

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE  
April 25, 2019  
9:00 a.m.

9:00:23 AM

CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Wilson called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair  
Representative Tammie Wilson, Co-Chair  
Representative Jennifer Johnston, Vice-Chair  
Representative Dan Ortiz, Vice-Chair  
Representative Ben Carpenter  
Representative Andy Josephson  
Representative Bart LeBon  
Representative Kelly Merrick  
Representative Colleen Sullivan-Leonard  
Representative Cathy Tilton

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Gary Knopp

ALSO PRESENT

Barbara Barnes, Staff, Representative Tammie Wilson;  
Representative Ivy Spohnholz, Companion Bill Sponsor;  
Representative George Rauscher, Bill Sponsor; Anne Weske,  
Director, Permanent Fund Dividend Division, Department of  
Revenue; Jen Winkelman, Director, Probation, Parole, and  
Pretrial Services, Department of Corrections; Kelly Goode,  
Deputy Commissioner, Department of Corrections.

PRESENT VIA TELECONFERENCE

Sara Chambers, Director, Division Of Corporations,  
Business, and Professional Licensing, Department Of  
Commerce, Juneau; Darrell Breese, Staff, Representative  
George Rauscher; Marty Parsons, Director, Division of  
Mining, Land, and Water, Department of Natural Resources;  
Laura Brooks, Deputy Director, Health and Rehabilitative

Services, Department of Corrections; Pam Martin, Deputy Chief Classification Officer, Department of Corrections; Courtney Donovan, Akeela, Anchorage; Shannon Pritchett, CFO, Akeela, Anchorage; Rosalie Nadeau, Former CEO, Akeela, Anchorage; Janice Weiss, Re-Entry Program Director, Department of Corrections; Taryn Link, Probation Supervisor, Department of Corrections.

SUMMARY

HB 3 STATE LAND SALE; PFD VOUCHER AND ASSIGN.

HB 3 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

SB 93 MEDICAL PROVIDER INCENTIVES/LOAN REPAYM'T

HCS CSSB 93(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Health and Social Services.

PRESENTATION: PRISON PROGRAMS BY DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS

PRESENTATION: UNSENTENCED PRISON POPULATION

Co-Chair Wilson reviewed the agenda for the meeting. The committee would be taking up SB 93. The committee had heard its companion bill earlier in the week.

#sb93

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 93(HSS)

"An Act relating to a workforce enhancement program for health care professionals employed in the state; and providing for an effective date."

9:00:51 AM

Vice-Chair Johnston MOVED to ADOPT proposed House Committee Substitute for CSSB 93 (FIN), Work Draft 31-LS0589\S (Marx, 04/24/19)(copy on file).

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

9:01:26 AM

BARBARA BARNES, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE TAMMIE WILSON, reviewed the changes of the committee substitute. She pointed to page 1, line 9. Rural was added to the list of areas to be covered by the bill. On page 5, lines 12-16 a new subsection was added to allow for inflation and utilization of the Consumer Price Index 5-year average for calculations and allowing for the option of changing the annual amounts without having to come back to the legislature.

Ms. Barnes continued to page 7, lines 19-21 rural was defined as a community with a population of 5,500 people or less that was not connected by road or rail to Anchorage or Fairbanks or with a population of 1,500 or less connected by road or rail to Anchorage or Fairbanks. On page 7, line 25 doctor of nursing practice, clinical psychologist, and counseling psychologist were added to the Tier 1 health care professionals category. She concluded with the changes to the committee substitute.

Co-Chair Wilson asked for a review of the fiscal notes.

[9:02:54 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:03:17 AM](#)

RECONVENED

SARA CHAMBERS, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF CORPORATIONS, BUSINESS, AND PROFESSIONAL LICENSING, DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, JUNEAU (via teleconference), reviewed Fiscal Note 1. She explained that the original version of SB 93 included some responsibilities for the Board of Nursing within the division. Therefore, she had submitted a zero fiscal note. However, the responsibilities were taken out in the committee substitute. The division had withdrawn its fiscal note and currently did not have any affiliation with the bill.

Co-Chair Wilson reviewed Fiscal Note 2 from the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS). She explained that the only change to the fiscal note was the amount of money to start the program. She reminded members that it had to be a state program in order to receive the benefits from the federal government. She reported there would be a change in revenue in a forthcoming fiscal note. She highlighted that as the fiscal note was currently written,

it was a general funds source but would be changed to statutory receipt authority and would match page 2. The wrong fund source was originally inserted but the amounts would not change.

Representative Tilton referred to page 3, lines 27-29 which talked about how an employer's payment could come from any available source including a philanthropic institution, health foundation, government agency, community organization, or private individuals. She wondered if it was possible for an employer to be receiving grants from the State of Alaska and using them for the program.

Co-Chair Wilson invited the sponsors of the bill to the table.

[9:05:50 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE IVY SPOHNHOLZ, COMPANION BILL SPONSOR, responded that it would have to be consistent with the grant award received by an employer and would depend on whether the grant award allowed for the funds to be used for the compensation of employees. She did not believe there would be a conflict, but it depended on the grant in question rather than the eligibility for SHARP.

Representative Tilton asked whether, as long as a grant was consistent with a grant award, the monies could be used for repayment. She was asking because it sounded like that much of the program came through non-profits. Many non-profit organizations received grant funding through the federal government.

Representative Spohnholz responded that most of the organizations eligible for the SHARP 3 Program were primarily non-profits for Medicaid billing. It could also include some grant funding. The state did some substance abuse treatment that was grant funding. She surmised that as long as it was consistent with the terms of the grant application, she thought it would be okay.

Representative Carpenter noted the comment regarding not having to come back to the legislature for additional authority. He asked Representative Spohnholz to comment.

Representative Spohnholz explained that the rationale was to allow for the program to keep up with the cost of doing

business over time without having to come back for permission from the legislature. She felt if the private sector was going to essentially fund the program support increases, and was willing to pay for it, it would not be necessary to come back to the legislature, especially with appropriate sideboards in place. She noted that health care inflation was more aggressive than the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Health care in the State of Alaska in the prior year was about 7 percent, whereas CPI was under 2 percent. The increases were not aggressive.

Co-Chair Wilson commented on the use of the word "may" instead of "shall."

Representative Carpenter added that the increases were not decided by the federal government. They would be decided by the employer.

Co-Chair Wilson responded that he was correct that they would have that opportunity.

Representative Spohnholz followed up that the decisions would be made by the SHARP Council in consultation with members of the employer community. It was not being done to employers but by them.

Vice-Chair Johnston MOVED to report HCSCSSB 93(fin) out of Committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal note.

There being NO OBJECTION, it was so ordered.

HCS CSSB 93(FIN) was REPORTED out of committee with a "do pass" recommendation and with one new fiscal impact note by the Department of Health and Social Services.

[9:09:51 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:10:57 AM](#)

RECONVENED

#hb3

HOUSE BILL NO. 3

"An Act relating to the purchase and sale of state land; relating to discounts for veterans on state land

purchases; and relating to assignments of permanent fund dividends."

[9:11:11 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER, BILL SPONSOR, thanked the committee for hearing his bill. He read the bill sponsor statement:

Alaska has an abundance of three things: land, PFDs, and veterans. House Bill 3 is a means to bring these three together.

House Bill 3 encourages the sale of state lands, thus creating growth, allowing for the use on an individual's Permanent Fund Dividend to purchase the land. It encourages veterans to use the statutory discount in combination with the PFD assignment to purchase land.

Alaskans who have resided in the state for at least one-year immediately prior to the opening of the land disposal and who are at least 18 years of age can participate. The state regularly offers surplus lands for sale either by auction or over-the-counter sales.

House Bill 3 aims to make these land sales more accessible to Alaskans by allowing the assignment of the PFD by individuals to pay for the purchase.

