



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of  
**Health and Social Services**

FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT SERVICES  
Juneau Office

P.O. Box 110650  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0650  
Main: 907.465.3082  
Fax: 907.465.2499

February 11, 2020

The Honorable Jennifer Johnston  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Room 511  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Johnston:

On February 4, 2020, the Department of Health and Social Services received the following questions from the House Health and Social Services Finance Subcommittee regarding the Alaska Psychiatric Institute presentation:

**Rep. Pruitt: Provide breakdown of I/A receipts, where do they come from?**

The Inter-Agency (IA) funding comes from Medicaid, Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) payment, and the Division of Juvenile Justice Pharmacy RSA.

**Rep. Johnston: Provide salary costs vs. Wellpath costs, vacancy numbers, and step increase information.**

The Wellpath contract is billed on a flat rate during the stabilization phase, not itemized.

As of pay period ending 12/15/2020 there were 107 vacancies at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute.

As a result of Classification studies the nurses and psychiatric classes received salary increases to bring them up to a competitive market rate. Market target is the 65<sup>th</sup> percentile. Additionally, all the exempt medical personnel received increases to bring their base salaries to market rate. The departments have struggled to recruit and retain qualified applicants for these classes as the current base salary rate lags behind current market base salary data in Alaska with focus on Anchorage, Alaska.

Class Code	Class Title	Salary Range
PG0351	Old: Assistant Nursing Director	Old: 23
	New: Assiatnt Nurse Administrator	New: 26
PG0352	Old: Nursing Director	Old: 25
	New: Nurse Administrtator	New: 27
PG0421	Old: Health Practitioner I	Old: 24
	New: Physician Assistant/Advanced Practice Registered Nurse I	New: 26
PG0422	Old: Health Practitioner II	Old: 25
	New: Physician Assistant/Advanced Practice Registered Nurse II	New: 27

Class Code	Class Title	Final Range	Final Class Study Actions
PG0231	Psychiatric Nursing Assistant I	10	Salary Range Change from 09
PG0232	Psychiatric Nursing Assistant II	11	Salary Range Change from 10
PG0233	Psychiatric Nursing Assistant III	12	Update and Revise Class Specs
PG0234	Psychiatric Nursing Assistant IV	14	Update and Revise Class Specs
PG0321	Psychiatric Nurse I	22	Title Change from Nurse (Psychiatric) Salary Range Change from 20
PG0322	Psychiatric Nurse II	23	Title Change from Nurse (Psychiatric) Salary Range Change from 21
PG0323	Psychiatric Nurse III	25	Title Change from Nurse (Psychiatric) Salary Range Change from 22
PG0324	Psychiatric Nurse IV	26	Title Change from Nurse (Psychiatric) Salary Range Change from 24
PG0326	Corrections Nurse I	22	Title Change from Nurse (Corrections) Salary Range Change from 19
PG0327	Corrections Nurse II	23	Title Change from Nurse (Corrections) Salary Range Change from 20
PG0328	Corrections Nurse III	25	Title Change from Nurse (Corrections) Salary Range Change from 21
PG0329	Corrections Nurse IV	26	Title Change from Nurse (Corrections) Salary Range Change from 23

### Rep. Claman: How many Wellpath staff are at API?

Wellpath has seven Anchorage-based team members at API currently (our low point), with additional on-site support from various disciplines on a weekly basis. Wellpath has averaged 12 onsite team members. At the high point, Wellpath has had as many as 25 team members at API and has provided support across all shifts, seven days per week.



In addition, Wellpath provides offsite corporate support, which ranges from 22 to 40 team members to support electronic system development/implementation, risk management, safety, program development, compliance, quality assurance and performance improvement, and policy development.

**Rep. Spohnholz: Do you have a sense of how the 1115 waiver will impact API's budget? Number of API population that is billable to Medicaid? Number that will be eligible under 1115 waiver?**

The Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) is in the process of re-entering into negotiations with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to receive approval for the exemption from the institutions for mental disease (IMD) exclusion for mental health services. Once approved, the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) will be able to bill Medicaid for individuals at API that are over the age of 21, and under the age of 64. The state of Vermont and the state of Indiana have received this approval and DBH is tracking these approvals closely. DBH is working with an actuarial firm to assess utilization projections, potential Medicaid revenue versus IMD Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funding, and the number of individuals that will be eligible under the 1115 Behavioral Health Medicaid Waiver.

**Rep. Claman: When was the last time a civil commitment patient was held at DOC?**

August 2019.

**Rep. Spohnholz: When would API be able to reopen the adolescent unit? How many youth have been diverted since it's been closed?**

The adolescent unit has never been "closed." It is currently not staffed and has no patients on it, but that unit has been used quite recently for high-needs patients (one patient was there for several weeks with a full staff because of their behavior and acuity level). Whenever API admits someone to that unit, it must be fully staffed, which significantly decreases the census in the hospital.

We have successfully found placements for several youth in the last few months at facilities that can provide proper care.

The Division of Behavioral Health does not require an out-of-state placement committee process for children going to an acute facility. As of 1/1/2019, 38 children have received acute care from out-of-state acute care facilities.

**Rep. Tarr: On a big picture level - ideas to address the lack of behavioral health care in Alaska and what kinds of long term support is available for people who leave API.**

The Department of Health and Social Services released a report on January 21, 2020, [Addressing Gaps in the Crisis Psychiatric Response System](#), which addresses the department's short-term and long-term plans for behavioral health reform in Alaska. The 1115 Behavioral Health Medicaid Waiver provides Medicaid coverage for the full continuum of behavioral health services, and includes step up and step down services to both divert and provide options for discharge for patients served at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API).

If you have additional questions, please contact me at 465-1630.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sana", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sana Efir  
Assistant Commissioner

cc: Kelly Cunningham, Fiscal Analyst, Legislative Finance  
Suzanne Cunningham, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor  
Jacqelli Ziegenfuss, Office of Management and Budget  
Adam Crum, Commissioner  
Albert Wall, Deputy Commissioner  
Clinton Lasley, Deputy Commissioner  
Marian Sweet, Deputy Director of Finance and Management Services  
Janelle Earls, Budget Manager  
Anthony Newman, Legislative Liaison  
Sarah Brinkley, Deputy Legislative Liaison  
Noel Rea, Alaska Psychiatric Institute Director

Log 8109/2020