

Mat-Su Senior Services Task Force Resolution
In support of State funding for the State designated
Aging & Disability Resource Center
serving the Matanuska-Susitna Borough

WHEREAS a Mat-Su Senior Services Task Force consisting of regional, governmental and provider representatives has convened to determine community priorities for services, systems change and policies that support Mat-Su seniors' health, independence and quality of life;

WHEREAS the Mat-Su Borough is experiencing one of the highest rates of population growth in the state among senior citizens, with the AK Department of Labor projecting the 65 to 74 year old age cohort to grow by 159.2% and the 75 to 84 year old age cohort by 247% by 2030, with the senior populations accounting for 23.1% of the total population growth by 2030;ⁱ

WHEREAS the 2010 US Census reported 9,700 people with disabilities of any age in the Matanuska Susitna census area each of whom may receive services from a variety of agencies or none at all. The average prevalence rate of disability is 10.9% across all ages with the age group 65+ having a 39.2% prevalence rate;

WHEREAS the Alaska Commission on Aging reports Mat-Su's senior growth rate at 11.6%, which includes a net gain from a senior in-migration rate that is almost double its senior out-migration rate;ⁱⁱ

WHEREAS Medicaid-funded long-term services and supports in the Mat-Su currently supports 1,250 individual as reported by the State Division of Senior and Disability Services in its FY11 census;

WHEREAS the qualification threshold for Medicaid services typically utilized by seniors and people with disabilities (i.e. nursing home care and waiver-supported services) in Alaska in 2010 was \$19,872, when 17.6% of senior households in Mat-Su qualified for Medicaid; and the number of Mat-Su households qualified for Medicaid will increase by 38% by 2015, having dramatic financial consequences for the State;ⁱⁱⁱ

WHEREAS Mat-Su's "gap population," which encompasses those households above the Medicaid threshold but below the median income, is projected to grow at an alarming rate from 1,351 65 and older households in 2010 to 2,174 households by 2015—an increase of 60.9%; and these individuals are typically at greatest risk because they do not qualify for State support but likely lack sufficient income to pay privately for senior services;^{iv}

WHEREAS the *Mat-Su Regional Plan for the Delivery of Senior Services February, 2011 (Regional Plan)*, commissioned by the AK Mental Health Trust Authority, Denali Commission, Mat-Su Health Foundation, Rasmuson Foundation and United Way of Mat-Su and prepared by the McDowell Group, has been endorsed by the Alaska Commission on Aging as a template for regional long term services and support planning for other regions in Alaska;

WHEREAS this *Regional Plan* noted four main challenges to caring for this growing senior population:

1. Lack of service coordination among all senior service providers.
2. Substantial challenges to service delivery due to the geography
3. State governmental infrastructure inefficient in identifying and qualifying seniors for service

4. Current service provisions insufficient to support future demand across the continuum of care;^v

WHEREAS this noted lack of service coordination among all senior service providers in Mat-Su is complicated by no service area “boundaries” and a State system that drives competition instead of collaboration; and that the creation of a centralized resource to provide information and refer seniors and people with disabilities to service options will be key in helping improve overall coordination of services;

WHEREAS the Coalition of Mat-Su Senior Centers and other partners has been meeting regularly since before the *Regional Plan* was released to coordinate service area boundaries, collaborate on grant applications, reduce unnecessary duplication of services and move toward consolidation of administrative functions in order to better serve the growing Mat-Su senior population with existing resources;

WHEREAS the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) is an evolving model of service coordination, sponsored by both the US Administration on Aging (AOA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS); and 45 states and territories, including AK, have implemented more than 200 ADRC programs nationwide, reaching approximately 40% of the U.S. population; and ADRCs are viewed as a key element in the process of expanding access to services for older adults and disability populations while containing Medicaid cost growth, improving the efficiency of the system with more streamlined allocation of resources, and increasing consumer satisfaction with person-centered, self-directed care aimed to maintain their independence;