Representative Rauscher urged the committee to support HB 3.

[9:13:03 AM](#)

DARRELL BREESE, STAFF, REPRESENTATIVE GEORGE RAUSCHER (via teleconference), reviewed the sectional for the bill. The bill made a couple of major changes of how land sales would be handled by Department of Natural Resources (DNR):

Section 1: Changes the discount on state land sales to eligible veterans from 25 percent to one-third.

Section 2: Makes a technical and language conforming change to the definition section of statute for an "eligible veteran". changing U.S. armed forces to United States armed forces.

Section 3: Creates clarifying language that veterans may not combine multiple discounts when purchasing state land. Example -Preventing three veterans from joining together to purchase land for free with the discount offered under section 1 of the bill.

Section 4: Establishes the ability for the Permanent Fund Division within the Department of Revenue to include on the electronic Permanent Fund Dividend application the ability for an individual to assign all or a portion of their PFD to the Department of Natural Resources to make payment for land purchased through the state land sales program.

Section 5: Establishes the ability for the Permanent Fund Division to create and charge an administrative fee for processing payments under Section 4 to the Department of Natural Resources.

Section 6: Applicability language clarifying the eligible veterans are entitled to only one discount. including the 25 percent discount available in existing statute or the one-third discount after the passage of this bill during their lifetime.

Section 7: Establishes an effective date for the bill of August 1. 2019.

Vice-Chair Johnston asked what drove the decision to increase the discount from 25 percent to 33 percent. Representative Rauscher explained that it was to encourage more participation of Veterans. The amount of veterans available to participate would increase based on the percentage.

[9:16:27 AM](#)

Vice-Chair Johnston asked about the fee in Section 5 that the Dividend Division would be able to set. She wondered if there should be a cap on the fee or whether he was comfortable with the division setting it. Representative Rauscher was comfortable with the division setting the fee.

Vice-Chair Ortiz supported the intent of the bill. He asked about the necessity of including Section 4 regarding the creation of a separate function of the Permanent Fund

Division. He did not understand the connection of the Permanent Fund Dividend to the bill. Representative Rauscher responded that it was basically a pass-through method rather than multiple people handling a PFD check. It was faster, cheaper, and saved a significant amount of money.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if Mr. Breese had any further comments. Mr. Breese thought Representative Rauscher described the intention of the bill very well.

Vice-Chair Ortiz asked for further detail about the savings. He wondered about additional costs for setting up the new function at the Permanent Fund Division. Representative Rauscher responded that there was a fiscal note attached that was about \$1,800 for upkeep. There was also an originally set-up fee of \$10,000.

Co-Chair Wilson relayed the committee would review the fiscal notes shortly.

Representative LeBon was curious about some of the workings of the program. He asked about the land in question. He wondered if a Veteran could request a certain portion of land.

[9:19:48 AM](#)

MARTY PARSONS, DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF MINING, LAND, AND WATER, DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES (via teleconference), responded that the department had a statewide land sale program in which lands were offered through auction every year. Lands that were not sold at auction were sold over-the-counter. House Bill 3 would allow a veteran to apply the discount to purchase any of the parcels offered by the department statewide.

Representative LeBon asked about the parcel in question. He wondered if there were requirements for the cash down payment for the purchaser and whether the discount eliminated the cash down payment requirement.

Mr. Parsons responded that when bidding through the auction there was a bid fee. The department did not require earnest money or a down payment. However, a purchaser could make forward payments. At the time of going to contract, the contract would be based on the remaining balance of the

purchase price. If a parcel was purchased through the over-the-counter method, it would require either paying cash or entering into a purchase contract for the land. The state was very generous in its ability to create contractual obligations for purchases of land.

Representative LeBon asked about the interest rate and the term of a loan. He asked if there was a requirement for improvements of the land. Mr. Parsons replied that the term of the contract was negotiable. There was the ability to provide several payment options. He asked the representative to restate his questions.

Representative LeBon asked about the interest and whether it was fixed or variable rate. He also wondered whether there were any requirements of the land purchaser to make improvements. Mr. Parsons replied that there was not a requirement to make improvements to the land. The interest rate was fixed at prime plus 2. He added that an Alaskan with a driver's license was eligible for a contract with the state.

Representative Merrick asked about any tax liability or tax breaks on the PFD. Representative Rauscher deferred to Mr. Parsons.

Mr. Parsons could not accurately answer about tax obligations without conferring with the Department of Revenue (DOR). However, he assumed if an individual received a PFD, it would still be reportable on their federal taxes. Co-Chair Wilson responded that Mr. Parsons was correct. Representative Merrick commented that was what she assumed.

[9:24:09 AM](#)

Representative Tilton asked about the assignment of the dividend and whether it was limited to Veterans or whether other people could use their PFD check towards purchasing land through the DNR sales.

Representative Rauscher replied in the affirmative. He elaborated that anyone could use their PFD check towards the purchase of DNR lands. The software that would be used would make it easy to specify the use of a person's PFD towards a state land purchase. He argued that the bill facilitated a way for a significant amount of people to be

able to partake in the bidding process. It would be beneficial to the state as well because it could potentially drive up the price.

[9:25:30 AM](#)

Representative Carpenter referred to Section 4 which provided a pass-through method of payment for the land with a person's PFD check. He queried about a different process if the PFD was eliminated by the legislature in the future and it was the means in which a person was paying for their land. Representative Rauscher assumed a person would have to write a check.

[9:26:17 AM](#)

Co-Chair Wilson OPENED Public Testimony.

[9:26:27 AM](#)

Co-Chair Wilson Closed Public Testimony.

Co-Chair Wilson invited Mr. Parsons to review the fiscal note.

Mr. Parsons indicated that the fiscal note [Fiscal Note 1 - OMB Component Number: 3002] showed a slight decrease in the monies collected on the income that would be generated for the land sales program. He reported that the department's assumptions were spelled out on the second page of the note. The department was not anticipating a major increase in the number of veterans that would potentially participate. However, the difference between the 25 percent discount currently in place up to a 33.3 percent discount, would account for a reduction of about \$21,000 to the program.

Co-Chair Wilson asked Mr. Parsons about a booklet for people to look at online at the DNR website regarding land sales. Mr. Parsons responded in the affirmative. Booklets were available online and at public information centers in Fairbanks and Anchorage. Booklets were also available in Juneau at the DNR office. The over-the-counter sales were available to see online.

Co-Chair Wilson indicated there was another fiscal note: Fiscal Note 2 by the Department of Revenue, OMB Component Number 981.

9:28:30 AM

ANNE WESKE, DIRECTOR, PERMANENT FUND DIVIDEND DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE, relayed that the Division included \$10,700 for the set-up costs for the program. The amount would facilitate the programming required to add a question to the application and ensure that the division included details that might come about as the process continued. It would be the first electronic assignment for the PFD. The division had typically done assignments through a paper process previously. The \$10,700 would cover approximately 89 hours of programming at a rate of \$120 per hour. After the programming was completed, \$1,800 would be required on an annual basis for upkeep of the system. It would include the production of reports for DNR and any bug fixes needed to the application.

Vice-Chair Ortiz had a broader question related to the Permanent Fund Division. He wondered about the costs over the years with additions to the PFD application such as the Pick. Click. Give. program, the potential lottery program and education money. He wondered if there had been a need for additional manpower and economic resources.

Ms. Weske responded that the program was very popular and there was more participation across the state. The division was seeing a need to produce a template for the cost to add programs. She suggested that at some point it might be necessary to have management of ancillary programs within the division. The application was growing. She was currently trying to make it accessible for Alaskans to choose any option without having to add multiple pages to the online application. It might need to be managed differently in the near future.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if Representative Rauscher wanted to comment further. Representative Rauscher believed the bill was a good idea. He reported that representatives that had been in the military signed on in support of the bill immediately. He had received several calls in his district about people wanting to see whether they could use their PFD in such a fashion to help pay for some of the land they

had already purchased. He relayed that the 25 percent program would end changing to 33.3 percent.

