

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 2001-2002 8672

10185 HOUSE HEALTH EDUCATION & SOCIAL SERVICES



RECORDS CERTIFICATION



I, the undersigned, an employee of the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the microfilm images on this microform are accurate reproductions of the original records of the State of Alaska as accumulated during the regular course of business, and that it is the established policy and practice of this State to microfilm its records and to dispose of the original documents after microfilm reproductions have been made.

William J. Carter

Signature of Camera Operator

10/14/2003

Date

OVERVIEW

AK

COMM.

AGING

2/13/01

Alaskan Aging
Focusing the Picture

House HESS Committee Briefing

February 13, 2001

Alaska Commission on Aging

Our framework today

- ✍ A baseline - results we seek
- ✍ Demographics
- ✍ Resources, opportunities and challenges
- ✍ Progress achieved
- ✍ Work underway
- ✍ To initiate

 A baseline - results we seek

- *Defined by seniors at the Common Ground II statewide senior leadership conference in January 2000*

Common Ground II

RESULTS DESIRED BY SENIORS

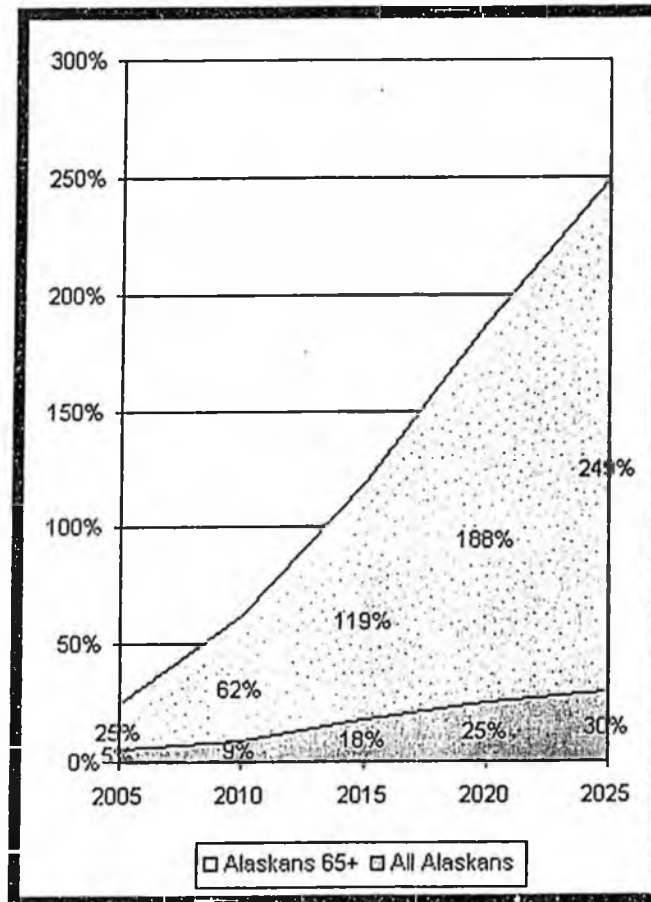
- Being connected socially -- preventing isolation
- Continuing to expand and maintain the highest possible level of independence
- Maintaining financial well-being and self-sufficiency
- Living at home, in one's home community
- Sustaining health - physically, mentally, spiritually, and emotionally
- Maintaining personal dignity; experiencing respect as valued family and community members
- Being safe at home and in the community



