
- 4) A revision to oil tax credit structure.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you. I urge your continued support for the university, which has huge impacts on the Alaskan economy in so many ways.

2015 Annual Report

Strengthening Alaska's healthcare workforce

Alaska AHEC Program



UAA Alaska Center for
Rural Health and Health Workforce
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

AlaskaAHEC
Area Health Education Centers



The 2014-2015 Alaska Annual Report is a wonderful representation of all the hard work and dedication AHEC staff contribute throughout the state. In my first year as AHEC Program Director I have been blessed to forge a path of new partnerships, enhance youth programming, and welcome

new AHEC staff to our family. The AHEC Program Office has undergone some organizational transitions moving from UAA Academic Affairs to the UAA College of Health. Along with this move, the home of the AHEC Program Office has undergone a name change and is now part of the Alaska Center for Rural Health and Health Workforce.

Pipeline programming is a long-term investment and many times it is difficult to paint a picture of our efforts within an annual snapshot. It takes time for students to meander the many twists and turns of their educational journeys. This year, we have decided to feature the story of two very special people who I have personally watched grow and blossom into healthcare professionals before my eyes.

It is my hope that sharing their story will highlight the power of the AHEC program in transforming the lives of Alaskans and improving the future of healthcare in our great state.

Gloria Burnett, MS
Director, Alaska's AHEC
907.786.6705 / gburnett3@uaa.alaska.edu

AHEC Mission & Organization

Area Health Education Centers (AHECs) are academic and community-based partnerships engaged in primary care workforce engagement, training, recruiting, and retaining activities to improve the distribution, diversity, supply, and quality of the healthcare workforce.

The national AHEC program is funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, Bureau of Health Workforce (HRSA). The Alaska AHEC began at the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2005 and was the first in the country to be awarded to a School of Nursing, rather than a School of Medicine. The five Alaska regional centers conduct educational activities to engage and expose students to primary care delivery in a rural and/or underserved setting, and to provide Continuing Education/Professional Development (CE/PD) to current health professionals.

The Alaska AHEC Steering Committee's role is to advise program activities and advocate for sustainability. Each member plays a vital role in ensuring that the Alaska AHEC remains a viable statewide resource and meets the needs of our diverse healthcare industry.

- **Suzanne Allen, MD, MPH**, Assistant Dean, Regional Affairs and Rural Health, UW School of Medicine
- **Carol Barnett**, Chief Human Resources Officer, Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
- **Barbara Berner, EdD, APRN, FNP-BC, FAANP**, Director, School of Nursing, University of Alaska Anchorage
- **Patricia Carr, MPH**, Director, Alaska State Office of Rural Health, State of Alaska, Division of Public Health
- **Curtis Clough**, State CTE Administrator, State of Alaska, Department of Education & Early Development
- **Terri Doughman-Billings**, Assistant Director of Nursing, Maniilaq Health Center
- **Paula Easley**, Member, Board of Trustees, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- **Jan Harris, DHA, FACHE**, Center Director, Alaska Center for Rural Health and Health Workforce, University of Alaska/UAA
- **Kathleen Hollis**, Director, Mission Services, Providence Health and Services Alaska
- **Birgit Meany EdD**, Dean of Instruction, Ilisagvik College
- **Nancy Merriman, MPH, MBA**, Chair, Executive Director, Alaska Primary Care Association
- **Jeannie Monk**, Senior Program Officer, Alaska State Hospital & Nursing Home Association
- **Thomas Nighswander, MD, MPH**, Assistant Dean, Alaska WWAMI Regional Affairs, UW School of Medicine
- **Jacqueline S Pflaum**, Director, Recruitment and Retention of Alaska Native Nurses (RRANN) Program, University of Alaska Anchorage
- **Ken Tonjes**, Chief Administrative Officer, PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center
- **Fred Villa**, Associate Vice President, UA Workforce Programs, University of Alaska
- **Dan Winkelman, JD**, Chief Executive Officer/President, Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
- **Elizabeth Woodyard, MEd, MSN**, Vice Chair, Chief Executive Officer, Petersburg Medical Center



Alaska AHEC Centers



MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF OUR TEAM

Mari Selle, MPH, SCAHEC Director, brings to the AHEC program a strong background in rural health policy and program development. Previously, she worked on the executive management team for a small rural hospital, managed a health care consulting business, and worked on health policy and research within state government and the university systems. Mari enjoys playtime with her young children and getting out in the Alaskan outdoors.