Co-Chair Wilson indicated amendments were due by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 30, 2019.

HB 3 was HEARD and HELD in committee for further consideration.

[9:33:07 AM](#)

AT EASE

[9:34:01 AM](#)

RECONVENED

^PRESENTATION: PRISON PROGRAMS BY DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS

[9:34:21 AM](#)

JEN WINKELMAN, DIRECTOR, PROBATION, PAROLE, AND PRETRIAL SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, introduced herself. She would be advancing the slides while other experts would address the presentation.

[9:34:47 AM](#)

LAURA BROOKS, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, HEALTH AND REHABILITATIVE SERVICES, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (via teleconference), continued the presentation beginning with the subject of substance abuse treatment. She reported that the Alaska Department of Corrections (DOC) was also the largest substance abuse treatment provider and played the role of providing the most drug and alcohol detox services to DOC's population. She informed members that about 80 percent of DOC's population had substance use disorders and on any given day the department had about 40 inmates being monitored or treated for withdrawals. About 10 inmates per day were on medically managed protocols which meant they were so deep in the withdrawal process that they had to be under a provider's supervision. Of those 10, a handful of them had to go to a hospital because their withdrawal became so severe that the department could not manage them within its facilities. Substance abuse for the department's population was a tremendous problem.

Ms. Brooks moved to slide 11 which showed on-site substance abuse services. The slide showed the different types of

programs the department provided. She would offer a brief rundown of the meanings for some key programs. Since FY 11, the department had worked diligently to expand its services offered to its population that struggled with substance abuse. In the previous 3 years the department's programming had changed significantly. The department had made a concerted effort to go to evidence-based programming. She indicated that the slide showed all of the different programs DOC provided currently.

Ms. Brooks mentioned medically assisted withdrawal services and discussed screening assessment processes. In 2017, the department streamlined its screening assessment process. The screening process provided basic information such as whether a person had enough of a substance use issue to warrant a referral to a substance abuse program. The assessment was more in depth and determined the level of care the individual needed.

Ms. Brooks reported that in 2016 the department significantly changed the way it provided interventions for things in pre-trial. It looked at its psychoeducation programs and entered them into the pre-trial systems. The psychoeducation program lasted for 6 weeks, explored risk factors associated with use, and provided education about consequences. It was a basic level of treatment. However, the department found that inmates in pre-trial, a transient population, did not have time to go through a full program. She reported that the intensive outpatient treatment was located at Goose Creek Correctional Center and Spring Creek Correctional Center where they had sober living units. At both facilities there were units where individuals lived on site and attended outpatient treatment. Other facilities also had intensive outpatient programs, but the inmates came to a classroom to participate in a group then meet individually with substance abuse counselors.

[9:38:16 AM](#)

Co-Chair Wilson asked if Ms. Brooks had indicated there was outpatient treatment for Goose Creek Correctional Center and Spring Creek Correctional Center. Ms. Brooks replied that the department had sober living at both facilities. The department used to have a residential substance abuse treatment program in Spring Creek. However, it could not find treatment providers which resulted in the program closing at Spring Creek. It was moved to the Wildwood

Correctional Complex. In the absence of the program at Spring Creek a sober living unit was added there.

Co-Chair Wilson noted Ms. Brooks reported doing evidence-based treatment. She wondered what the department was doing before. Ms. Brooks responded that upon evaluation of its programs, the department found that they were being run differently. The department worked to standardize the curriculum. Evidence-based treatment provided true fidelity to the model. The substance abuse counselors of the program were following the curriculum. Whereas, when the department evaluated the treatment program several years prior, that was not the case. Even though there might have been curriculums that were nationally evidenced, they were being presented by treatment providers in a way that did not ensure they were fully meeting the requirements of the program. The department did a revamp about 3 years prior to make sure that the department was getting the most out of the programs.

Co-Chair Wilson asked about success rates of the programs showing that the evidence-based programs were more successful than the previous programs. Ms. Brooks responded that recidivism numbers were based on 3 years post-release. She indicated that the end of FY 19 would mark the first year the department would be able to evaluate the recidivism for the 2017 cohort under the new program. She added that when the department looked at the numbers of people entering into treatment and completing the programs, it was seeing an increase. However, there had been a number of things over the previous couple of years that had impacted the numbers as well.

Ms. Brooks reported that one of the major issues the department had in FY 17 was that the substance abuse contractor cancelled the contract. There was an 8-month period where the department was trying to put the program back in place where there was not a contract. The department had to significantly reduce its services during that time. The folks that were in the program were allowed to complete it, but the department had to reduce what was offered. The period was between the end of FY 17 and the beginning of FY 18.

Ms. Brooks continued that since the department brought the Salvation Army onboard for the residential treatment program at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center and doing

the intensive outpatient program at Goose Creek Correctional Center, the department had started to see the numbers to where it had hoped they would be. The department was still in the process of increasing the numbers. In addition, the contract that was cancelled a couple of years ago was a statewide contract. The department lost services in all facilities. Since that time, instead of having one statewide contract, the department had been looking for local providers to go into its facilities to provide treatment programs. Depending on the community, the department had various levels of success. The lack of substance abuse treatment providers in Alaska's communities was a statewide problem and one that DHSS had identified as a major gap.

Ms. Brooks elaborated that the workforce continued to impact the departments programs. The department had closed its intensive outpatient program in Lemon Creek as well as its community program because it was consistently underutilized. Also, the community provider in that location could not keep up with the staff needs required to keep the programs going. Systemwide, the department had seen its numbers go up and down depending on where there were treatment providers.

[9:43:17 AM](#)

Representative Josephson spoke of the urgent needs around the previous year's earthquake in Anchorage. He suggested that Ms. Brooks was describing a type of emergency as well. He noted the need for a holistic system. He asked why the legislature was not being notified of the need to fix certain things regarding SB 91 [Omnibus crime bill passed in 2016] in a more urgent way.

Ms. Brooks agreed that the substance abuse problem in Alaska was at an emergency level. It had been for years, as Alaska had the highest alcoholism rate in the country. The last governor declared a state of emergency for the opioid crisis. What she had seen as the real issue was a lack of treatment providers in communities. She did not have a good answer to Representative Josephson's question. She suggested that it was an easy process to become a substance abuse treatment provider in terms of education and credentialing. However, it was not a specialty profession that seemed to draw many people's interest. She suggested that DHSS could possibly speak to his

question. She agreed, that it had reached a crisis level being that 80 percent of DOC's population was in need of treatment. The department had not been able to reach the people it needed to reach.

Representative Josephson established that it was an individual problem for the person with the substance abuse and a problem for society if they reoffended. He wondered how individuals complied as a condition of probation if sufficient services were not available. He wondered if compliance would not happen.

Ms. Brooks responded that when individuals left the system with a requirement to complete substance abuse treatment in their community, they went on a wait list if treatment was available. The waitlist might be weeks or months depending on the community and the level of treatment required. In some communities telehealth systems were being set up to assist with treatment. She was not sure where the state was in the process. However, telehealth only addressed a certain level of treatment. It did not address the need for detox or residential treatment. For a person on probation or parole, it was a challenge to meet their treatment requirement. It might be a significant amount of time before they could meet their requirement.

Ms. Winkelman commented that regarding people on probation or parole, if they were placed on a waitlist and treatment had not become available before their time was expiring, they would appear in court through a petition to revoke probation or a summons to let the court know they were not able to complete the terms of their probation. At that time the department would either make a recommendation to honor the time lapse or to extend their probation period in order to complete a treatment program.