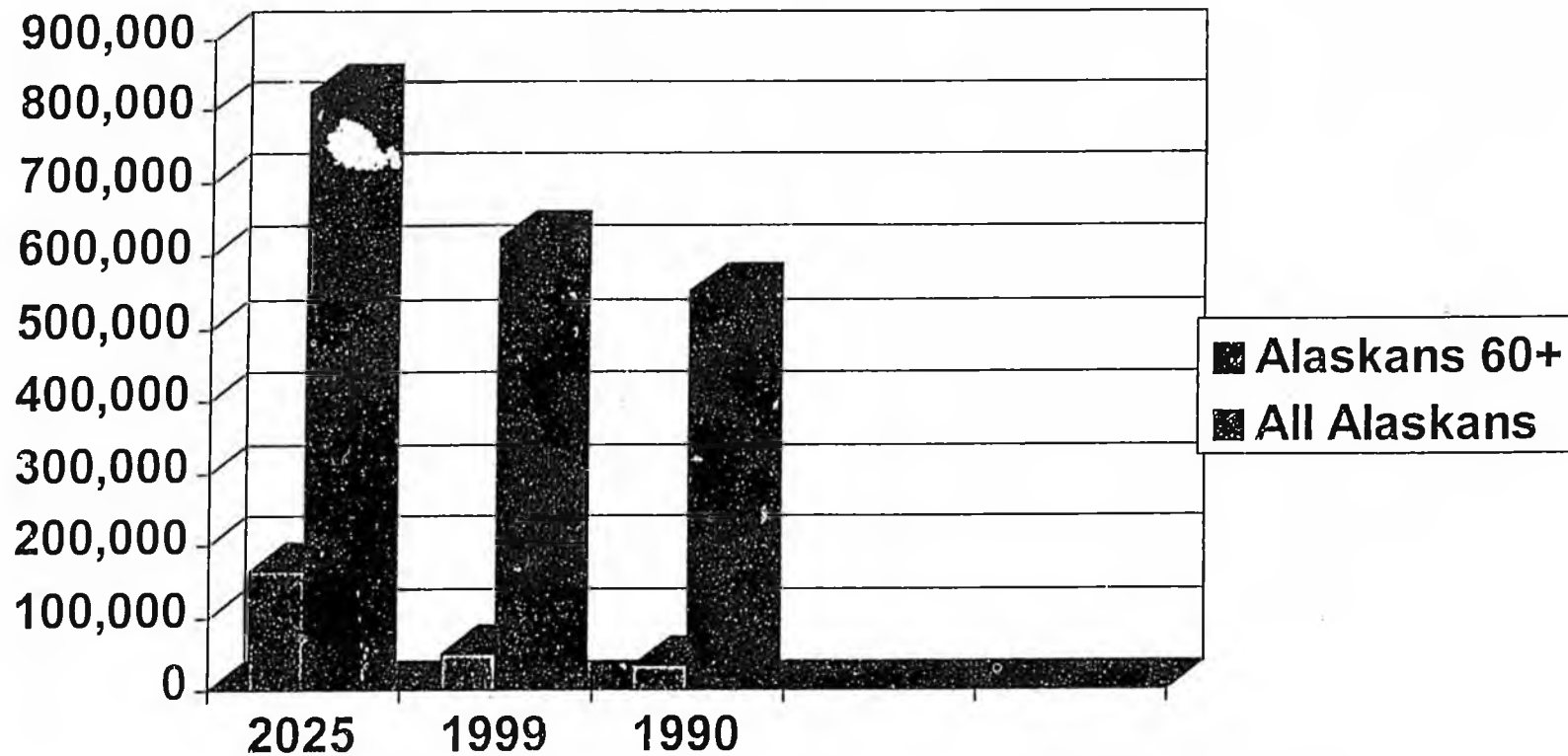
Demographics

<u>Age</u>	<u>1999</u>	<u>1990</u>	<u>% growth</u>
Alaskans 60+	50,631	34,908	45%
Alaskans 65+	33,641	22,095	52.3%
Total Population (all ages)	622,000	550,043	13.1%

Alaska's Projected Population Growth



Proportional growth in number of Alaskans age 60+



How does this compare with other states?

- Proportionately, the Alaskan senior population is growing more rapidly than in any other state.

Why the rapid growth?

- Improved health -> greater survival into later years
- Fewer Alaskans leaving the state to retire

Why the rapid growth?

- Impact of baby boomers staying here at retirement
- Some middle aged children now bring their parents to Alaska rather than leave the state