Northwest AHEC

Hosted at Ilisagvik College
Amanda Sialofi, Director
www.nwahecak.org

Northwest
AHEC

Interior AHEC

Hosted at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
Lillian Ruedrich, Director
www.interiorahec.org

Interior AHEC

Southeast AHEC

Hosted at Peacehealth Ketchikan Medical Center
Carlen Williams, Director
www.seakahec.org

Southeast
AHEC

Yukon Kuskokwim AHEC

Yukon Kuskokwim AHEC

Hosted at Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation
Jennifer Nixon, Interim Director
Currently no website

South Central
AHEC

South Central AHEC

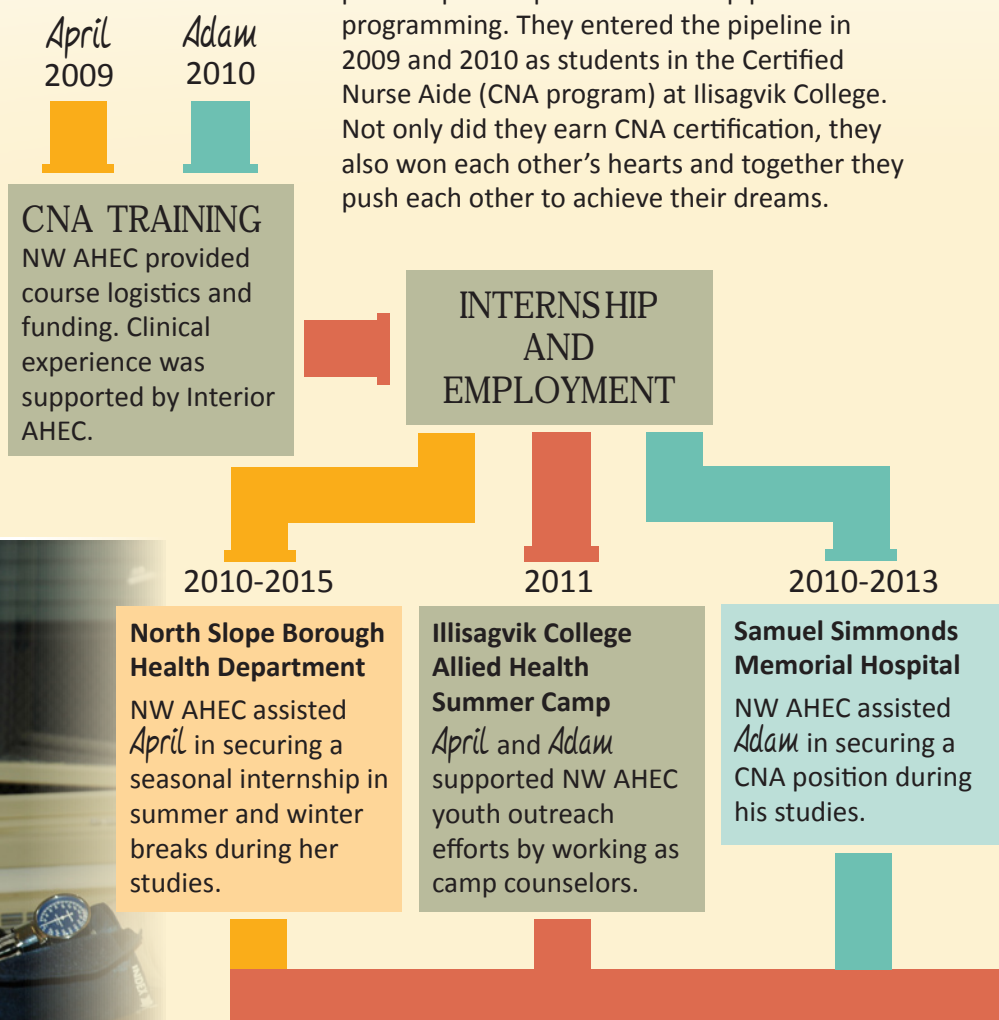
Hosted at Alaska Primary Care Association
Mari Selle, Director
www.scahecak.org

AHEC PIPELINE PROGRAMMING

A pipeline is commonly used to visually describe the workforce development process. Individuals enter at one end and wind through a sequence of turns and check points where there are opportunities for inputs, such as presentations, job shadows, and summer camps and, likewise, for leaks, such as life distractions, poor academic standing, and loss of interest.

The AHEC program's ultimate goal is achieved when a rural student graduates from a health program of study and returns to their home community to practice healthcare.