[9:48:15 AM](#)

Representative LeBon restated that approximately 80 percent of Alaska's prison population struggled with substance use disorders. He wondered how to judge and measure the 80 percent of the population. He wondered how low the bar was that defined someone as having a substance abuse disorder. Ms. Brooks clarified that the 80 percent applied to the jail and prison population. Representative LeBon suggested that she add the word "prison" before population on the chart on slide 12.

Vice-Chair Johnston noted methadone bridging. She asked about the blocker medication that had started being used about 5 years prior. She asked if Vivitrol was currently being used in DOC's programs. Ms. Brooks responded in the affirmative. The department started a Medication Assisted Treatment for Reentry (MATR) program. It included the drug, Vivitrol or long-acting Naltrexone. The program was started about two years previously and was currently part of the release process.

Vice-Chair Johnston asked if she would be providing statistics of the success of MATR. Ms. Brooks replied that the department had partnered with the University of Alaska's Center for Circumpolar Health Studies. The department was in the process of studying MATR, as it was presently a pilot program. The department was receiving the medication at no charge from a pharmaceutical company, which would not last indefinitely. The injection of the medication was approximately \$1000 per treatment. The department wanted to make sure that when the pharmaceutical company no longer provided the drug cost-free, it was clear the drug was positively effective against recidivism and clinical relapse. She indicated that the University would be completing the project in the coming summer and could report back with solid numbers in the coming fall.

Co-Chair Wilson asked about the frequency of giving Vivitrol. Ms. Brooks reported that the injection lasted about 28 days and was administered to a prisoner about 3 days prior to their release. A person had to have all opioids out of their system before they could receive the medication. Individuals were put through a mental health and a medical screening to make sure there were no contraindications to taking Vivitrol. The department made referrals in order for individuals to follow up in their community to receive an additional shot in 30 days. The department also made referrals to substance abuse treatment, as the research showed that Vivitrol in conjunction with a cognitive behavioral treatment program was more effective than the injection alone. It was similar to someone who took an antidepressant. Someone who took an antidepressant and went to therapy would have a much better outcome than someone who took the medication alone. How long a person took monthly shots in their community depended upon how their other substance abuse counseling progressed. The hope was that individuals would no longer

need the medication after developing alternative coping skills through cognitive behavioral treatment.

[9:53:51 AM](#)

Vice-Chair Ortiz returned to the topic of lack of access to substance abuse services. He asked if the state was making any progress in satisfying the supply and demand for treatment services.

Ms. Brooks would have to get numbers from DHSS in order to reply accurately. Anecdotally, she thought gains were being made. There was a greater recognition over the previous several years about the lack of services within Alaskan communities. More attention had been brought to the issue. She could not speak to specifics about the strides DHSS had made. She confirmed a statewide plan had been developed. She thought DHSS could better address his question.

Vice-Chair Ortiz returned to the issue of being able to recruit people to work in the area of substance abuse treatment. He wondered if the issue had to do with a lack of commitment to put resources towards recruiting people. Ms. Brooks did not attribute the issue to a lack of recruitment efforts. Training and certification rather than a college degree were required to work in the field. She was uncertain why people were not seeking to work in the field.

Vice-Chair Ortiz asked if the pay was low in the profession. Ms. Brooks thought pay for substance abuse counseling was a factor.

Co-Chair Wilson queried the average yearly salary in the field. Ms. Brooks did not have the information.

Vice-Chair Johnston asked why Akeela, Inc. no longer provided services for the state. She asked for details regarding its contract. Ms. Brooks responded that Akeela, Inc. canceled the contract prior to its completion.

Vice-Chair Johnston asked if she could provide the reason they had given for ending their contract early. Ms. Brooks relayed that the Akeela, Inc. felt that it was not beneficial to them as an agency. Midway through the contract they determined they financially could no longer provide services at the contracted rate.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if the state's payments were not on time. Ms. Brooks responded that the rate of pay was not sufficient.

9:58:29 AM

Representative Carpenter brought up the issue of parole and the availability for substance abuse treatment. He wondered if there was a process in place to sync the dates of release with the date of treatment availability.

Ms. Brooks responded that when someone came into the system requiring substance abuse treatment they were referred to that program. The department had waitlists for substance abuse treatment. Waitlists for residential substance abuse treatment could be 60 days or more. A person who was incarcerated for years had the opportunity to participate in the programs. She offered that when an individual came up for discretionary parole but had not completed a recommended substance abuse treatment program, it would be up to the parole board to allow them to seek substance abuse treatment in their community or deny them parole until it was completed while in custody. The parole board looked at a number of factors when making considerations including the efforts an offender made to get into treatment. There was a surprising number of offenders that were not interested in seeking treatment even when it was a legal requirement. Syncing parole and treatment had to do more with a review of what the offender had done and their efforts to seek treatment. The parole board would make a determination after a review.

Representative Carpenter was specifically talking about discretionary parole. He clarified that he was talking about those individuals that came up for parole and there was some discretion to the state as to whether they were released. It was his understanding that the state was releasing individuals on parole and were free to do what they wanted and were on a waitlist for a long duration for a treatment option. He suggested it was no surprise that they would recidivate, as they had not dealt with the underlying issues that led them to incarceration. He was concerned with the idea that the state would choose to release them prior to addressing their issues. He wondered if there was a way to sync the waitlist with the discretion

to release an inmate such that their date of release matched the date of treatment availability.

Ms. Brooks replied that the difficulty with Representative Carpenter's suggestion was that most substance abuse treatment programs would not put a person on a waitlist until they were released from prison. The waitlist clock did not start ticking until a person was out of corrections. The issue was further complicated because the community providers frequently did not accept the assessments DOC did in custody and wanted a new assessment completed. A person would be given an appointment for an assessment, an assessment would be conducted, a level of care would be determined, and the person would be placed on a waitlist. She agreed that a simple system was not in place for offenders. She noted that the department was trying to change the way in which assessments were done. In the current year DOC purchased access to Continuum Software, a national gold standard tool. Employees of the department received training in the use of the new software which the department would begin using in the near future. It was a standardized assessment tool that DHSS was also looking at using. The hope was that when DOC did an assessment it would automatically transfer to any treatment provider in Alaska's communities in an attempt to streamline the process. Until then, the process remained complicated and did very little to aid offenders in rehabilitation once they reached the community.

[10:04:14 AM](#)

Representative Carpenter asked if treatment providers had the ability to do an assessment prior to parole. Ms. Brooks answered in the affirmative; it happened in many of DOC's facilities.

Representative Carpenter hoped the committee was highlighting a process problem that allowed people who needed to receive treatment while in prison, not receiving it before being released. He thought the state was part of the problem and that the public was feeling the pain. He was very frustrated to hear something being described as "the way it is."

Co-Chair Wilson wondered whether the law needed changing or whether treatment needed to be ensured. She thought it was unclear whether changing the law would change the outcome.

She intimated that if treatment was not available, inmates would reoffend once on parole. She wondered if the department was aware of the drugs that entered its facilities. She asked if drug dogs were brought into prisons. Ms. Brooks replied that the department was aware of contraband entering DOC's facilities. She recommended having someone from the Division of Institutions or Deputy Commissioner Goode speak to the subject.

10:07:21 AM

KELLY GOODE, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS, was aware contraband entered into DOC facilities throughout the state. The department had a drug dog, Coda, who had done some amazing things in the previous few years. She was happy to provide a list of things that Coda had found within DOC's facilities.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if DOC only had one drug dog and asked for the number of facilities the dog served. Ms. Goode responded that DOC currently had one canine.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if DOC was working with Department of Public Safety (DPS), as DPS had more than one drug dog. Ms. Goode reported that DOC was collaborating with the Department of Public Safety to broaden the canine program to better address contraband in DOC facilities.