WHEREAS the State of AK has endorsed the ADRC model with four ADRCs currently serving Southeast, Kenai Peninsula, Bristol Bay and the Anchorage municipality; and the DHSS 2012 Priorities include developing a “sustainable long term care delivery system” through the following strategies: identifying and coordinating health and welfare needs, promoting a service array that meets the needs of those requiring long-term care services, developing an integrated and comprehensive model of care, and promoting rural infrastructure development;^{vi}

WHEREAS the *Regional Plan* examined numerous service delivery models used across the country and in AK and determined that an ADRC exclusively serving the Mat-Su Borough to be the most appropriate model to address the service area challenges and growing senior population;

WHEREAS the *Regional Plan* determined that regulatory change must figure prominently into addressing Mat-Su’s challenges and also those of regions across the state; and the plan recommends, among other actions, to decouple Mat-Su from the AK DHSS current Coverage Area V (encompassing the Mat-Su Borough, Kenai Peninsula and Valdez/Cordova Census Area) and create a distinct Mat-Su region with respect to ADRC funding and services; since the State’s current ADRC plan allows for only one ADRC per administrative coverage area; and the ADRC based in the Kenai Peninsula Independent Living Center is the designated ADRC to serve the Mat-Su, provides no services to Mat-Su seniors, has determined the provision of services to Mat-Su seniors to be unfeasible, and supports the creation of two sub-regions within Coverage Area V to enable the development of another ADRC to support the Mat-Su Borough senior population;

WHEREAS the State DHSS has effectively decoupled Region V with respect to ADRC programming and operation by working with the Mat-Su Aging and Disability Coalition to provide a specific designation for a Mat-Su ADRC but failed to decouple the funding or provide funding as promised in order to ensure that the Mat-Su ADRC would be able to function sustainably;

WHEREAS the State funding formula for senior services should be revised to reflect population growth in the Mat-Su; revisions to the State formula should reflect the Mat-Su as its own region;

WHEREAS the *Regional Plan* recommends, among other actions, to secure enhanced State commitment to evolving the fully-functional ADRC model to encompass all three primary functions of the program, which would increase the volume of senior services and assessment that could be completed at the local level to benefit both seniors and service providers; and the State must dramatically increase ADRC funding to both achieve the fully-functioning model at existing sites and expand to Mat-Su and other areas of need in Alaska;

Therefore be it resolved that the Mat-Su Senior Services Task Force advocates that the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services follow its designation of an Aging Disability Resource Center in the Mat-Su Borough with funding appropriated based on State share of senior population; and

Be it further resolved, that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough identify state funding for the Mat-Su designated ADRC as a priority in its request to the Alaska State Legislature


Jim Beck, Co-Chair
Mat-Su Senior Services Task Force


Lois Wier, Co-Chair
Mat-Su Senior Services Task Force

Funder Representatives:

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Coalition of Mat-Su Senior Centers:

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Mat-Su Borough Government:

Mayor Larry DeVilbiss

Tribal Representative:

Melissa Caswell

Senior Community:

Leona Hixon
Lois Wier

Disability Providers:

Jim Beck
John Cannon

Transportation Provider:

Charolett Robinson

Homecare Provider:

Natalia Zhuchkov

Senior Housing Provider:

Doyle Holmes

Case Management:

Frances Walker

Local Physician Community:

Dr. Andrea Greenfeld

Community-at-Large:

Cheri Day
Beth Fread

ⁱ Mercer <<http://labor.alaska.gov/research/trends/dec10art1.pdf>>

ⁱⁱ Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FY2008-FY2011. Alaska Commission on Aging. June 2007
<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/acoa/documents/statePlanFinalFY08_FY11.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section, Demographics Unit, Nielsen, Claritas, Inc.

^{iv} Claritas, Inc.

^v Mat-Su Regional Plan for Delivery of Senior Services, McDowell Group, February 2011

^{vi} Department of Health & Social Services 2012 Priorities < <http://hss.alaska.gov/publications/priorities.pdf>>