The journey of April Phillip and Adam Burnett paints a perfect picture of AHEC pipeline programming. They entered the pipeline in 2009 and 2010 as students in the Certified Nurse Aide (CNA program) at Ilisagvik College. Not only did they earn CNA certification, they also won each other's hearts and together they push each other to achieve their dreams.



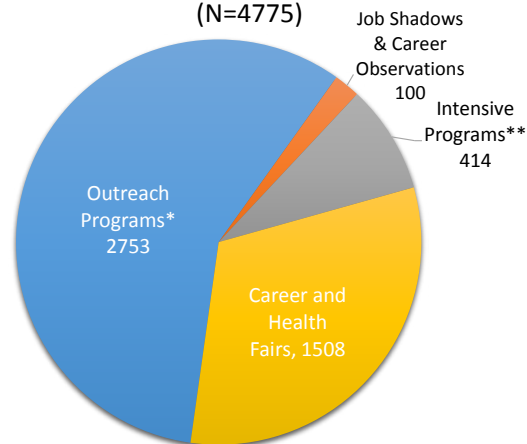
HEALTH CAREERS PROMOTION AND PREPARATION

Just as the NW AHEC engaged April and Adam into health career pathways, AHECs across the state continue to enter the healthcare career pipeline. Some highlights from 2015 include:

- Program Office developed a partnership with Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP), and created a health science strand to existing youth academies
- NW AHEC piloted a Behavioral Health Camp and Methods in Molecular Biology Camp
- Interior AHEC coordinated Career Exploration Days at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
- Interior AHEC partnered with the UAF Alaska Summer Research Academy (ASRA)

Types of Programs HCPP Students Participated in Statewide

(N=4775)



*Outreach Programs include presentations, tours, speakers and career exploration days.

**Generally 20 hours or more.

April shared, “I was raised by the Iñupiaq, Yup’ik, and Tlingit cultural values. Being with Adam and having a life partner to share this experience with while teaching him the ways of my people is a blessing. Together we are able to learn how to give back to our communities while holding our cultural values close to our hearts.”



ILLISAGVIK COLLEGE ALLIED HEALTH PROGRAM

2011

With NW AHEC’s academic advising support, *April* and *Adam* both earned an Associate of Science in Allied Health.

One thing is clear to both Adam and April, they have AHEC to thank for the support provided along the way. “We continue to have such a great relationship with both Ilisagvik College and the AHECs all over Alaska. We can’t thank them enough for the love and support, and can only continue to be successful together by inspiring more Alaskans to do the same.”

GUSTAVUS ADOLPHUS COLLEGE

2015

April and *Adam* NW AHEC’s mentorship and support helped April and Adam earn BAs in Nursing. They continued to focus on rural healthcare by completing Clinical Rotations in Barrow and Fairbanks.

CERTIFICATES FOR TRAINING

This year, 81 students earned certificates in AHEC programming in the following areas:

- Emergency Trauma Technician
- First Aid
- CPR
- Mental Health First Aid
- Certified Nurse Aid
- Medical Office Assistant

April and Adam went on to nursing school and are now residing in Anchorage where they plan to acquire the nursing experience they need to return to Barrow. They are both interested in continuing their education and studying Advanced Practice Nursing. Adam is particularly interested in psychiatric nursing.



WWAMI AHEC STUDENTS

WHERE ARE THEY TODAY?

HIGHLIGHTS

The Alaska AHEC Program Office has a close relationship with the Alaska WWAMI¹ program. Each summer, Alaska AHEC staff finds preceptors and supports WWAMI medical students participating in the Rural/Underserved Opportunities Program. WWAMI students, between their first and second year of medical school, spend four weeks with preceptors in rural communities or those who work with urban underserved populations. Some of our regional AHEC centers also support WWAMI students in additional rotations during their 3rd and 4th years of medical school in communities across Alaska.

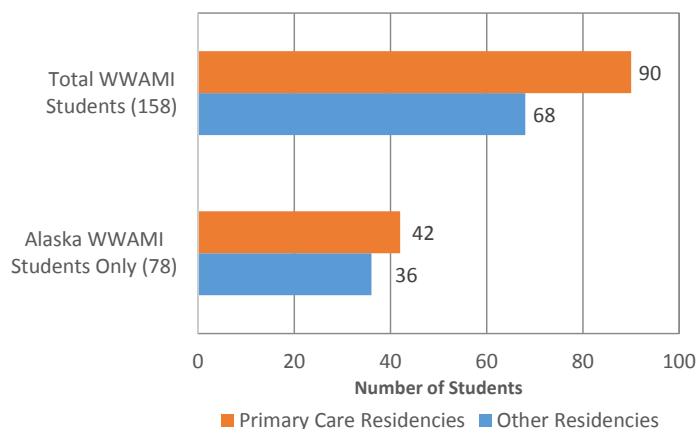
As part of Alaska AHEC's long term tracking efforts, we took a look at where the 196 WWAMI students who worked with Alaska AHECs since 2005 are now. Of these students, 158 are either currently in a residency or have completed a residency. 27% of these residents are in family medicine, which is a much higher percentage than the 8.4% of seniors who were matched to family medicine in 2015 across the nation.² If we include students who went into Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, and OB/GYN as additional primary care residencies, this number jumps to 57% of the total WWAMI students (54% of the Alaska WWAMI students).