Life expectancy

- 79 for women
- 74 for men

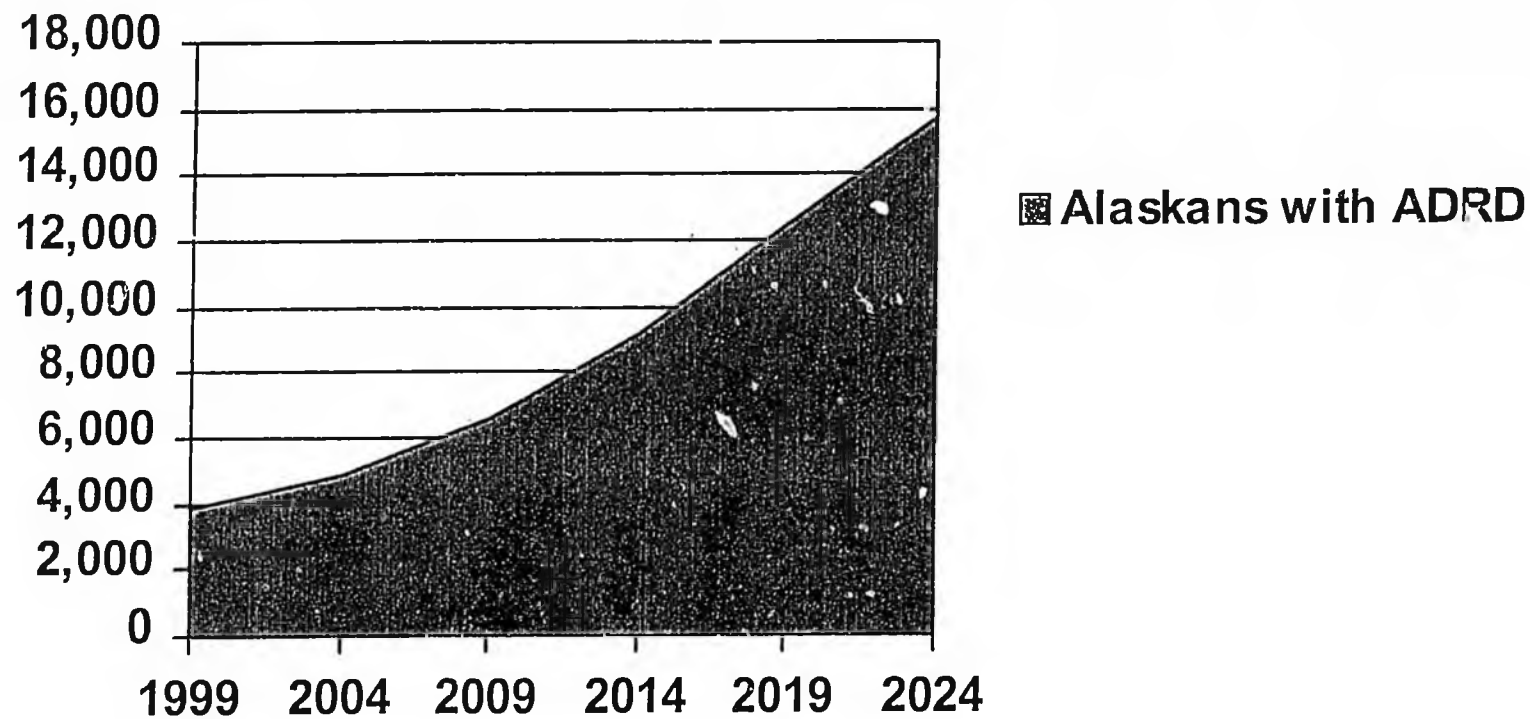
Leading causes of death in Alaskans 65+

- Cancer @ 30.4% of deaths
- Heart disease @ 26%

Cost of health care as we age

- For Americans age 65+, 12% of their annual expenditures are for health care. This *three times* the proportion spent by younger people. For older Americans:
 - Insurance 53%
 - Drugs 22%
 - Medical services 19%
 - Medical supplies 5%

Projected Increase in Alaskans with Alzheimer's Disease

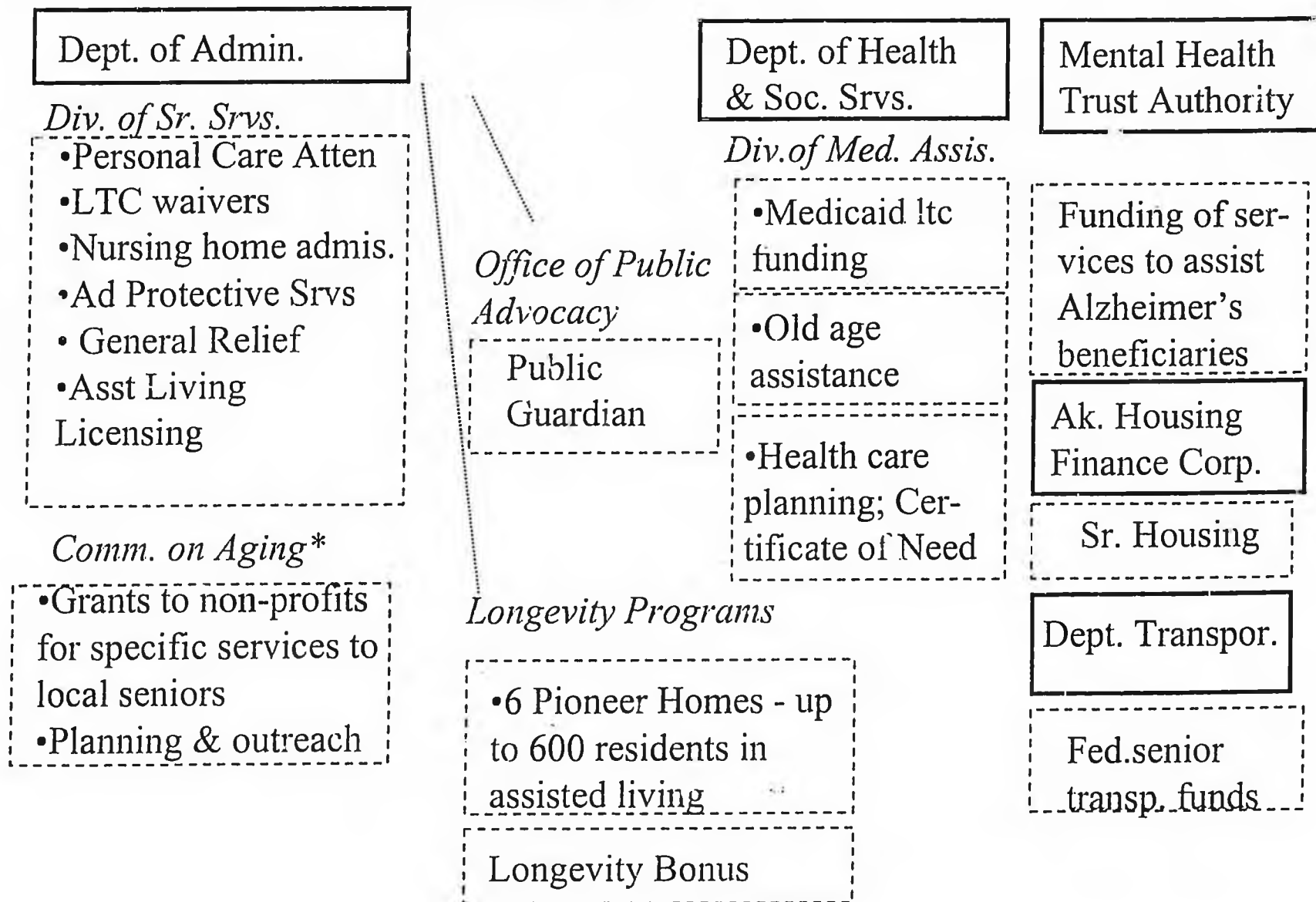




Resources, opportunities & challenges

- Economic impacts
 - Income that stays and is spent within Alaska
- Social impacts
 - Volunteering
 - Caregiving across the generations

