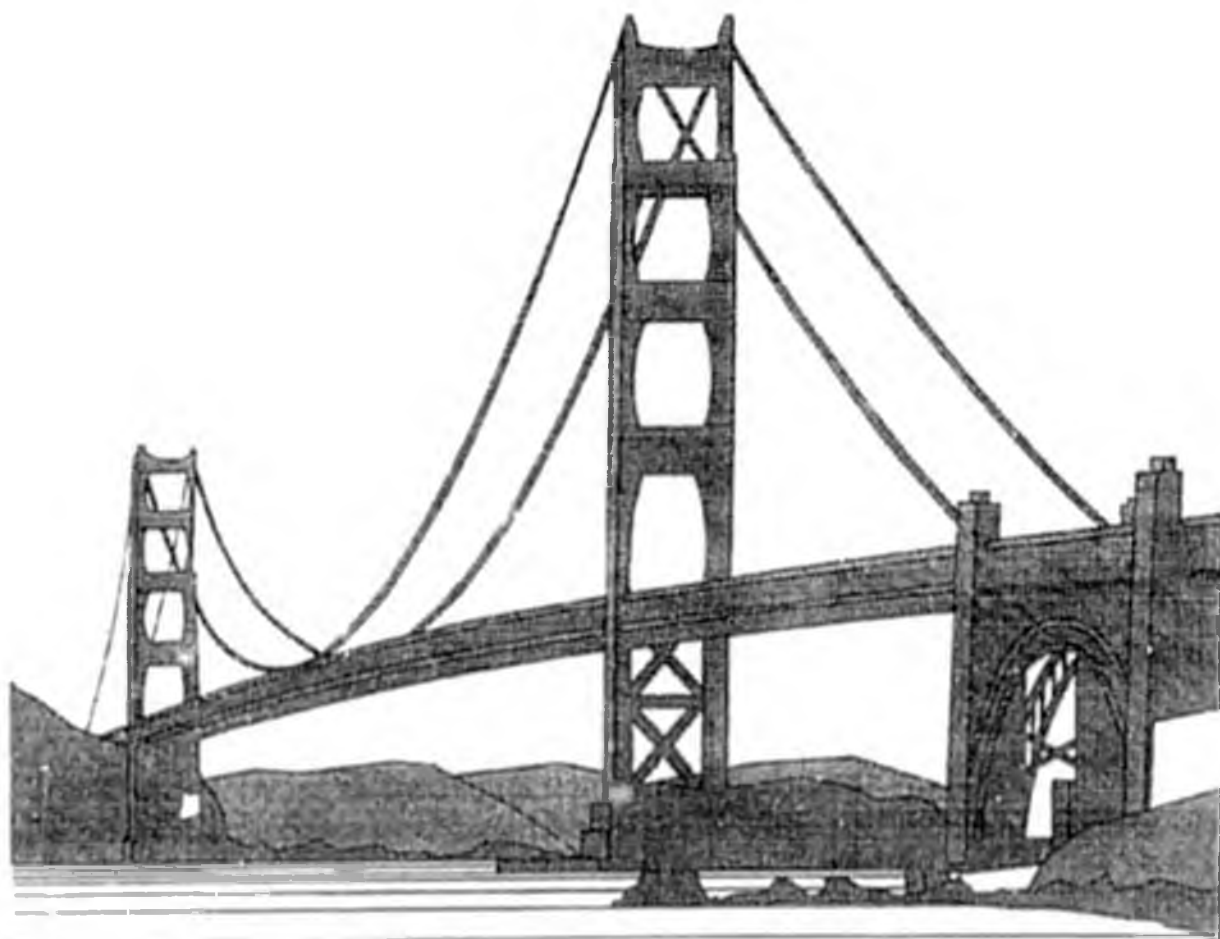


**BUILDING  
BRIDGES**

**3/18/98**

**The 5th Annual**  
**Building Bridges Campaign**  
**for Mental Health**



**FY99 Legislative Priorities**



**Dear Legislature:**

**The 5th Annual Building Bridges Campaign for Mental Health is pleased to present a copy of our FY99 Legislative Priorities**

**The Bridges Campaign represents the needs of Alaskans with mental illness and emotional disturbance to have bridges to their families and communities. Lack of treatment and support results in isolation and dysfunction. With bridges of treatment, support, full community participation, contribution and responsibility are possible.**