Some of the former WWAMI students/residents moved on to employment. Of the 43 physicians where employment information is available, 33% of these graduates are working in Alaska, with an additional 7% working in a rural community in another state.

¹WWAMI is a collaborative medical school among universities in five northwestern states—Washington, Wyoming, Alaska, Montana, and Idaho--and the University of Washington School of Medicine.

²American Academy of Family Physicians. "2015 Match Results for Family Medicine." AAFP.org. American Academy of Family Physicians, 2015. Web. 10 Dec. 2015 (<http://www.aafp.org/medical-school-residency/program-directors/nrmp.html>).

WWAMI Residencies (Primary Care* vs Other)

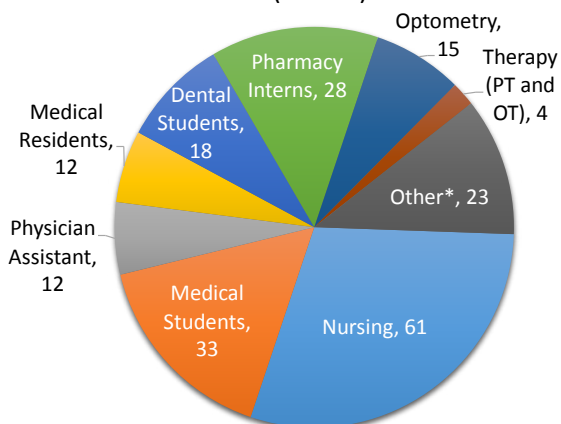


*Primary Care Residencies=Family Medicine, Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, OB/GYN.



Margaret Jayich and Ann Jennings, Alaska R/UOP students, enjoy sampling the seafood delights of Sitka, Alaska.

Clinical Rotation Students by Health Field (N=206)



*including Allied Health and Behavioral Health

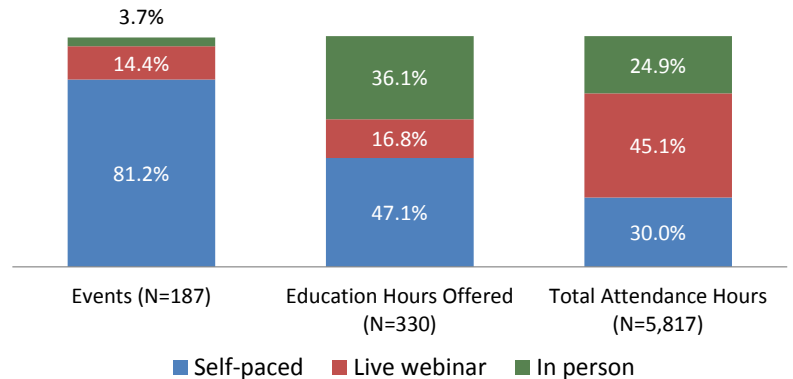
Clinical rotations are typically required clinical experiences that health professions students must complete in order to successfully finish the program. AHEC strives to facilitate rotations at rural and under-served sites in Alaska to expose students to care delivery in these settings where hard-to-fill vacancies persist.

HIGHLIGHTS

To support health professional workforce retention and growth across Alaska, the AHEC provides continuing education and professional development (CE/PD) opportunities through partnerships with other health organizations, associations, and state programs, or by developing individual events. Highlighted activities for FY 2015 include:

- Interprofessional Simulation Workshops – Training university faculty and facility educators to use simulation to enhance Interprofessional learning and curriculum development.
- Rural Veterans Health Access Webinars – Sponsored through a grant received by the Alaska DHSS and focused on suicide prevention and traumatic brain injury.
- HPV Vaccination in Alaska – First Alaska training of a multi-year National AHEC Organization (NAO) partnership with the Center for Disease Control (CDC) to increase HPV vaccination rates across the nation.
- Annual Geriatric Education Series – Coordination of twenty 1.5 hour weekly webinars broadcast from the University of Washington to over 30 host sites across Alaska.
- Lactation Educator Course – 3 day training in Barrow to advocate the benefits of breastfeeding.