Co-Chair Wilson wondered why the issue was only being addressed presently. The issue had existed for several years. She had been told by inmates that it was easier to obtain contraband in DOC's facilities than it was on the streets. Ms. Goode responded that her team had only been serving under the current administration for about 5 months. The department recognized the problem and was working to address it. The department was working with DPS to actively address curtailing the contraband. She could not speak to the actions of the previous administration. However, the current administration was working to find ways to address the issue. Co-Chair Wilson commented that the legislature was happy to help encourage DPS in its cooperation.

Representative Carpenter asked a question regarding discretionary parole. He wondered why it a person would be released on parole with an unaddressed drug problem.

Ms. Winkelman thought the question would be best addressed to the parole board. She offered that often times when a parole board encountered an individual coming before them for discretionary parole, they had to consider the totality of the circumstances. The recommendation of when a person would be released often required that they complete treatment in a certain facility in order to be released. A person could appear before the parole board and be granted parole for a later date once a treatment plan was completed.

Representative Carpenter was hearing that individuals were paroled and placed on a waitlist for community-based treatment which did not fit with what was possible and what Ms. Winkelman conveyed. Ms. Winkelman explained that there were two types of parole, discretionary parole and mandatory parole. Those persons that were on discretionary parole saw the parole board as she had previously explained. Individuals with mandatory parole were released based on statute after serving two-thirds of their sentence. Individuals on mandatory parole would wind up on a waitlist.

Representative Carpenter clarified that those released on discretionary parole did not get released until they have completed treatment. Ms. Winkelman replied, "Not necessarily." She noted that the parole board would consider the totality of the circumstances. There were some individuals that were released that were required to obtain treatment in their community and had to be placed on a waitlist.

Representative Carpenter thought he might need to talk to the parole board. He wondered what the parole board based its decisions on. Ms. Winkelman was not sure.

Co-Chair Wilson wondered if some inmates were kept in jail longer because of a lack of treatment availability and were required to complete treatment prior to release. She noted that there was a backlog for sex offense treatment. Ms. Winkelman deferred to other available testifiers online. Co-Chair Wilson restated her question.

[10:13:09 AM](#)

PAM MARTIN, DEPUTY CHIEF CLASSIFICATION OFFICER, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (via teleconference), responded that the

department could not keep an inmate past their statutory release date. In regard to discretionary parole, if the parole board required the inmate to complete a program prior to their release, the inmate could be held either until the treatment was complete or until the statutory release date.

Co-Chair Wilson provided a hypothetical scenario. Ms. Martin explained that a prisoner on mandatory parole would be released on their release date. A person on discretionary parole could be held until their mandatory release date.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if an inmate could be released if their mandatory release date came, and they had not been able to get their prescribed treatment in time. Ms. Martin replied that the department could not legally hold someone past their mandatory release date. The department could not hold someone longer than their sentence.

Co-Chair Wilson commented, "That could be part of our problem too, then." Ms. Martin reiterated that once an inmate's release date was established on their timesheet, they had to be released on that date.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if a person could be taken back into custody if they did not complete community-based treatment. Ms. Martin responded that the field probation-parole officer would have the option to submit a petition to revoke probation or send the person to the parole board with a parole violation for failure to complete treatment.

Co-Chair Wilson supposed the person would basically be taken back into custody without treatment and spend more time in jail. The idea did not make sense to her.

Vice-Chair Ortiz returned to the topic of discretionary parole. He wondered if it was possible for a prisoner to be transferred to a facility that had treatment available.

Ms. Winkelman responded in the affirmative.

Representative Carpenter commented that inmates could be transferred between institutions as well. He was aware of that happening on a regular basis.

[10:17:02 AM](#)

Representative Josephson referred to the statute having to do with discretionary parole. He read directly from Alaska Statute 33.16.100. Under SB 91 for unclassified felonies, the most heinous crimes, the board might authorize discretionary parole, but it might not. He continued that for A, B, and C felonies, which were very serious, the board "shall" authorize, unless there was clear and convincing evidence that the prison posed a threat. The relevant portion read that the prisoner must have met the requirement of a case plan created under AS 33, and the case plan would have a treatment recommendation. It also stated the following:

"If the board finds that the incomplete case plan is not the fault of the prisoner or that the prisoner would not pose a threat of harm to the public if released on parole, the board may waive the case plan requirement."

Co-Chair Johnston explained that the idea of SB 91 was to not blame the inmate if a program was not available. The Board of Parole was invited not to blame the inmate.

Co-Chair Wilson relayed that her bigger concern was recidivism and people who were violated as a result.

Representative Carpenter asked about the mandatory parole date. He wondered if the date was a part of their sentence. He provided an example. He thought the right thing would be to ensure the individual received treatment prior to parole. He wondered if there was a process in which a conversation could occur. Ms. Winkelman did not have an answer for him. She relayed that for an individual to be released on mandatory parole they needed to be sentenced for over 2 years in prison. When an individual was sentenced for over 2 years, one-third of their sentence would be removed. She deferred to Ms. Martin for more specifics.

Ms. Martin responded that the mandatory parole date was the same as an offender's statutory release date. If the offender had not completed their program they had to be released anyway.

Representative Carpenter still wondered if there was a process to take the inmate in front of the judge to stop

them from being released until they completed treatment. Ms. Martin replied, "Yes." There was a mechanism if the offender was court ordered to complete treatment while incarcerated, an important phrasing had to be in a judgement. If the wording was present, the inmate could be taken back to the court under a probation violation prior to their release.

Co-Chair Wilson asked how an offender could violate probation if they were still in the institution. Ms. Martin explained, they would still be under the conditions of the judgement which fell under the court rather than the parole board.

Co-Chair Wilson mentioned that someone from Akeela, Inc. would be calling in during the meeting. She thought they could provide more information about what happened between them and DOC. She asked the presenter to continue.

[10:23:28 AM](#)

Ms. Brooks continued with the presentation returning to slide 11. In 2018, the department added a dual diagnosis program for inmates that had both a mental illness and substance use disorders. It followed the general and intensive outpatient models but was tailored to those with cognitive disabilities or mental illness. The departments residential substance abuse treatment program was 6 months in length and was an intense treatment. She detailed about 25 hours per week were devoted to group and individual counseling. The Medication Assisted Treatment (MAR Program) was added in 2017.

Ms. Brooks continued that along with the MAR program the department had Methadone bridging. There was a large number of individuals in the community that were currently going through Methadone Treatment. It was a difficult withdrawal process for someone to enter the system and be taken off of Methadone. The department had worked out agreements with community providers for them to provide Methadone to anyone who was serving time for less than 30 days. It was a significant change for individuals in those types of programs. The department also added a video based programming for individuals in segregation. It allowed individuals in segregation to access psycho-education services for substance abuse while they were spending time

in segregation rather than until they came out. It was a significant change.

Ms. Brooks continued that in 2017, the department changed the way offenders in halfway houses accessed treatment. The department made agreements with community providers in several different locations resulting in dedicated substance abuse treatment slots for individuals in a halfway house. Someone who went to a halfway house did not have to be waitlisted, as certain spots were held specifically for individuals in halfway houses. The change was made about 1.5 years prior.

Ms. Brooks reported adding peer-based intervention services. The department had approximately 36 inmates trained as facilitators and hoped to expand the number. It was one way the department was trying to address the lack of treatment services available because of the lack of treatment providers. It did not replace true substance abuse treatment, as it did not qualify for such a level of treatment. However, it provided an additional layer of services available to DOC's offender population.

Ms. Brooks conveyed that not everything the department did resulted in growth. She informed the committee that when the department closed the substance abuse treatment program at Spring Creek and moved it to Wildwood, the department lost a number of beds - about 6 female residential substance abuse treatment (RSAT) beds when men were moved into Hiland. It was reversed and was back to full capacity in Hiland.