Organizational overview of services & funding targeted to meet older Alaskans' needs



THE
FOLLOWING
DOCUMENT(S)
ARE
POOR
ORIGINAL
COPIES

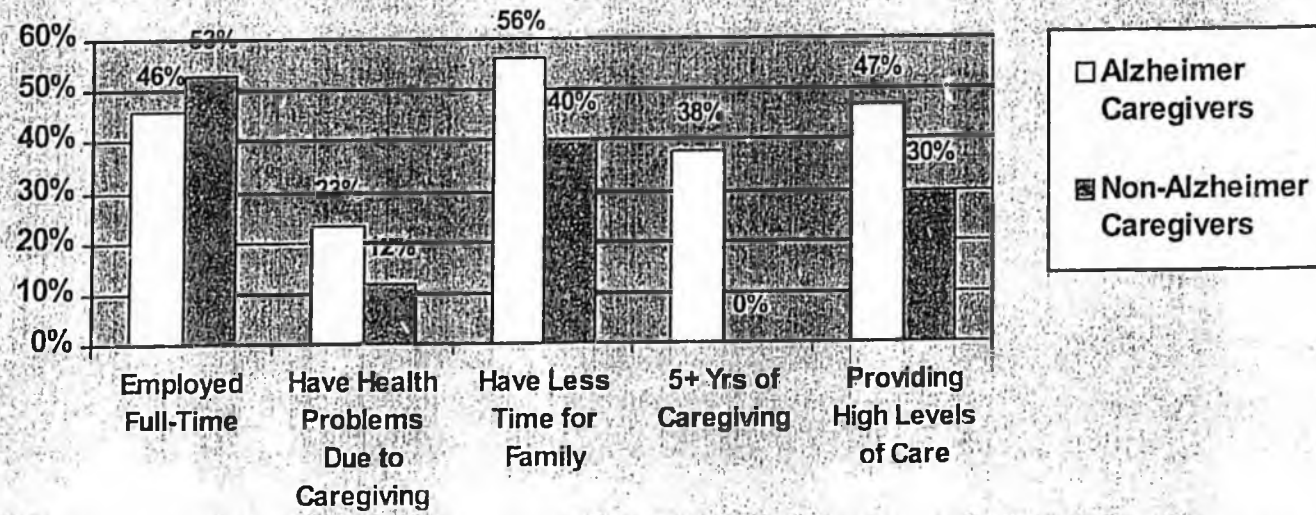
Consequences of ADRI

- Poor judgement/ need for supervision
- inability to perform routine activities of daily living
- mental health problems
- preventable health problems
- significant impact on caregivers

Impact on Alzheimer Caregivers

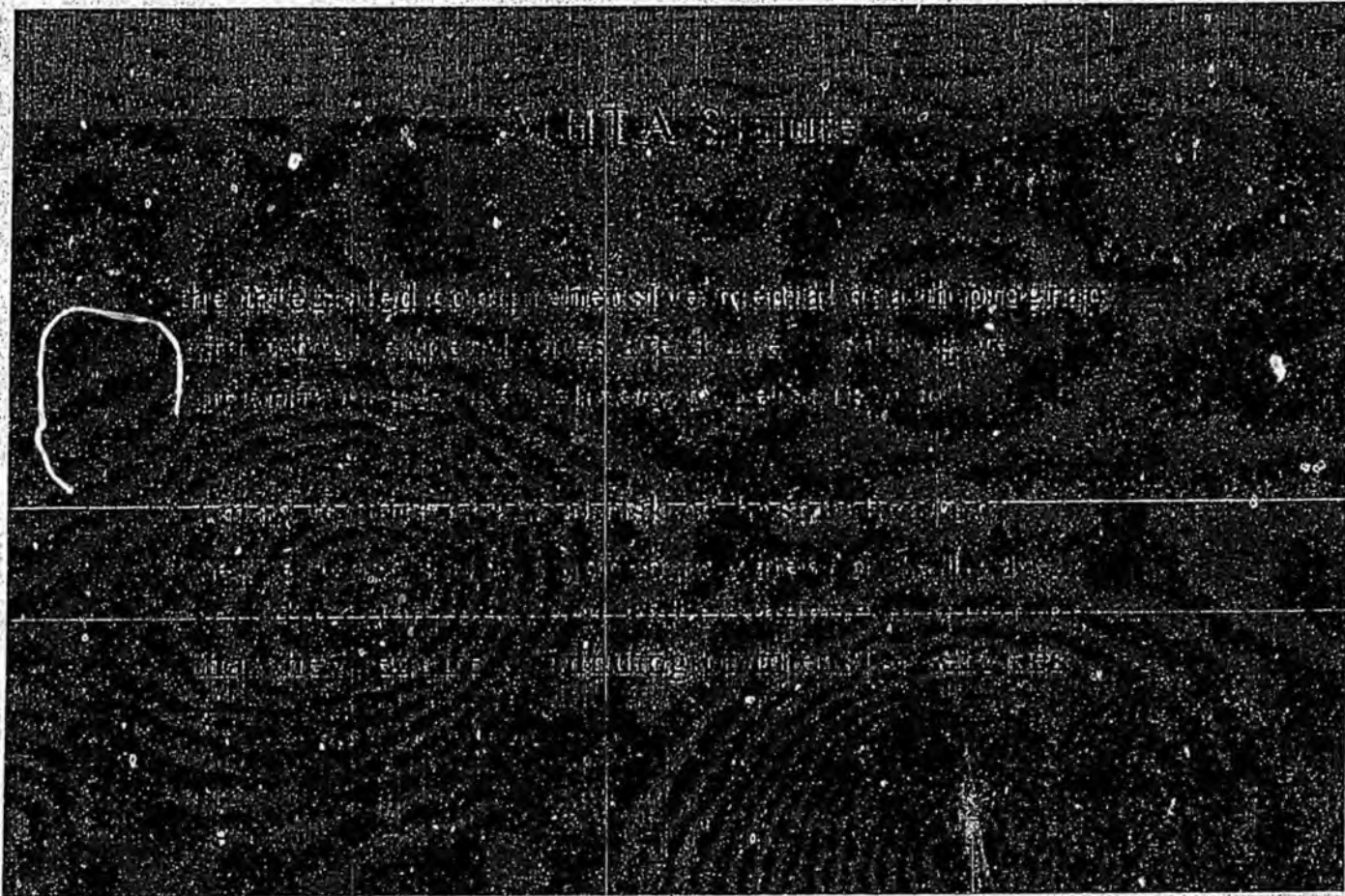
- 1 in 8 become ill or injured
- 1 in 3 use medication for problems related to caregiving
- Higher levels of financial strain
- Twice as likely as other caregivers to be providing the highest level of care
- Seriously affects employment status