Overview of Continuing Education/ Professional Development (CE/PD)



"Thank you for all the excellent information provided. This will help considerably in my role as family practice RN." -CE student

"Excellent, excellent workshop. Everyone did a great job--all done professionally and competently." -CE student

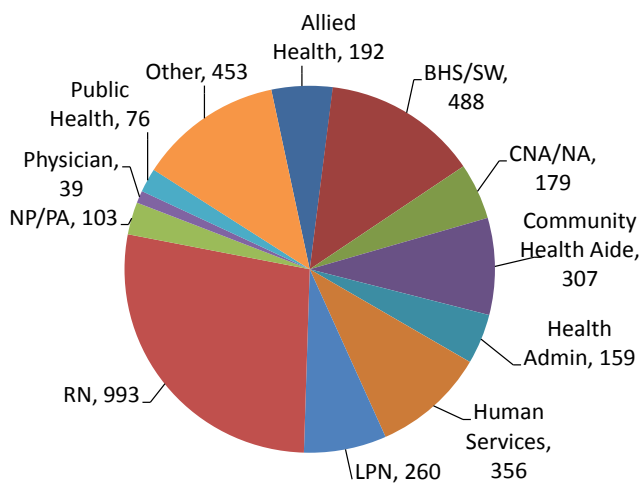
The Alaska CACHE is a web-based system that increases access to CE/PD for health professionals by creating a single-access



point that can be utilized by all CE Providers and employers. The system allows users to: search for current events by profession, topic, or host; manage and track completed CE/CME; receive new training notifications; post upcoming events; track attendance and registration; and download reports.

Visit AK CACHE online! www.akcache.org

Total CE/PD Participation by Profession (N=3605)



Note: Includes 920 individual participants, many of whom attended more than one training.



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GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

P.O. Box 110693
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Fax: 907.465.1398

February 29, 2016

The Honorable Mark Neuman, Co-Chair
The Honorable Steve Thompson, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Rooms 505 & 515
Juneau, Alaska 99811-1182

Subject: Support for Senior Benefits, Senior Community Based Grants, and Medicaid Adult Dental (HB 256 and HB 257, Department of Health and Social Services Operating Budget)

Dear Chair Neuman and Chair Thompson:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) extends our sincere thanks and appreciation for the important work conducted by the House Finance Health and Social Services Subcommittee on the operating budget for the Department of Health and Social Services. We do understand and recognize the difficult decisions that you have been called upon to make. We want to take this opportunity to share with you how important programs such as Senior Benefits, Senior Community Based Grants, and Medicaid Adult Dental are for Alaska seniors in reducing the need for more expensive health and long-term care services. While targeted for funding reductions, these safety net services help seniors to maintain their health, independence, dignity, and ability to live at home and contribute to the well-being of their families and communities. We are concerned that reduced funding for these programs will have unintended consequences that may lead to increased utilization of more expensive health and long-term care services thus straining the state's budget and, most importantly, compromising the health and welfare of Alaska's older people.

The **Alaska Senior Benefits Program**, administered by the Division of Public Assistance, provides a critical safety net for Alaskans age 65 and older who live on small fixed incomes. This program offers monthly cash benefits to more than 11,700 seniors statewide to help pay for life necessities including food, housing, heat, and prescribed medications. The average age is 76. The majority of recipients are women, many of whom may be widowed. The proposed budget reduction of **\$5,137,000** eliminates the third highest income category (175% federal poverty level) that provides the lowest amount of cash assistance and will impact 5,438 seniors. The loss of \$125 monthly for a person on a fixed income will make a huge difference in their purchase of nutritious food like fresh fruits and vegetables at the grocery store, being able to afford medications in the prescribed amounts, and keeping the thermostat at a comfortable level during the winter. Many low-income seniors lack cash reserves to pay for emergencies and the increased cost of living. Senior Benefits has proven to be an invaluable help for many older Alaskans who are most vulnerable to economic stresses.

