

Key Coalition of Alaska



Legislative Platform and Priorities

2014



“The purpose of government is to enable the people of a nation to live in safety and happiness. Government exists for the interests of the governed, not for the governors.”

— Thomas Jefferson



2014 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Priority I

Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC)

Priority II

Continue to Eradicate the Wait List

Priority III

Task Force on Direct Support Professional wages and benefits

Support of Key Bills

Restraint, Escort and Seclusion of students in public and private schools
Education and Employment of individuals with disabilities



If families are important, if people are important,
we should be willing to pay what's necessary.
We should be willing to make the appropriate
investment in our people

Bernard Rostker

PRIORITY 1

Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC)

WHAT:

The Complex Behavior Collaborative (CBC) provides intensive support and intervention to individuals at risk of being removed from their community and sent to institutions, frequently out of the State of Alaska. The CBC provides services to individuals experiencing behaviors that present a high risk of danger to themselves or others.

The Division of Behavioral Health has identified experts knowledgeable in behavior intervention for individuals with developmental disabilities, mental health challenges, brain injuries and Alzheimer's disease and other related dementia. These experts provide individualized training and consultation to local providers and families, enhancing their knowledge of behavior management.

Services:

1. Assessment
2. Development of intervention plans
3. Training
4. Ongoing consultation
5. Results based evaluation

WHY:

- To reduce and prevent the number of individual who are placed in high cost institutional care systems
- To continue to increase in-state provider capacity to meet the needs of individuals with complex behavior management needs
- To assist the State in meeting its Americans with Disabilities Act requirements for community services

SUPPORTING DATA FROM 2013:

- 42 participants received services
- 76% avoided institutional care
- Agencies and family members report a significant decrease in behaviors that put participants at risk
- CBC participants reduced aggregate days at API from 227 to 9 at a cost of \$1200+ per day for acute care
- Thousands of dollars of savings realized as a result of CBC interventions
- 27 agencies (from Juneau to 2 northern villages) have utilized services.
- 93% of participants maintained were supported to remain in community



ACTION REQUESTED

The Key Coalition of Alaska asks the Alaska State Legislature to:

Support the base funding increment of \$450,000 in the FY15 budget to continue critical services provided by the Complex Behavior Collaborative

PRIORITY II

Continue to Eradicate the Wait List

WHAT:

Maintain Alaska's **commitment to eradicate the State Wait List** for community services. Actively reduce the Wait List by continuing the monthly selection process drawing a minimum of 200 individuals from the Wait List annually.

WHY:

With 652 individuals and families still on the waitlist for community supports and services there is still a critical need to continue this initiative until we reach our goal when no Alaskan will have to wait for critical community services.

- When services are provided early, prior to crisis, there is a reduced cost to the State. If families must wait until crisis arises needs are escalated and costs increase significantly
- Individuals experiencing disabilities are supported in their home communities
- Enhances local and state economy
- Return on investment in special education
- Increased productivity, community participation and independence for the people experiencing disabilities
- Increases the probability that families will stay intact if receiving critical supports for their family members



ACTION REQUESTED

The Key Coalition of Alaska asks the Alaska State Legislature to:

Continue to support and maintain of State of Alaska's commitment to actively reduce and expeditiously eliminate the Wait List for community services by:

- *A monthly removal of 20 individuals from the Wait List into full community services*
- *An annual removal of a minimum of 200 individuals from the Wait List*

PRIORITY III

Creation of an Alaskan Task Force regarding Direct Support Professional (DSP) wages and benefits

WHAT:

Establish an Alaskan task force:

- To study the issue of low Direct Support Professional wages and benefits
- To examine potential risks to the service delivery system if wages and benefits remain stagnant
- To isolate the barriers to improving wages and benefits
- To identify the steps necessary to attain a living wage for Alaskan DSPs

Workforce development and sustainability are priority issues within the community service delivery system. Without a workforce to deliver critical supports and services, Alaskans experiencing disabilities, mental health challenges and elders are at risk. Direct Support Professional salaries and compensation do not provide sustainable income for workers, requiring them to seek second and third jobs to meet basic expenses or drive them to other vocations paying a livable wage

WHY:

In order to assure Alaska is prepared to address the life support needs of its citizens, workforce development barriers and solutions must be addressed. National data indicates we are headed for a crisis in the personal care and direct support fields of service. The Key Coalition of Alaska recommends prioritizing this issue and creating an avenue for study so that solutions can be created before the pending crisis negatively impacts the health and safety of Alaskans.



ACTION REQUESTED

The Key Coalition of Alaska asks the Alaska State Legislature to:

Establish an Alaskan task force to study the issue of low Direct Support Professional wages and benefits, to examine potential risks to the service delivery system if wages and benefits remain stagnant, to isolate the barriers to improving wages and benefits, and to identify the steps necessary to attain a living wage for Alaskan DSPs.