Profile of Alzheimer Caregivers



Source: *Who Cares? Families Caring for Persons with Alzheimer's Disease*, February 1999

*THESE ARE Alaska Mental Health Trust
Authority CORE BENEFICIARIES*





Progress achieved

- 2000: Increase in state rates for assisted living services to General Relief recipients (SB 73)
- 1999: Certificate of Need (HB 187)
- 1999: Care of vulnerable adults (SB 57)
- 1999: Home health care licensing (SB 56)
- 1999: SCR 8 - Long Term Care Task Force of 1999

Progress achieved

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation

- 2000: small assisted living home low interest financing
- 2000: small grants for accessibility modifications for seniors' homes



Work underway or pending

- Regulation revision
 - State Personal Care Attendant program (Consumer directed program)
 - Assisted living
 - Certificate of Need
 - Home health care licensing
 - Licensing of hospice organizations
- Workforce
 - retention and development
- Establishing rural assisted living in new areas



Legislation underway or pending

- EO 102: Long Term Care Ombudsman transfer to Ak. Mental Health Trust Authority
- HB 18, SB 26 Renter's Tax Equivalency payment
- HB 107, SB 67 Assisted Living
- HB 88, SB 55 Pioneer /Veterans Homes
- Guardianship statute revisions (not yet introduced)



To initiate

- New Legislative Long Term Care Task Force
- Change Alaska's Medicaid long term care eligibility policy to provide coverage for people with the sole diagnosis of ADRD who are income eligible
- Legislation to provide state funding to assist in paying for essential long term care for Alaskan adults unable to fully pay.



To initiate

- Adoption of the *Five Wishes* format for advance directives
- Incorporate mental health coverage in health insurance policies

Information sources

- *Issues Affecting the Economic Well-Being of Alaskan Seniors*
- *Legislative Long Term Care Task Force Report 1999*
- *Long Term Care Services Survey*
- *Alaskan Seniors - Living Longer: Growing Stronger*
- *Guardianship Study*



Alaska Commission on Aging

Resolution 2001-02

In support of a Legislative Long Term Care Task Force

WHEREAS the Legislative Long Term Care Task Force of 1998 successfully brought together Alaskan consumers, providers, agency personnel and public policy makers to assess and improve the availability of appropriate and responsive long-term care services; and

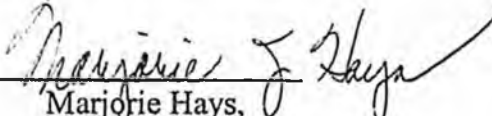
WHEREAS the Legislative Long Term Care Task Force Report (January, 1999) outlined 31 central issues and areas for action to improve the capacity and quality of long-term care services, and associated supportive resources vital to the well-being of Alaskans with disabilities and chronic or long-term illness or frailty; and

WHEREAS Legislative Long Term Care Task Force leadership and guidance on long-term care issues resulted in the passage of vital legislation concerning elder abuse, facility-based long-term care, long-term care services, and assisted living; and

WHEREAS the term of the Legislative Long Term Care Task Force of 1999-2000 concluded with the convening of the Twenty-Second Alaska Legislature;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Alaska Commission on Aging vigorously encourages the Twenty-Second Alaska Legislature to institute a new Long Term Care Task Force. Such a Task Force can serve as a Legislative forum for study and leadership concerning the challenges and opportunities associated with Alaska's rapidly growing senior citizen community, and the long-term care needs any of us may experience at any times in our lives.