The **Senior Community Based Grants Component**, within the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, is targeted for a funding cut in the amount of **\$450,000**. These funds provide services for seniors age 60 and older that include home-delivered meals, congregate meals, adult day services, respite for family caregivers, homemaker/chore services, transportation, services for people with traumatic brain injury, and the Aging and Disability Resource Centers. Senior Community Based Grant services serve the largest number of older people at the least cost so that seniors may remain in their homes and communities, where they most desire to be, and provide support for their family caregivers so that they can retain their health and ability to hold a job. Senior

Community Based Grant services target seniors with the greatest economic and social need. They also serve seniors with dementia and other vulnerable older people who do not meet the level of care for the Medicaid Alaskans Living Independently Waiver program. In SFY2015, 25,893 seniors (unduplicated count) received senior grant-funded services at an average annual cost of \$574 per person. These services, if provided at the right time, prevent the need for higher cost health and long-term care such as assisted living (\$68,430 annual cost per person) and nursing home care (\$281,415 annual cost per person) (Genworth Financial Cost of Care Survey 2015). In the long run, senior grant funded services save money for the State.

Adult Preventative Dental Medicaid Services, within Medicaid Services, is targeted for a General Fund reduction in the amount of **\$3,161,700** and a consequential loss of \$2,882,700 of federal receipts. Medicaid Adult Dental is a Medicaid State Option service that was implemented in April 2007. This program assists many low-income seniors who live with a variety of painful, destructive dental problems who otherwise could not afford to pay for routine dental health care, such as dentures. Medicare does not cover the cost of most dental care for senior beneficiaries, including dentures. Dental pain and missing/decaying teeth often affect the dietary choices for seniors that may impact overall health. Studies have consistently shown the link between oral health and chronic disease. Older adults are at high risk for dental decay that has been associated with periodontal disease, diabetes, pneumonia, and cardiovascular disease including increased risk for stroke and vascular dementia. Those without dental coverage or a routine place for dental care and under distress may be forced to access care through hospital emergency departments at a significantly higher cost.

Other budget reductions proposed for programs serving seniors include the

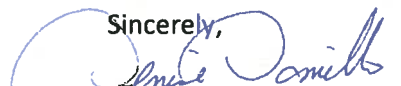
- **Alaska Pioneer Homes (\$741,000)** that will result in the elimination of 11 staff positions and reduce the number of residents who can be served, adding to the waitlist. The Pioneer Homes provide high quality residential care for 535 older Alaskans with an average age of 86 years. Fifty-eight percent of the residents are diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias; and
- **Alaska's Heating Assistance Program (\$9,174,300)** that provides energy assistance for households up to 221% federal poverty level was eliminated in the Governor's budget. In FY2016, 815 households that received home heating assistance through this program had at least one elderly member age 60 and older. Funding for the federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), that provides heating assistance for households up to 151% federal poverty level, is not expected to be affected by these budget actions.

In total, there is an approximate **\$18,664,000** proposed reduction for five programs serving seniors and other vulnerable Alaskans in the FY16 operating budget for the Department of Health and Social Services. These programs support Alaskan seniors desire to continue living in-state and promote their health, safety, and personal dignity. Seniors are our parents, grandparents caring for grandchildren while their parents are making a living, and pioneers who developed the State many years ago. The Alaska Commission on Aging appreciates your thoughtful re-examination of the consequences of these particular reductions and the impact on Alaska seniors. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's Executive Director by phone (465-4879) or email (denise.daniello@alaska.gov) for further information. Thank you for your leadership and commitment serving Alaskans!

Sincerely,


Mary E. Shields
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,


Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Representative Dan Sadler, Vice Chair
Representative Cathy Muñoz
Representative Lance Pruitt
Representative Les Gara

Representative Tammie Wilson
Representative Scott Kawasaki
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Mike Hawker (alternate)



Feb 29/16

goodday state -

i'm a 40 year fbks resident - i never went to the "u", nor have i worked there -

however the "u" is an almost daily part of my life - friends who work there share their knowledge and expertise - the science, the art, the music, its FBKS!

the salaries, both big and small, from the "u" are reinvested in the fbks economy - without the "u" fbks would be an economic cripple -

research is a vibrant and important part of the "u" - a world with no research is a dead world - we move forward via research -

the state should borrow money from the permanent fund to keep the "u" afloat until we can get our feet back under us.

Zin Kittredge
605 front st.
fbks, 99701

thank
Zin



the "u" is the university!



State Of Alaska
Legislative Affairs Agency
Kenai LIO
145 Main St Lp, Ste 217
Kenai, AK 99611
907-283-2030

Date: _____ 022916 _____

Please accept the following as written testimony for the
_____ HFIN _____ HB256 _____ teleconference
hearing that was scheduled on _____ 030116 _____.

A copy of this testimony was transmitted to your committee
on _____ 022916 _____.