[10:27:30 AM](#)

Ms. Brooks moved to slide 12: "Substance Abuse Assessments and Screenings." The slide showed the number of substance abuse screenings and assessments being done in the past couple of years. She suggested the number would increase significantly with the use of the Continuum Software because of the resulting streamlining.

Ms. Brooks turned to slide 13: "Substance Abuse Programming" which provided an overview of each of the different levels of care, where they were located, the number of beds in each location, and the length of the program. She relayed that the state had over 400 slots for substance abuse treatment in custody. The department had

another 18 furlough treatment beds available at Clitheroe Center and Akeela, Inc. The department also had 58 dedicated treatment slots for people in the community residential centers. The department had waitlists for the programs. At any given time it had 50-60 people waiting for RSAT and about 30 waiting for intensive outpatient treatment. The psychoeducation program did not generally carry a waitlist because it was an open-ended program that anyone could join at any time.

Ms. Brooks advanced to slide 14: "FY18 Substance Abuse Program Participation" which showed the program participation for the past year. She noted that 458 people completed institutional substance abuse treatment in 2018. It did not include the furlough or CRC numbers. She would have recidivism data for the committee after FY 19 when the 3-year cohort could be studied.

Ms. Brooks had already covered what was on slide 15: "Medication Assisted Treatment for Reentry (MATR)."

Representative Josephson asked if the governor was curtailing any of the substance abuse treatment programs in an effort to cut the budget. Ms. Brooks had not seen where any of the changes were expected to affect DOC's substance abuse program.

Co-Chair Wilson noted a representative from Akeela was currently online. She would break from the presentation for a moment to hear from Ms. Donovan.

[10:30:38 AM](#)

COURTNEY DONOVAN, AKEELA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), made herself available.

Co-Chair Wilson asked why Akeela pulled out of its contract.

Ms. Donovan indicated that Akeela's previous chief Executive Officer largely handled the decision at the time and was available online. She indicated that it had been a difficult decision for Akeela to end the contract. She explained that the company obtained different contracts for each site. For example, if the company operated a program in the Anchorage Correctional Complex and in the Goose Creek Correctional Complex there would be two separate

contracts. In the renewal process DOC decided to roll the individual contracts into one large contract. By doing so, it made budgeting and program operations more difficult for Akeela. It also impacted the organization's rate of pay. She explained that the rate of pay was no longer competitive with local providers around the state. Also, there was an issue in the contract around the amount of hours that were to be paid. She further explained that a full time employee worked 2080 hours per work year. The contract reimbursed for less than 2080 hours. It did not allow for an employee to be sick or on vacation. Akeela provided approximately 2 weeks of vacation and sick leave per year or about 80 hours.

SHANNON PRITCHETT, CFO, AKEELA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), relayed that in addition the contract required Akeela to have a floater to fill certain hours. In Alaska trying to find the qualified staff that was required to fulfill the DOC contract was extremely difficult. She suggested that if an employee of Akeela was sick or trying to take vacation, they could submit to use some of their hours. For example, they could take 8 hours for vacation leave if they were sick for a day. The way that the DOC contract was written, it did not allow for the company to recoup any money for those 8 hours. At the end of the year the amount exceeded \$600,000 for sick time and vacation time that was not recouped by the contract. The company could not financially continue the arrangement.

Co-Chair Wilson asked for details about the program and why Akeela ended the contract.

ROSALIE NADEAU, FORMER CEO, AKEELA, ANCHORAGE (via teleconference), did not recall the performance statistics, but remembered they were good. The company was aware it was losing in excess of \$500,000. She had informed DOC of the loss. At the time of renewal in May she and her deputy, Courtney, met with the commissioner and his staff explaining the situation. The commissioner relayed he did not expect the company to lose money on the contract. In a room full of people he asked her to sign the contract promising that the department would pull out if it did not work to the benefit of the company. Courtney was present at the time. She trusted the commissioner and signed the document. She tried to get in touch with the commissioner who would not return her calls. When she did get ahold of him he hung up on her after she had the chance to tell him

that her people had been trying to reach him for months without anything happening. At the time she had secured a lawyer. The commissioner went on to call all of Akeela's representatives liars. Some of the people working for the commissioner, who had been at the meeting where the commissioner made promises, indicated they were willing to testify on behalf of Akeela. Finally, she told the commissioner that Akeela could no longer do business with the State of Alaska giving him a notice of 6 weeks, January 1. The commissioner responded that Akeela had to continue to provide total programs until January 1 and had only 1 day to close down any operations the company had within the institutions. She relayed that with facilities throughout the state it was a challenge, but the company did it. She conveyed that Akeela had liked the program but felt that a small non-profit should not be expected to donate over \$500,000 per year to the state.

[10:39:13 AM](#)

Vice-Chair Johnston asked if Akeela had to pay any money to break the contract. Ms. Nadeau responded in the negative. The department had been aware that the company would have gone to court had there been any penalties.

Co-Chair Johnston clarified that the issue had not gone to court. Ms. Nadeau responded, "No." She offered to have Akeela's attorney provide additional background if the committee wanted.

Co-Chair Wilson thanked her for her testimony. She was sorry Akeela's program was no longer in the state's facilities. Ms. Nadeau responded, "we're sorry also."

Co-Chair Wilson reported that the committee would move on to the sex offender programs.

[10:40:09 AM](#)

Ms. Brooks moved to the section on sex offender management. She specified that Alaska had the highest rate of sexual assault in the country. The Department of Corrections used the containment supervision model for management of sex offenders in communities. The containment model was the best practice for supervision of sex offenders and had been proven nationally to be the most successful at reducing sex crime recidivism. The containment model used specially

trained probation and parole officers in conjunction with polygraph testing and focused cognitive sex offender treatment. Each sex offender released on probation was followed by the specially trained probation and parole officers. They underwent polygraph testing and engaged in sex offender treatment in Alaska's communities.

Ms. Brooks reported that there was an important piece when a sex offender was released from custody called a safety net. It was an integral part of their reentry plan. It was made up of a group of leaders such as people like elders, Village Public Safety Officers (VPSOs), clergy, and others who were aware of the crimes of the offenders and were trained in recognizing high risk behaviors and help to support and monitor the offender in the communities. They worked with the probation and parole officers and treatment providers to keep folks safe in communities.

Ms. Brooks continued that the intensity of the treatment and the length of supervision were key factors associated with successful management of sex offenders. She emphasized the importance of the polygraph.

Ms. Brooks moved to slide 17: "Sex Offender Programming" showing a list of where Alaska's sex offender programs were available. She explained that the department provided institutional sex offender programming and also community programs. She reported that approximately 250 sex offenders were released each year. The Department of Corrections had 118 institutional programming slots. There were 15 in a halfway house and another 24 spots by telehealth. The telehealth option was instituted by the department in the previous year for offenders in rural communities allowing them to remain in their home community and not be transplanted to a larger urban setting. There were about 170 spots available in communities. The department had seen its treatment numbers go down slightly in the prior year because of a long-time treatment provider retiring. The caseload for that provider was about 70 people.

Ms. Brooks reported about 30 offenders were currently waitlisted for community treatment which took about 90 to 120 days for the list to turn over. There were about 50 offenders on any day waiting for in-custody treatment. Priority was based on offenders' risk factor and release date. Priority was given to highest risk sex offenders such as those who were at highest risk for violent sex offenses

who had a shorter anticipated release date. The waitlist was constantly changing because someone who was considered a higher risk offender might leap-frog to the top of the list.

Co-Chair Wilson asked if individuals at Lemon Creek Correctional Center were primarily released into the City of Juneau. Ms. Brooks replied in the negative. The individuals would be returned to their home community to participate in sex offender treatment in person or via telehealth. There were not necessarily released in the community where the treatment program was.