THE KEY COALITION OF ALASKA STRONGLY SUPPORTS AND ENDORSES THE FOLLOWING:

HB210

Restraint, escort, and seclusion of students in public and private schools

Legislation has been introduced to address the issue of restraint, escort and seclusion in schools, thus providing that all children and personnel are safe in school. Use of restraint and seclusion should be limited as a rare emergency crisis intervention.

This legislation would require all school districts to develop policies and procedures for the use of restraint and seclusion. Those policies and procedures would be available to the public. In addition, they would need to be reviewed on an annual basis. Schools would be required to notify the parent/guardian within 24 hours of the use of restraint or seclusions, have a team meeting to discuss the use of restraint or seclusion as it is related to the IEP and/or behavior plan, and would have to provide a written report of the use of restraint or seclusion. This report would be in the student's file and would be available for parents or guardians. The use of restraint or seclusion could only be used when the student's behavior poses imminent danger to others and less restrictive interventions would be ineffective to stop the behavior. The restraint or seclusions is discontinued immediately when the student no longer poses a threat to safety

This legislation does not allow:

- the use of chemical restraints,
- the use of mechanical restraints
- physically escorting or physically restraining a student in a manner that restricts breathing
- physically restraining a student by placing the student on the student's back or stomach



The Key Coalition of Alaska strongly supports passage of HB210 relating to the use of restraint, escort and seclusion of students in public and private schools.



THE KEY COALITION OF ALASKA STRONGLY SUPPORTS AND ENDORSES THE FOLLOWING:

HB211

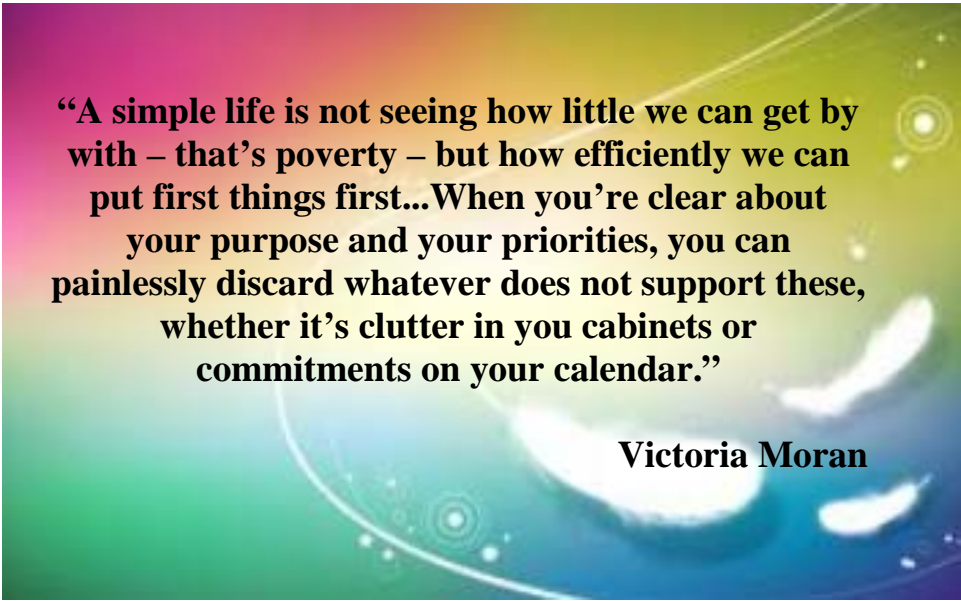
Education and employment of individuals with disabilities

Employment in the general workforce is the first and preferred outcome in the provision of publicly funded services for all working age citizens with disabilities, regardless of disability. Employment has been associated with lower health care costs to federal and state benefit programs. When individuals with disabilities work in competitive employment they earn better wages increasing self-sufficiency and decreasing dependence on public benefits. Approximately 17% of individuals with a disability are currently employed in Alaska compared to 74% of individuals employed in the general population. Workforce development is a critical topic to most employers. Assisting to develop a viable component of our workforce is critical to our state's economic health

This legislation will require State agencies that provide support, education, or training to persons with disabilities must consider integrated and competitive employment as the first and preferred option in planning services for working age individual with disabilities. All state agencies that provide support to individuals with disabilities must follow this policy and ensure that it is effectively implemented in their programs and services. The Employment First Act does not require employers to give preference to hiring persons with disabilities



The Key Coalition of Alaska strongly supports passage of HB211 relating to education and employment of individuals with disabilities.



“A simple life is not seeing how little we can get by with – that’s poverty – but how efficiently we can put first things first...When you’re clear about your purpose and your priorities, you can painlessly discard whatever does not support these, whether it’s clutter in you cabinets or commitments on your calendar.”

Victoria Moran