Thank You,

Kenai LIO

Shauna Thornton
320 Lantern Circle
Kenai, Alaska 99611

February 29, 2016

State of Alaska Legislators
C/O LIO Office Kenai
145 Main Street Loop
Kenai, Alaska 99611

Dear Alaska State Legislators,

I just wanted to take a moment and voice my support of the University budget the Governor has recommended this is imperative for online courses and programs. These programs have allowed and afforded me the flexibility to remain in my hometown of Kenai, receive an excellent education and given me opportunities that are boundless for not only my growth as a student but as a participating community member. I have attended classes at the University all throughout working on my Bachelors in Liberal Arts (concentrations in Sociology, History, and English) with an academic minor in Anthropology and currently enrolled in the Masters of Public Administration program at UAS.

I have been very active not only within our UA community as a Student Government member, Coalition of Student Leaders Speaker, and now as the Student Government Advisor. I additionally serve my community as a volunteer with many organizations and starting a non-profit community art group, sitting on the Kenai Harbor Commission and many other events on our local campus. The opportunities to attend classes at times that are most convenient have enhanced my application of what I am learning within each of the courses that I have attended. The most fascinating thing for me in the online course delivery method is the vastness of our cohort as we travel on our paths. I have had in class people from all over the world, working and living just as I do here in Alaska. However, this network and bond have given me ideas and a network far larger than I had ever dreamed of, this is the priceless part of what I consider the tools for success part of my education. I believe that as a University that we can weather the storm that a budget crisis will create through our innovative and problem solving skills, working together and focusing on unique delivery methods that our outlying campuses have perfected and work for a large diverse population.

I support and have witnessed first hand how many of our smaller campuses are not only innovative for their local markets but have reached new heights with worldwide enrollment, making our smaller campuses a golden gem of opportunity to the larger University, through their value added programming/research within their individual communities, and our state as a whole. Please during the impending doom and gloom; keep an eye on the future, and our often forgotten gems within the University.

Sincerely,

Shauna Thornton
Graduate Student
UAS MPA Program.

Greetings:

I am writing to oppose the proposal to eliminate the service component of University of Alaska faculty workloads. This idea would seriously impact our organization.

I chair the board of OLÉ! (Opportunity for Lifelong Education, offering courses and learning activities for folks over 50) centered in Anchorage. We are an all-volunteer 501c3 non-profit with one paid administrative assistant and over 350 members. We are not part of, but are affiliated with UAA, UAF, Alaska Heritage Museum, and other organizations. (see our website at www.OLEAnchorage.org).

The University of Alaska's Mission Statement reads: *"The University of Alaska inspires learning, and advances and disseminates knowledge through teaching, research, and public service, emphasizing the North and its diverse peoples."* Regents' Policy 01.01.01. The UA Values include **Accessibility for all Alaskans** and **Dedication to Serving Community Needs**.

OLÉ! is a great benefit for the University of Alaska as we serve senior citizens at no direct cost to the university, a population that UAA does not serve well. While UAA has a tuition waiver, it serves only those who qualify for social security, generally age 66 and above. Seniors can't enroll until the day the class begins and often by then there is not room in the class; they must pay Student Life and other fees. Most senior citizens do not want to enroll in credit courses, they just want to keep learning.

OLÉ! courses have no tests, no grades and provide stimulating academic learning as well as a valuable social component. We do not ask for any grants or funding but successfully operate using our membership fees. We are affiliated with UAA- they allow us to use a few classrooms on Friday, the least conflict for space. As part of their community service, a few talented UAA faculty have taught OLÉ! classes for which we are very grateful. We are also affiliated with UAF through Cooperative Extension- we help them meet their goal of offering learning and services to the community; they provide us a small shared office space and periodic use of their main classroom. Some of their faculty have taught courses for us as part of their service.

Service is part of all public institutions in the U.S. Service has been a benefit to the citizens of Alaska since our university system began. At Anchorage Community College, from its founding in 1954 until the merger in 1986/87, community service was a big part of their mission and faculty responsibility. At UAA and UAF, community/public service continues to be part of their mission.

There is no benefit to cutting the public service component of faculty workloads. There is great benefit to continuing. It:

1. Maximizes the university/community partnerships, bringing financial benefit to the university and its mission. It provides high benefit for minimal cost.
2. Allows a few faculty each term to teach OLÉ! classes, serving an important stated mission and value of the university, and helping faculty meet their public service responsibilities.
3. Saves the university substantial funds if it had to create and staff an office to serve this clientele.
4. Builds connection with senior citizens who may be in some of the best position to financially and politically support the university and its mission.