[10:44:11 AM](#)

Co-Chair Wilson asked if the majority of individuals that were released from treatment in Juneau ended up staying in Juneau. Ms. Brooks responded that they were not.

Co-Chair Wilson asked where they went. Ms. Brooks answered that they were returned to their community of arrest regardless of where they served their time unless they chose to stay in the community where they currently were. There might be some individuals that would choose to stay in the community where they were incarcerated but, it was unusual. Most of them chose to go home.

Co-Chair Wilson clarified that it was the offender's choice. Ms. Brooks responded, "That's correct."

Representative Carpenter asked how long the containment supervision model had been used in Alaska. Ms. Brooks thought about 10 to 15 years.

Ms. Brooks detailed the chart on slide 18: "Sex Offender Program Participation." In FY 18 the department had 442 offenders in sex offender treatment. She reiterated the slight drop due to the 70 treatment slots lost in the community. The department had a completion rate of about 83 percent which was considered high. Due to the length of treatment some offenders found it very difficult to complete treatment the first time through. Offenders were allowed to return to treatment if they voluntarily left or were discharged from treatment. Most of them returned to treatment, as it was a legal requirement. Most of the offenders eventually successfully completed treatment programming. She reported that discharges from treatment

were due to a variety of things including technical violations and engaging in high risk behavior. They were allowed to eventually return to the program.

Ms. Brooks highlighted that the slide also showed the number of people polygraphed in the previous year. She reported that 526 offenders were polygraphed and were polygraphed approximately 850 times. A large number of the individuals were polygraphed multiple times. It depended on the situation and the results of a polygraph. If an individual failed a polygraph, they would work with their treatment provider and their probation officer to address whatever came to light in the polygraph and would be polygraphed again at a later time.

Ms. Brooks highlighted the recidivism rate for new offences of 13 percent. The national recidivism rate for sex offenders who had gone through the containment model was about 5 percent. Alaska's recidivism rate for new sex offenses was just over 1 percent.

Representative Merrick asked what kind of questions were asked during a polygraph. Ms. Brooks did not have a list of questions. Ms. Winkelman also did not have a list of the questions in hand. However, most of the time the questions were based on certain behaviors observed by probation officers. A question might be whether the person had contact with a minor, been in a certain location, or consumed alcohol. The questions typically were around triggers of sex offense behavior. Ms. Brooks indicated Ms. Weiss was available to present the next portion of the slide.

[10:49:15 AM](#)

JANICE WEISS, RE-ENTRY PROGRAM DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (via teleconference), began her portion of the presentation by explaining that the purpose of the institutional programs was to enhance the security of Alaska's institution, to safeguard the public, and to help reduce recidivism.

Ms. Weiss moved to slide 21: "Program Categories." The institutional programs were broken down into 4 categories including education, vocational, pro-social, and faith-based.

Ms. Weiss turned to slide 22: "The Offender Management Plan." She explained that within the education program the department tried to tie what was in the offender management plan which was based on the risk assessment results. It was very important to look at the risk of someone reoffending when trying to decide what programs the person should be given. When an incarcerated person was getting ready to enroll in some of the programs, they had the opportunity to talk with several people including their probation officer, the education people, the mental health people, and the housing people to discuss what kind of things would work best for them while incarcerated. The idea was for the department to lead inmates to a better outcome when they returned to their communities. She provided several of examples of better outcomes.

Ms. Weiss looked more closely at education programs on slide 23. She reported that the basis of any education was for someone to earn a high school education or a GED if they did not have one. The opportunity to obtain a GED was available in all institutions. She had been told that DOC was the third highest provider of the GED Program in Alaska. Of all GEDs that were granted within any year, 15 percent of them came from someone incarcerated. Just over 100 people per year received their GED while they were incarcerated. Getting a GED was not always an easy accomplishment. The state served approximately 800 to 900 people per year working on their GEDs. In order to get a GED a person had to pass 4 tests with a certain score. In order to take those tests a person had to be able to type 40 words per minute. They often had to attend a computer class first to practice their keyboarding and typing skills.

Ms. Weiss continued that the GED was often one of the prerequisites for a person to be able to participate in one of the vocational programs. The vocational programs tried to address what was going on in the state that required more employees for a particular industry. Also important was determining if a person could make a living wage at the job they could get with the vocational training the department provided.

Ms. Weiss referred to the vocational program list on slide 24. She pointed out the extent of the list. Overall, DOC offered about 166 programs for inmates in various areas. The heaviest concentration of programs was in construction

trades including carpentry, plumbing, and electrical. The vocational programs also offered training in the items that accompanied the construction classes such as OSHA 10 training and OSHA 30. The idea was to show that people had the necessary training to go to work immediately.

[10:53:44 AM](#)

Vice-Chair Ortiz noted he had a constituent that voiced a concern about a lack of unified curriculum in the prison system by facility. It created various roadblocks for inmates. He asked if she was aware of such concerns.

Ms. Weiss had heard the concern. She explained that regarding the GED, it would be available at any institution. If someone was working on their GED and was moved to a different facility, they could continue to work on it, as it was a standardized test with standardized workbooks. She thought the inconsistency might have to do with vocational education because some institutions had different programs available than another depending on their size, location, and whether they served long-term or short-term people. A long-term sentence might afford a person the opportunity to attend a 2-year apprenticeship program and shorter programs for people serving a shorter sentence. She believed the main concern regarding education within an institution was whether a person could complete a program that would lead to a job or further education in the same area. She thought it was important to work with the education coordinators in each facility to make sure they were working with inmates on a career path.

Vice-Chair Ortiz surmised the state was doing a better job of meeting the particular concern. Ms. Weiss answered in the affirmative. She reported that from 1996 to 2006 she had served as the education coordinator at Hiland Mountain Correctional Center. Coming into her current position she recognized significant progress since her time at Hiland leading towards the connection between community and institutional corrections. She referenced receiving the Second Chance Act grant, which enabled a contractor to look at the department's programs and their effectiveness in reducing recidivism. She thought the department was currently making giant steps.

[10:57:46 AM](#)

Ms. Weiss turned to slide 25 and addressed general participation requirements of the education and vocational programs. The main goal of the education program in any of the institutions was to offer the chance to have some training and education to anyone that wanted it. In every institution every effort was made to include anyone who wanted the opportunity. She relayed that everyone could work on their GED or high school diploma. The vocational programs in general were open to the sentenced people. However, unsentenced could participate depending on their location and what was being offered. She conveyed that the point of the programs was to have them open to as many people as possible. She had been asked how a person found out about the programs. She offered that information was posted on the bulletin boards within the institutions. Generally, the education coordinators would go to the housing units and talk about the available programs. Also information was spread by word of mouth. Inmates that had completed a program would talk about it with their friends and house mates. The contractors offering the programs would come into the facilities to talk about the programs to potential participants.

Ms. Weiss discussed slide 26: "Pro-Social and Extra-Curricular." In addition to the GED and vocational programs, the department offered other trainings that were more difficult to classify. She suggested that pro-social and extra-curricular were other ways to look at them. Under pro-social programs, for example, the department looked at changing the way someone thought; a cognitive program such as criminal attitude or anger management. The department had an anger management course offered through invitation that was different than the one offered through mental health. In most of the institutions, parenting courses were offered. Re-entry was offered in every institution.

Representative Carpenter asked if the programs were used as incentives for substance abuse, anger management, and other behavior modification programs. He wondered if inmates could choose not to participate in substance abuse treatment programs but still engage in vocational rehabilitation.

Ms. Weiss responded that a person would be able to participate in vocational programs depending on what else they were doing in the institution. Enrollment would be looked at by the inmate's probation officer and the

education department. If a person had not done their substance abuse treatment it would be discussed with them. She could not say whether they would be allowed to take another class.