Adopted this 13th day of February 2001.


Marjorie Hays,
Chair

Alaskan Seniors

Living Longer Growing Stronger

from the Alaska Commission on Aging

January 2001

The mission of the Alaska Commission on Aging is to ensure dignity and independence for Alaska's seniors and to assist them, through programs and services funded by the Commission, to lead useful and meaningful lives.



Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger is a monthly publication of the Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

Commissioners

Chair

Marjorie Hays Soldotna

Doris E. Bacus Kodiak

Peggy Burgin Anchorage

Ella Craig Anchorage

Allison Elgee Juneau

Jesse L. Gardner Anchorage

Bob Gregovich, Jr. Juneau

Banarsi Lal Fairbanks

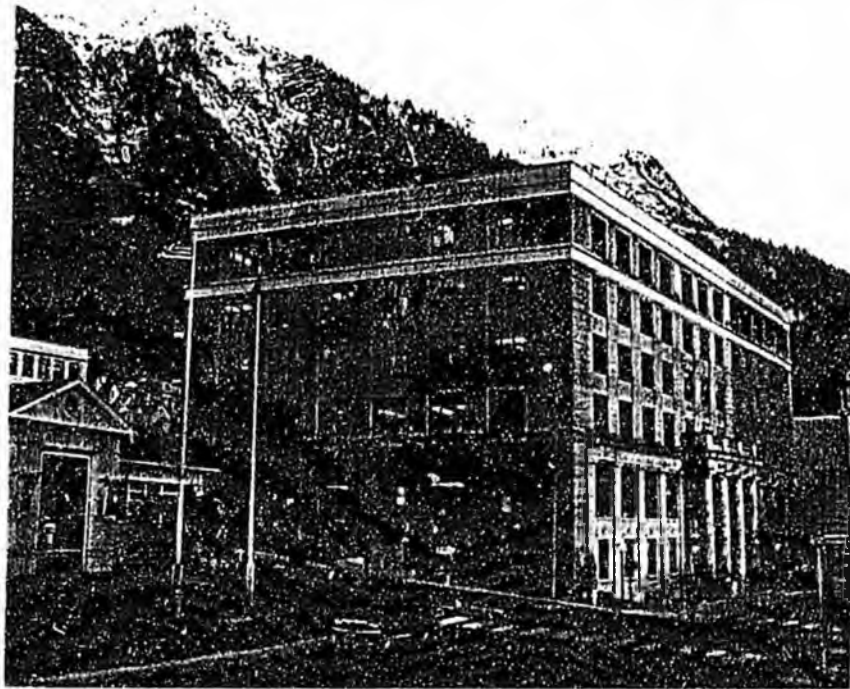
Bernice Joseph Anchorage

Dan Karimun, Sr. Nome

Jonathan Sherwood Juneau

Executive Director Jane P. Demmert P O Box 110209 Juneau, AK 99811-0209

(907) 465-3250 Jane_Demmert @admin.state.ak.us



Alaska's State Capitol building in Juneau.

Senior-Related Legislation for the Current Session

The 22nd Legislature of the State of Alaska began its first session January 8. This is the busy season for advocates seeking to educate policy makers on legislative issues affecting all of us as we age.

This legislative season, the Alaska Commission on Aging has identified the following legislative priorities:

- Establishing a state-funded long-term care program for seniors and adults with long-term care needs whose income and conditions now exclude them from the state's Medicaid long-term care home and community-based services waiver
- Strengthening the state guardianship and conservatorship system
- Strengthening state oversight for assisted living facilities
- Securing inclusion of Alzheimer's and related disorders as an allowable primary diagnosis for coverage under the state Medicaid long-term care waiver for older Alaskans
- Securing passage of budget increments to provide vital assistance to Alaska's rapidly-growing senior community. These increments are found in the budgets of the Division of Senior Services and the Commission, Division of Medical Assistance Medicaid long-term care funding, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation's Senior Housing Program, Alaska's Pioneers' Homes, and the Office of Public Advocacy Guardianship Program

In this issue of *Alaskan Seniors, Living Longer, Growing Stronger*, we'll look at some of these priorities individually.

Broadening Alaskans' Access to Home and Community-Based Care

Many seniors and adults with disabilities cannot pay for all the long-term care services they need, yet still do not qualify to receive Medicaid benefits. When these moderate income Alaskans don't receive necessary health care services, they often end up requiring more intensive services than they would have needed had they received earlier help to stabilize their situation.

The Legislative Long-Term Care Task Force has proposed that the Department of Administration establish and administer a program of home and community-based support services to address this need. The proposed program would begin to address the long-term care needs of adults of all ages, including significant numbers of older Alaskans, who face the following challenges:

- Income levels that exceed allowable income for participation in Alaska's Medicaid long-term care waiver programs
- Medical, physical, or cognitive impairments that place these Alaskans at greatest risk, or who have already been placed in a more restrictive care setting than they desire or need.

The participants in this program would pay for services they receive on a sliding scale. They would be required to apply for payment from all other sources available to them.

