



August 28, 2013

Representative Cathy Munoz  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

I am writing in response to the latest amendments to state regulations governing Home and Community-Based Waiver Services. As Southeast's Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL) works closely with community service providers and caregivers to help seniors and people with disabilities connect with longterm services and supports. Consequently we are keenly aware that for many of Alaska's most vulnerable citizens, maintaining dignity and personal choice would not be possible without the HCB Waiver program. While it is recognized that the state's goal of the amended regulations is to improve services for these Alaskans while ensuring responsible program management, there is considerable concern amongst consumers and service providers regarding the potential unintended consequences of some of the current regulations.

A sample of specific concerns brought to the attention of the ADRC include:

- The effort to increase standardization of approach in assessments does not adequately take into account **individualized needs**. Try helping dress a person with Alzheimer's disease who is confused and combative knowing that you must accomplish this task within Medicaid's service computation allowance. One consumer who is a quadriplegic and has successfully remained living at home with the help of PCA services reported that his latest assessment resulted in a reduction of hours to one-third of his prior allotment. He wonders how he will maintain his level of hard earned independence.
- For **small group home operators**, reduction in **day habilitation hours** could spell the financial difference in being able to keep their doors open.
- Long waiting lists for **Grant Services** indicate these back up programs are inadequate to pick up the slack of reduced services.
- While Senior and Disability Services has noted that the six hour cap on **Adult Day Services** does not represent a service reduction, family caregivers who work an eight hour day and may be caring for their own children in addition to elderly parents, note that this time limit is inadequate and adds to an already stressful scenario.

Social service professionals respectfully recognize the challenge the Alaska Legislature faces in dealing with the effects of federal sequestration on the State's budget. In light of the tough decisions ahead, we implore you to consider the longterm financial impact of service reductions to consumers and care providers. Reduced funding to service providers inevitably results in fewer services to those most in need. Ultimately without these services, an individual's risk of institutionalization is increased, an alternative that is far more costly to the State. Most importantly, the ability to promote the State's mission to ensure the health, well-being and safety for individuals with disabilities, seniors and vulnerable adults is severely jeopardized.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Laura Lucas'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Laura' and last name 'Lucas' clearly distinguishable.

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