Ms. Weiss addressed slides 26 and 27. She reported that one of the most important programs DOC had inside the institutions was the parenting program. She indicated that 760 inmates enrolled in a parenting course in FY 18 and 410 completed it. In general, in the 24 hour course there were a couple of different curricula used. A completion number of 410 was very good. In FY 17 over 1000 inmates enrolled in the course and 621 completed it. One of the incentives offered along with the parenting class was an enhanced visiting program. The class offered the opportunity for the parent to do more bonding with their children if they completed it. Enhanced bonding might include an extra day of visitation or an inmate being able to sit with their child and read a book.

[11:02:53 AM](#)

Ms. Weiss continued to review programs on slide 26. She relayed that many activities were used as incentives such as yoga, orchestra, gardening, and writing. If inmates were doing what they were supposed to, they were allowed to participate in extra-curricular activities. She highlighted that the extra-curricular activities helped individuals to see that they were not the center of the universe but members of a team. It was a means to addressing the pro-social risk of returning to incarceration. She reported that when someone had the opportunity to be with people in a pro-social way, it helped them learn how to get along with others as a team. She referenced an analysis that concluded that inmates who participated in correctional education had a 43 percent less chance of recidivating than those who did not participate. She concluded that correctional education played an important role in keeping the public safe.

Ms. Weiss turned to slide 27: "Faith-Based Programs." Faith-based programs were available in every institution. Every group was able to do something within their own space within an institution. The options were open for whatever someone might need while they were incarcerated. There were some institutions that had housing units that were completely faith-based and had activities such as bible

studies and services available. Many faith-based volunteers go into the facilities. She noted that as part of reentry, the reentry programs relied on faith-based communities outside of the institutions to participate with people that were incarcerated. She stressed the importance of keeping the connection from the inside to the outside to curtail recidivism.

Ms. Weiss moved to the CRC programming on slide 29. She explained that much of what the halfway houses offered was similar to what was offered while people were incarcerated. It was a good continuum of the kind of education and information that people were getting while incarcerated that continued into their community.

Co-Chair Wilson asked about drum circle and civil world under NorthStar. Ms. Weiss was not familiar with civil world. Regarding drum circle, an effort was made in some communities with larger populations of native people to address cultural things. A drum circle would be a cultural education program.

Co-Chair Wilson pointed out that substance abuse and behavioral health were the largest issues. She wondered why there were not inpatient programs included. Ms. Weiss could not answer the question.

Co-Chair Wilson noted that no one else had been able to either.

Representative Josephson asked if programming was at the discretion of the CRC. He wondered how it came to be that the program, Living in Balance, was offered. He asked why behavioral health was not being offered.

[11:08:51 AM](#)

Ms. Weiss was not able to answer the question.

Ms. Winkelman thought Ms. Martin could speak to what the CRCs offered and why. Ms. Martin asked for the question to be repeated.

Representative Josephson restated his question. Ms. Martin thought that some of it was compelled to encourage more programming at the halfway house. Many of the facilities that were Geo [The GEO Group, Inc. - a same community

reentry center corporation] facilities used the programs that were part of Alaska's CRC programs. The programs were included to provide more options for halfway houses.

Co-Chair Wilson reported that the state rewrote a contract in Juneau that removed treatment and raised the amount of money the state paid per person to \$158. She asked why the state would do such a thing. Ms. Martin could not answer the question, as she was not involved in the contract negotiation process.

Co-Chair Wilson wanted committee members to be aware that the state had opened negotiations. She agreed with Representative Josephson that the state could write the CRC contracts anyway it needed. She was frustrated with the underutilization of halfway houses and thought the state was missing out on an opportunity.

Ms. Weiss concluded the presentation. She conveyed that one of the things that was very important to the administration was a review of the programs that were being offered inside the institutions to determine their effectiveness and whether they addressed risks of recidivism. The department would be conducting a review over the following 1.5 years particularly under the Second Chance Grant.

[11:12:15 AM](#)

Representative Carpenter noted that most of the CRC's included Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous with the exception of Bethel which he thought was concerning. He asked about inmates being trained as facilitators. He thought it appeared some inmates wanted to be of help in some capacity. He asked if a mentor program was possible for long-term inmates that wanted to make an impact on another person's life. He asked if the opportunity for a long-term inmate to get in front of the pre-sentenced inmates to form a mentorship opportunity.

Ms. Weiss responded positively. She thought it was fair to say that inmates wanted to help each other, and that mentorship was a popular thing to do. The department was making the opportunity available especially to long-term inmates. She reported that peer mentorship was an established part of programs at many institutions. She suggested that it would continue to be standardized. She

noted there was always the availability for peers to do tutoring for basic education.

Representative Carpenter wondered if there was a program or a concerted deliberative effort to get the first-time offender connected with a long-term sentenced inmate establishing a mentorship. He believed a crashing and building up needed to occur for an individual to successfully rehabilitate themselves. The mentorship goal would be to wake up the newer inmate.

Ms. Weiss could not speak to a specific location or program using the deliberate process he was talking about. She offered that she was aware of many places using peer mentoring as a way of assisting people into incarceration and reentry. She indicated that base communities were involved in preparing people for reentry. She would be happy to look into any programs that deliberately address the question Representative Carpenter was asking. She asked for any additional input from testifiers online. Ms. Winkelman suggested asking Ms. Link, the probation supervisor.

[11:17:30 AM](#)

TARYN LINK, PROBATION SUPERVISOR, DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS (via teleconference), noted the peer mentor programs that she was aware of were tied to substance abuse programming or the transformational living community. She was not aware of any other pure mentor programs targeted at newly arriving inmates.

Representative Carpenter commented that it was a missed opportunity.

Co-Chair Wilson conveyed that, regarding programing for Seaside, there was an intensive outpatient substance abuse program at the CRC through the Norton Sound Health Corporation. She thought similar programs could be applied in other areas. She wanted to see additional data about what programs were working. She expressed concerns about DOC having the expertise to provide the needed behavioral health programs, as the State of Alaska, being the number one provider for behavioral health.

Co-Chair Wilson indicated the committee was out of time and would not be hearing the scheduled presentation on the

unsentenced prison population. She explained that she had looked at the presentation and discovered it only contained a portion of the information she was looking for. She suggested that 45 percent of Alaska's inmates were unsentenced sitting in institutions. There were 2000 more people awaiting pre-trial under supervision or electronic monitoring. There were additional people out on their own reconnaissance or bailed out prior to becoming part of the system. She posed the question whether it was the system that was the problem.

Co-Chair Wilson noted over 5,000 individuals that were currently in the system but not sentenced. The state was looking at adjusting its crime levels, but if individuals could not get through the system, the state needed to fix it. She wondered if money was the issue. If so, she wondered what area needed more money. Presently, she was uncomfortable adjusting the criminal code until there was an understanding of the problem. It was not about blame, but about getting out of the silo the state had been in for a significant amount of time.

[11:21:32 AM](#)

Representative Josephson was reminded that there were vacancies for several deputy commissioners within DOC. He wondered if the department could comment.

Co-Chair Wilson directed Ms. Goode to respond to the question.

Ms. Goode did not have any information.

Representative Josephson suggested that there was no great story, rather the positions simply had not been filled. Ms. Goode replied that she did not know of any forward movement in filling the positions. Her understanding was that two individuals had been pulled out of retirement to get the department running but did not know anything else.

Co-Chair Wilson asked Ms. Goode to explain the duties of the two deputy commissioners. Ms. Goode responded that one deputy was over the Division of Institutions which also had a director, Dean Marshall. There was a deputy commissioner of parole and probation. Currently, the division had Director Winkelman in place.

Representative Josephson commented that the other departments had filled out the upper echelon. He did not understand why the positions had not been filled.

Co-Chair Wilson reviewed the agenda for the afternoon meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

11:24:52 AM

The meeting was adjourned at 11:24 a.m.