Strengthening Alaska's Guardianship System

With funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Division of Senior Services commissioned a review and assessment of Alaska's guardianship system in 1998. The purpose was to take a proactive look at the future of guardianship services in Alaska. The effort to act on the recommendations in this report, mostly involving more funding for guardianship agencies to lighten case loads and providing more support and training to private guardians, began with the release of the report. Legislation is now sought to strengthen Alaska's present statutes concerning guardianship and conservatorship to further assure that the best interests of the ward or respondent (the person being placed in guardianship or conservatorship) are effectively addressed in guardianship cases.

This legislation would serve all individuals for whom a guardianship or conservatorship is being established. This includes significant numbers of older Alaskans. One improvement this legislation would make is to allow a third type of guardianship petition that falls between regular and emergency petitions. This new type would have to be heard by the court sooner than a regular petition, but not in as short a time as an emergency petition is required to be heard.

Strengthening State Oversight of Alaska's Assisted Living Facilities

Across Alaska, the number of assisted living homes now licensed by the Division of Senior Services has grown to 125. This indicates rapid growth in the numbers of older Alaskans choosing to make Alaska their lifelong home. Assisted living offers Alaskans with residential long-term care needs the opportunity to receive that care in home-like settings. After five years under the present assisted living statutes and regulations, more is understood about issues of care, residents' rights, and structures needed to guide providers, the state, clients and their families involved in assisted living. In 1999 and 2000 the state held statewide information and listening forums to gain feedback and perspective on the core issues needing work. Now the state is drafting new regulations and proposed legislation to refine the framework for licensing assisted living. Key areas slated for strengthening:

- Standards and provisions for assisted living employee criminal background checks, and requirements that prohibit facilities from using employees, contractors, or volunteers convicted of offenses listed in regulation.
- Definition of circumstances under which assisted living resident contracts may be terminated, and provisions regarding termination procedures that assure checks and balances for residents and their families.
- Provisions under which the State may revoke an assisted living home's license.

Draft language is expected to include a framework for the state to secure court-ordered temporary administration of an
(Continued on Page 3.)

Medicaid Coverage for Those With Alzheimer's Disease Must Improve

By 2025 an estimated 124,303 Alaskans will be age 65+. Of that population, an estimated 15,700 will be at-risk for Alzheimer's Disease and related disorders (ADRD). As the number of Alaskans ill with Alzheimer's increases, it is vital to include Alzheimer's as an allowable primary diagnosis for Alaskans otherwise eligible for the present Medicaid long-term waiver program. Alaska is one of only two states that exclude seniors with Alzheimer's from Medicaid funded long-term care services if Alzheimer's is their primary diagnosis.

The *Legislative Long-Term Care Task Force Report, 1999* recommends exploring ways to support the long-term care needs of Alaskans whose sole diagnosis is Alzheimer's Disease.

Governor Knowles Introduces Legislation for for Alaska's Senior Veterans

Governor Tony Knowles has introduced legislation expanding the Pioneers' Home system to provide long-term care for veterans. This proposal has been well received by seniors and veterans. House Bill 88 changes the name of the Pioneers' Homes to the "Alaska Pioneers' and Veterans' Homes." It authorizes the Department of Administration to establish, through regulation, an admissions preference that would reserve a designated percentage of beds for veterans.

This bill and the accompanying FY 02 budget request will simultaneously increase the Homes' staffing to provide long-term care to older Alaskans, and enable more aging veterans to receive long-term care in the six Pioneer Homes across the state. The funding includes nearly \$2.5 million in general funds and another \$2.6 million in receipt authority. Receipts include fees paid by residents, and potential payments for veterans' care through the federal Veterans Administration.

The proposal also requests \$200,000 to survey veterans' housing and health needs to help guide the state in future planning for the Homes. The state will ask the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to examine the possibility of placing VA clinics at the Homes.

A companion bill would establish the Alaska Veterans Advisory Council. It would make recommendations concerning veterans' priority service needs, develop public and private partnerships to meet those needs, and provide coordination of information regarding veterans' benefits and services around the state. The chair of the council would serve on the renamed Alaska Pioneers' and Veterans' Home Advisory Board.

Alaska Commission on Aging Will Meet in February

The Alaska Commission on Aging will hold its quarterly meeting February 13-15. The meeting will be held in Juneau at Centennial Hall.

Among the issues to be addressed, the Commissioners plan to review the Seniors' Economic Impact Study commissioned last year, assess the impact of the reauthorization provisions of the Older Americans Act, and finalize the timeframe for new fiscal year extensions of grants, and awards of new grants. The Commission will also adopt a timeframe and process for completing its "Interim State Plan" to guide its programs supported with Older Americans Act funding. Time will be scheduled for discussion with local senior advocacy organizations, and meetings with legislators.

Those wishing to offer public comment on issues pertinent to the wellbeing of older Alaskans are invited to attend the Commission meeting at Centennial Hall. The meeting schedule is now being finalized.

Assisted Living (continued from page 2.)

assisted living facility if that facility operates without a license, the health, safety or welfare of residents were jeopardized, or if a pattern of statute, regulation or local ordinance violation had occurred. Also anticipated are specific training requirements for assisted living administrators.

Stay Informed of Senior-Related Legislation Through Statewide Teleconferences

Keep up with legislation affecting us as we age by participating in statewide teleconferences on the subject. These include the Senior Advocacy Coalition's monthly teleconferences (see box below) and the Alaska Commission on Aging legislative teleconference.