**On March 17, 18 and 19 mental health consumers, family members, friends, providers and advocates will be in Juneau to raise public, legislative and administrative awareness regarding the needs of Alaskans who experience mental illnesses and emotional disturbances.**

**We appreciate the support the Alaska Legislature has shown the mental health service delivery system in the past. Your support has fostered significant progress in establishing services in Alaskan communities. Unfortunately, our system still requires vigilant nurturing.**

**We ask your continued help to support community based mental health services. The Building Bridges Campaign endorses the Alaska Mental Health Board's Shared Vision Plan and FY99 Funding Recommendations.**

**We also thank you for your time and willingness to meet with Alaskans from the Building Bridges Campaign.**

**Respectfully;**

**Building Bridges Campaign for Mental Health**

## ***BUILDING BRIDGES CAMPAIGN***



### **Who are we?**

The **BUILDING BRIDGES** Campaign is a rural and urban group of consumers, family members, and service providers. Our members either suffer from mental and emotional illnesses or provide services for people who experience mental and emotional illnesses. Most people we are concerned about have inadequate resources to obtain adequate mental health care. Many are not covered by Medicaid or grant programs.

### **What do we want?**

The **BUILDING BRIDGES** Campaign wants mental health care which is:

Affordable  
Accessible  
Within our community  
High quality

### **What is our stake in this?**

The pain and loss for our children, family, friends, and neighbors is real and unrelenting. We have come forward to share our experience with you.

### **What are we asking from you?**

**We need: *your help and your leadership to insure adequate mental health care for all Alaskans.***

Specifically, we ask your support for:



A fully developed system of mental health care



Community mental health services



Medicaid services



## *Legislative Concerns*

### Education Regarding Mental Illness

People are **not** mentally or emotionally ill **by choice**.

**Treatment** for mental and emotional illnesses **works**.

**Community treatment works better and costs less** than hospital or institutional treatment.

The primary support for mental health services to people without enough resources to pay their own way comes from state grants and Medicaid. Both sources are necessary to continue successful community treatment.



**When people are unable to receive adequate community mental health care, the results are felt in other areas of the community.**

<b>When Community Care is not Available to:</b>	<b>Care is Provided by:</b>
People experiencing Psychiatric Crisis	Emergency Rooms Hospitals
People with Mental Illness	Alaska Psychiatric Institute Correctional Facilities Private Hospitals
Children with Emotional Disturbance	Private Hospitals Public Institutions
People with Alzheimer's and Related Disorders, or Seniors with Mental Illness	Public Institutions Private Hospitals Nursing Homes
Adults with Emotional Problems	Physicians Correctional Facilities

***The outcome of cutting community mental health services frequently includes transfer of care to inappropriate and more expensive settings.***



### **FY99 Budget Priorities**

**BRIDGES** appreciates the support people with mental health problems have received from the State of Alaska. We also recognize unmet needs and we ask for your consideration of increases in funding as listed below. Even these requests fall short of meeting needs, however, **BRIDGES** recognizes the financial problems we all face.

**The Building Bridges group supports the following levels of priority:**

**The first level is for no cuts to the mental health system in either grants or Medicaid budgets.**

**The second level is to maintain current service levels.**

**The third level is for increased service capacity.**

# **Supporters of the Building Bridges Campaign for Mental Health**

## **Northern Region**

Copper River Mental Health Center  
Fairbanks Community Mental Health Center  
Family Centered Services of Alaska, Inc.  
Four Rivers Counseling Center  
K.N.A. Community Counseling Center  
Maniilaq Counseling Services  
North Slope Borough Community Counseling Center  
Norton Sound Community Mental Health Center  
Railbelt Mental Health & Addictions Program  
Tanana Chiefs Conference Mental Health Center  
Tok Area Mental Health Center  
Yukon Flats CARE Center  
Yukon-Koyokuk Mental Health & Alcohol Program

## **Southeast Region**

COHO Mental Health Services  
Community Connections  
Gateway Center for Human Services  
Juneau Alliance for the Mentally Ill  
Juneau Community Mental Health Center  
Lynn Canal Counseling Center  
Petersburg Mental Health Services, Inc.  
SFARCH-Behavioral Health Services Division  
Sitka Mental Health Clinic, Inc.  
Wrangell Mental Health Services, Inc.



