

Support for HB 58/SB 57, establishing adult care home license for individuals with special needs who age out of the foster care, treatment, or disability care system

The Alaska Prenatal Alcohol Exposure (PAE) Partnership supports HB 58/SB 57, establishing a new licensed residential setting type, Adult Care Home, that will allow individuals to open their homes and provide care for adults who have difficulty caring for themselves.

HB 58/SB 57 would authorize the Department of Health (DOH) to pay for assisted living services under the state’s Medicaid Home and Community-Based Services waiver program, adding to the array of supports available for adults with developmental disabilities, including prenatal alcohol exposure/fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (PAE/FASD) who age out of foster care, residential treatment, and disability care systems.

Under HB 58/SB 57, this license type “would be limited to a non-business site where the head of household lives and provides 24-hour care for no more than two individuals.” DOH would be able to “adopt regulations that allow for care of up to three individuals based on certain circumstances,” according to the Sponsor Statement.

Access to home and community-based services allows people with disabilities to live regular lives in their communities, utilizing in-home and community supports, such as adult day services, day habilitation, respite, supported employment, transportation, environmental modifications, meals, specialized medical equipment, nursing oversight, intensive active treatment, private duty nursing, and more—all of which are less expensive than institutional care. The final menu of services available to people in adult care homes will be determined through regulation.

ALASKA PAE FACTS & FIGURES

- *Prenatal Alcohol Exposure (PAE) is exposure to alcohol before birth, with or without a diagnosis.*
- *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) are a range of diagnoses that result from prenatal alcohol exposure, and include Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Alcohol-Related Neurodevelopmental Disorder, and others. *The term fetal alcohol effects (FAE) has been replaced with the term FASD.*
- *FASD is a brain-based neurodevelopmental disability and people impacted by FASD require accommodations like any other person with a disability.*

- *The impacts caused by prenatal alcohol exposure most commonly impact behavior, memory, attention, emotional regulation, impulsivity, cause and effect, judgment.*
- *1.7 out of 1,000 live births in Alaska may experience Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS), and accounts for 10% of the total diagnoses on the fetal alcohol spectrum.^[1]*
- *Individuals with other diagnoses on the FASD spectrum are estimated to be 65 per 1,000 (90% of the diagnoses).^[2]*
- *1 of every 600 individuals impacted by prenatal alcohol exposure will receive an FASD diagnosis.^[3]*
- *PAE/FASD is often misdiagnosed as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder, Oppositional-Defiant Disorder.*
- *Impacts vary from individual to individual, based on when the alcohol was consumed, how much was consumed, metabolism of the mother, metabolism of the developing baby, and other variables.*
- *The percentage of juveniles in a Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) facility with an identified behavioral health or neurobehavioral condition was 96.% in FY20, and 100% in FY21, a +4% increase.^[4]*
- *In 2018, in the Office of Children’s Services estimated \$39.7 million (25%) expenditures for child abuse and neglect attributable to alcohol misuse.^[5]*
- *Approximately 47,860 people have an FASD in Alaska, including 2,950 specifically with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS). For individuals with FAS, the estimated annual costs of services, including home and residential care associated with mental disability, medical equipment, special education, and lost productivity, is \$35.4 million. The estimated cost in 2018 for caregivers of children with FASD from birth to 53 years old was approximately \$21,079 per individual, suggesting a total cost of \$1 billion in Alaska.^[6]*
- *The Alaska Screening Tool (AST) screens for mental illness, substance used disorders (SUD), co-occurring occurring disorders, traumatic brain injury (TBI), and fetal alcohol spectrum disorders (FASD). All behavioral health grantee providers are required to administer AST. Between 2013 and 2017, 72,964 AST screenings were conducted, with 5,833 (8%) positive to FASD. 11% were homeless; 11% received care in a private residence without supportive services; 6% were in foster care. Note: 29 individuals living in a correctional or detention facility screened positive for FASD on the AST in 2017, based on a daily census of 4,992, for a total annual cost of \$1.8 million.^[7]*

^[1] *Health Impacts of Alcohol Misuse in Alaska, Alaska Division of Public Health, (2018).*

^[2] *Alaska Mental Health Trust, Drugs and Alcohol Report, FASD Summary, (2020).*

^[3] *Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder: Can We Change the Future?, Alcohol, Clinical, and Experimental Research, (2020).*

^[4] *Alaska Scorecard: Key Issues Impacting Alaska Mental Health Trust Beneficiaries, (2021).*

^[5] *Economic Costs of Alcohol Misuse in Alaska, McDowell Group Report, (2020).*

^[6] *Ibid.*

^[7] *Ibid.*