The university system is working hard to find ways to reduce their costs. Cutting out faculty public service would jeopardize valuable community partnerships and alienate the university from the community. It would go against its mission. And I don't believe in the end, it would save money.

Regards,

Gretchen T. Bersch
OLÉ! Board Chair
gtb@alaska.net

Dear Alaska Representatives,

I support the Governor's proposed budget.

I do not support the House UA Budget Subcommittee budget to eliminate all UA/UAF research and outreach state funds. A cut of 71% to the CES budget would result in the near shutdown of CES programs and possibly a total shut down of 4-H coordinating and funds in Dillingham.

The CES programs have been an amazing resource for Dillingham Youth. Youth who have participated in 4-H groups have grown from irreplaceable experiences that promote team building, community service, STEM experiences, life skills, culture, body awareness and strengthening, to understanding varying ways of personal expression. Most of all I see these 4-H experiences teaching our youth authentic positivity! Students work together with community volunteers to make their lives and community strong and healthy.

As a parent of children who are 4-H and as a 4-H group leader, I can not express in words the strength these programs have given our community! 4-H is making a difference here in rural Alaska.

Sincerely,

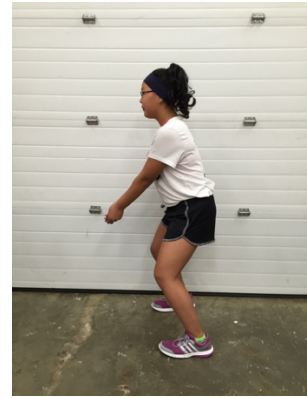
Brook Spurlock

Mother, Community Volunteer, Teacher, UAS Masters Student, Artist

Let these photos be evidence to the knowledge being cultivated and the lives 4-H is improving:









Christine E. Klein
12201 Graiff Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99507

Alaska State Legislature
Legislators'
Alaska State Capital Building
Juneau, Alaska, 99801

February 29, 2016

Re: State Budget Comments

Dear Legislators:

This letter is to express my support for developing a comprehensive state fiscal plan and sustainable budget this legislative session. Solving our deficit simply cannot be accomplished in operating budget reductions alone, and requires generating funds to pay for government services through increased costs to everyone.

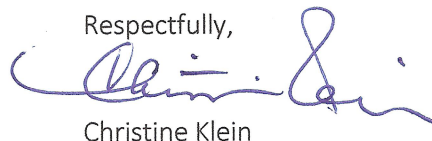
As a lifelong Alaskan raised in a rural area, state income tax and local school tax were for years taken from my paycheck starting age 14. My parents had me file tax returns to 'learn how to do it', and get a portion back at the time. It was a good lesson. Nobody likes or wants to give away hard earned money to pay any kind of taxes. There is no choice but to revisit getting everyone to help pay their way for services and the way we choose to live. Alaska once had very respectful programs—even before we relied on oil & gas revenue and enormous federal funding. Our dependency on one industry and federal money paying for programs & projects is untenable. Generating revenue from all of us will be very painful; but doing nothing will result in a far worse economic collapse than we lived through in the mid '80s.

The time is now for developing a comprehensive and sustainable fiscal plan. It needs to be fair, consistent, and have impacts across the board to all businesses, every citizen, out of state workers, non-resident permit holders', and seasonal visitors'. Please consider all options of revenue to pay for the basic services our constitution guarantees. It's standard in business and for every other state in the United States, most have far fewer savings options tucked away—and don't issue annual dividend during budget deficits. Our state has options and EVERYTHING should be on the table to develop a solution. I support consideration of and a mixture of ALL measures below, as you AND the Governor balance Alaska's budget gap and create a long term fiscal plan this year:

- Utilize savings from Alaska state budget reserves - constitutional reserve and permanent fund earnings; however, used only for services guaranteed in our original or current state constitution.
- Immediately reduce, cap, and/or cease Alaska permanent fund dividends distributed.
- Start State personal income tax based on a percentage of Federal tax. This will capture workers and fishing permit holders living outside Alaska who take resources away spending elsewhere.
- Reduce state funds distributed to communities without local sales tax to contribute to their own costs (city with majority of state population has no sales tax despite nearly every other village, town and city having a local sales tax to help offset their own costs). This would help reduce reliance on state funds and capture revenue from seasonal tourism.
- Return to a mandatory once annual state education fee from all adults 18 years of age.
- Initiate a State Sales Tax on non-food items.

All of these measures will be distasteful and difficult, but must be part of a sound solution. As a current and long-time small business owner, this process is going to be painful for me and my family as well, but it is necessary and overdue. Thank you.

Respectfully,



Christine Klein