

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE HEALTH, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE

March 21, 2007

1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Bettye Davis, Chair
Senator Joe Thomas, Vice Chair
Senator John Cowdery
Senator Kim Elton
Senator Fred Dyson

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW: Aging and Disability Resource Centers

SENATE BILL NO. 85

"An Act extending the termination date for the State Medical Board; and providing for an effective date."

MOVED SB 85 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 85

SHORT TITLE: EXTEND STATE MEDICAL BOARD

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DAVIS

02/19/07	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
02/19/07	(S)	HES, FIN
03/21/07	(S)	HES AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

WITNESS REGISTER

Patrick Reinhart, Director
Alaska State Independent Living Council (SILC)
Anchorage, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Participated in overview

Joanna Geisler, Director
Kenai Peninsula Independent Living Center
Homer, AK

POSITION STATEMENT: Participated in overview

Teisha Simmons, representing herself
Fairbanks, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Participated in overview

Richard Benavides
Staff to Senator Davis
Juneau, AK
POSITION STATEMENT: Presented SB 85

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR BETTYE DAVIS called the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at [1:32:36 PM](#). Present at the call to order were Senators Cowdery, Elton, Thomas, Dyson, and Chair Davis.

OVERVIEW: AGING AND DISABILITY RESOURCE CENTERS

CHAIR BETTYE DAVIS announced the overview on aging and disability resource centers.

PATRICK REINHART, Director of the Alaska State Independent Living Council (SILC), said that the goal of the centers is to consolidate long-term care services in communities, and that they've been using a federal grant to fund their efforts; a main partner is the Alaska Housing and Finance Corporation. The service delivery aspect is overseen by Independent Living Centers (ILC).

[1:35:30 PM](#)

JOANNA GEISLER, Director of the Kenai Peninsula ILC, said that there are four such centers in the state; she explained where they're located and what parts of Alaska they serve. Each center has a large region of responsibility. There are partners in each of the communities; together they gather and disseminate the information needed to provide assisted living services.

MR. REINHART said that the original goal of the grant program was to create a single entry point for all consumers. Eligibility screening and determinations are closely coordinated, and eventually the process will become seamless to the consumer. The program is a long way from realizing this goal, but eventually it will be able to meld various resources so that no matter the need, people will be able to call one single place. The program was started with the southeast Alaska

and Kenai centers, and in later years the other three centers were introduced. One of the first acts of the ILCs was to get information to the public through posters and brochures in medical and state offices; there was an immediate response to the advertising.

MS. GEISLER said that the senior centers in each community are very important partners for the ILCs. She then related a story about someone who benefited from their local center.

MR. REINHART continued to list accomplishments of the program, including how it has helped with Medicare enrollment for many consumers.

MS. GEISLER said that 350 individuals have been aided in enrolling in Medicare plans through the Kenai center. Without the ADRC in place, the enrollment would have been far more difficult for many people.

MR. REINHART explained how a memorandum was recently signed by the Division of Senior and Disability Services, the ADRCs, Alaska Housing and Finance Corporation, and Alaska Public Assistance regarding the future of the ADRC program and streamlining of access. He then explained that Network of Care is a web-based program that ADRC will be purchasing to aid its consumers in researching providers and creating medical profiles to share with others. The ADRCs are excited to begin the process of using the program, which many states utilize already. Eventually it will include streamlined application forms for different programs including Medicare.

He then cited statistical data for the ADRCs recent years, including user numbers and age and the referral calls made.

MS. GEISLER said that the centers are key providers because they provide services without age or disability discrimination. Alaska is the only state in the union where ILCs have partnered with ADRCs.

MR. REINHART explained how the ADRCs have helped seniors to relocate from senior centers, and how many consumers have been able to avoid entering such settings.

MS. GEISLER said that many of the centers have supplies that they loan to users, such as hospital beds and other equipment.

[1:54:19 PM](#)

MR. REINHART said that the ADRCs will continue to collaborate with different community centers and organizations, and they're looking at ways to utilize state general fund to help reduce Medicaid costs. He said that he expects funding challenges in the future, and the centers are looking for the possibility of a state grant. Eligibility for and access to services should happen behind the scenes; the individual shouldn't have to be involved in elements of the process that can be streamlined.

He added that partnership development is very important for future expansion of and minimum standards for the ADRCs. The centers are also looking at transferring the management of the program to the Division of Senior and Disabled services.

[2:00:26 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS asked how the program will function after June 2007 when the grant will end.

MR. REINHART said that current funding should carry them into next year, but they are scrambling to see how the contracts will be carried out beyond July 2007. They haven't submitted a funding request to the legislature, but there is a lot of different options for finding new funding.

CHAIR DAVIS asked what will change if the administration transfer is made.

MS. GEISLER said that she hopes the CILs won't be abandoned, and explained how they have been successful in developing their programs. Suddenly there's a lot of interest in other institutions trying to become defined as ADRCs, and without continued funding for the project the current staff will have to be laid off.

She added that the program struggled with the idea of asking for money, or just hoping that the Department of Senior and Disability Services will recognize the program's quality and will give it grant money.

MR. REINHART said that the future funding of the program isn't perfectly clear at the moment.

[2:04:56 PM](#)

SENATOR THOMAS referenced a page of the presentation packet, and asked if the program anticipates a particular number of new patients to be served.

MR. REINHART said that the program hasn't done such a statistical analysis yet, and that funding for the centers has been fairly stagnant over the years despite the rising numbers of users. \$45,000, the amount of the grant the centers currently receive, will hardly cover the new costs of the program. He explained that providing up front, preventative services can stave off Medicaid waivers or a long-term care plan for several years.

[2:08:16 PM](#)

TEISHA SIMMONS, representing herself, explained how she was in a car accident in 1992 and her family had to move to Seattle for rehabilitation. Eventually returning to Alaska was hard in terms of adjustment and finding appropriate care. Independent living services were helpful to her family in myriad ways, and it would be unfortunate for a lack of funding to cause centers to have to turn people away. Getting waivers and personal care is important and a lot of people don't have the help they need to fight for aid. The ADRCs are great resources for a lot of disabled and aging people.

[2:13:27 PM](#)

MR. REINHART said that he had provided the committee with information to pass out to the legislature.

SB 85-EXTEND STATE MEDICAL BOARD

[2:15:31 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS announced SB 85 to be under consideration.

RICHARD BENAVIDES, staff to Senator Davis, explained that the bill would extend the sunset date of the State Medical Board until 2013. He explained the make-up of the board and its duties, and how it investigates complaints against those in the medical profession. It has consistently proved to be efficient and the state recommends that it be extended.

[2:17:29 PM](#)

SENATOR DYSON made a motion to move SB 85 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, the motion carried.

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Davis adjourned the meeting at [2:18:42 PM](#).