### Southcentral Region

Alaska Children's Services  
Anchorage Center for Families  
Alternatives Community Mental Health  
ASSETS, Inc.  
Bethel Community Mental Health  
Bristol Bay Area Health Corporation  
Central Peninsula Counseling Services  
Eastern Aleutians Tribes  
Kodiak Island Borough Mental Health Center  
Life Quest  
Seward Life Action Council  
Sound Alternatives  
Southcentral Counseling Center  
Southcentral Foundation - Southcentral Behavioral Health Services  
South Peninsula Community Mental Health Center  
The ARC of Anchorage  
Valdez Counseling Center  
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation CMHC

### Statewide Advocacy Organizations

NAMI Alaska - Alaska Alliance for the Mentally Ill  
Mental Health Association in Alaska  
Mental health Consumers of Alaska

BUILDING BRIDGES CAMPAIGN FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Legislative Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Lennier Innerchild and I am a resident of Alaska. I have an MBA and was Adjunct Professor at the University of Alaska-Anchorage. I am a parent of a seriously emotionally disturbed daughter and I have experience the mental health delivery system from that perspective.

1. The system failed for my daughter due to the following:

Gaps in services

This interrupted consistency in her treatment. She was re-traumatized by having to tell her story many times.

Duplication of services

Going back and forth to same agencies that could no longer provide the necessary treatment she needed, while waiting for appropriate placement in a structured locked continued treatment facility.

Timing of services

Excessive long waiting periods for in state placements. Length of time involved in paperwork coordination and prior authorization procedures which delayed treatment and placement needed.

No program direction

As a consumer of services I was unaware of what services were available. I grabbed what I could to save her life.

There was no mechanism in place for direction assisting in early intervention and prevention that could have identified this system failure.

She had to make numerous adjustments in various placement settings while waiting appropriate services. This impacted her illness causing setbacks.

When released from API after a 30 day stay and even after two out of state Behavioral Treatment Hospitals, no support services were available for continued care.

2. Costs incurred for treatment:

I used all of my Aetna insurance money. Max \$50,000 paid. This amount did not include my out of pocket payments as co-pay and also money I continued to pay when insurance stopped.

When money ran out and I was in debt and collections, I placed my daughter in state custody to get services she still needed. I could not pay for a private bed and the agency had state beds available. While in state custody 1995 her placements for a one year time frame were the following:

Alaska Baptist Home, Innerchild Home, Booth Memorial, Providence Discovery, Innerchild Home, Covenant House, AMOL, API, Laurel Shelter, AMOL, Innerchild Home, AYI Program foster mother, Runaway, Laurel Shelter, Runaway, Laurel Shelter, Charter North. I then took custody back in order to send her to another out of state emergency locked treatment hospital which was approved by Champus and paid at 100%. Total cost for this treatment \$70,000.

Her previous stay in API was a total of 41 days x medicaid rate of \$738.48 per day

3. Recovery

You can not measure it because it is ongoing. Recovery does not mean she is cured and therefore no more mental illness. Recovery means:

Maintaining quality of life  
Having the right to choices and options  
Community survival skills  
Employment stability

My daughter has recently graduated from highschool she receives BSI she has been accepted into a continued care program with intensive outpatient services. I am grateful.

I know my daughter will do the best she can.

4. Final statement and requests:

Do not cut the funding for programs and services.

Allow for a integrative quality service delivery system that will not only be cost effective but consumer oriented in serving children and families.

\*An investment today will save in the future\*

THANK YOU

*Lennier Innerchild*

Lennier Innerchild  
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Anchorage Alaska 99514-2888

JOINT NOTES  
HESS Committee Hearing

Peter Barnes - Dillingham / Bristol Bay

Sylvia Matthews - Anchorage (Sitka)

Beth LaCrosse - Ketchikan

Jeri Lanier - Fairbanks

Loran Guilbeau - Soldotna

Karen Tullis - Anchorage

Roseanne Smith - Fairbanks

~~Loran~~ Theresa Hopper - Kenai

Pauline DeMars - Nikiski

Calaya Williams - Fairbanks

Dona J Rule - Fairbanks

Darryl R Bingaman - Anchorage

Kendra Parker - Fairbanks

Lois Campbell - Ketchikan

~~Angela~~ Connie Wilkinson - Anchorage

Patricia Arnold - Homer

De Ann Heidi - Anchorage (Condova)

Ben Marvin - Sitka

Dawn Nadeau - Fairbanks

PJ King - Peters Creek

Joy Sabin - Juneau

Crystal Choate - Soldotna

Lennier Innerchild - Anchorage

Tudy Edwards - Eagle River

Alexandria Lockwood - Anchorage