ACoA's Legislative Teleconferences are every other Tuesday. The dates are **February 6th & 20th; March 6th & 20th**. Beginning **April 3rd** the meetings will be held every **Tuesday** until the end of the Legislative session. The time will be from **9:30 to 11:00 AM**.

Public sites include:

Anchorage	Anchorage Senior Center, 1300 E. 19 th Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501
Barrow	North Slope Borough Senior Center, Barrow, AK 99723
Bethel	City of Bethel Senior Services, 127 Atsaq Street, Bethel, AK 99559
Chugiak	Chugiak Senior Center, 22424 N. Birchwood Loop Rd., Chugiak, AK 99567
Fairbanks	North Star Council on Aging, 1424 Moore St., Fairbanks, AK 99701
Homer	Homer Senior Citizens, Inc., 3935 Svedlund, Homer, AK 99603
Juneau	Alaska Commission on Aging, State Office Bldg., Room 757, Juneau, AK 99801
Ketchikan	Ketchikan Pioneers' Home, 141 Bryant Street, Ketchikan, AK 99901
Kodiak	Senior Citizens of Kodiak, Inc., 302 Erskine, Kodiak, AK 99615
Nenana	Nenana Tortella Council on Aging, 116 E. 4 th Street, Nenana, AK 99760
Sitka	Center for Community, 700 Katlian, Suite B, Sitka, AK 99835
Soldotna	Soldotna Area Senior Citizens, Inc., 197 W. Park Avenue, Soldotna, AK 99669
Sterling	Sterling Area Senior Citizens, Inc., 34453 Sterling Highway, Sterling, AK 99472
Wasilla	Wasilla Area Services, 1301 Century Circle, Wasilla, AK 99654

Anyone requiring assistance or information or special devices and equipment to participate in the meetings must contact Lillian Bradley at 465-3250 (Fax: 465-1398) no later than the Thursday before each teleconference to make necessary arrangements. Agendas are available after 3:00 PM on the day prior to the scheduled teleconference at the ACoA Website, www.AlaskaAging.org. Click on the "Legislative Teleconference" button on the left side of the screen.

Senior Advocacy Coalition Holds Monthly Teleconferences

The Senior Advocacy Coalition meets by teleconference from 9:30 to 11:30 AM on the second Friday of every month to address issues affecting Alaska's seniors. The teleconference originates at the Anchorage Senior Center.

For more information on joining a meeting, contact Sue Samet, 261-4140, Lila Berry, 261-4848, or Brenda Brown, 338-6492 in Anchorage; Fred Lau 235-7355 in Homer; or Rosemary Hagevig 463-6153 in Juneau.

~~~~~  
You can read *Alaskan Seniors: Living Longer, Growing Stronger* on line at [www.AlaskaAging.org](http://www.AlaskaAging.org). To receive email notification when a new issue is on line, contact:

**Mark Zeiger, Editor 907-465-4638 or email: [Mark\\_Zeiger@admin.state.ak.us](mailto:Mark_Zeiger@admin.state.ak.us)**

~~~~~




RECORDS CERTIFICATION



I, the undersigned, an employee of the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the microfilm images on this microform are accurate reproductions of the original records of the State of Alaska as accumulated during the regular course of business, and that it is the established policy and practice of this State to microfilm its records and to dispose of the original documents after microfilm reproductions have been made.

William J. Carter

Signature of Camera Operator

10/14/2003

Date

OVERVIEW

AK

COMM.

MENTAL

HEALTH

ACMHSA Overview
Before House HESS Committee
Tuesday, March 20, 2001

- I. ACMHSA (Alaska Community Mental Health Services Association) overview – who we are.
 - A. Review of member organizations and member profiles
- II. What we do
 - A. Supporting evidence of quality of services
 - B. Examples of Innovative Programs
- III. 2001 Legislative Priorities
- IV. Where we see possible improvement

ALASKA COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ASSOCIATION

Introduction

Hello, I am the President of the Alaska Community Mental Health Services Association (ACMHSA), commonly referred to as the Mental Health Director's Association. The purpose of my visit before your Committee is to provide you with a general overview of ACMHSA; information regarding our statewide membership; 2001 Legislative Priorities; and particular areas of concern where we see possible improvement in the delivery of services.

ACMHSA is comprised of the Community Mental Health Centers in the State of Alaska which provide an array of services to children, adults, and senior citizens. Enclosed for your review is a complete listing of those agencies which the association represents. You will notice that we cover the entire state, with members in urban, suburban, and remote locations. The CMHC's are for the most part non-profit corporations.

ACMHSA provides efficient, cost-effective mental health services to beneficiaries designated by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. Due to the quality of services provided, many consumers chose to utilize mental health services provided the ACMHSA members, dispelling the myth that only the poor and indigent seek treatment at a community mental health center.

2001 Legislative Priorities

ACMHSA established the following objectives for the current legislative session:

Education: Provide the necessary information to state legislators about ACMHSA, uncompromised quality of care, and value added components to the overall mental health delivery system; discuss financial viability issues regarding the mental health delivery system.

Funding: Monitor DHSS departmental budget; advocate for maintenance funding; monitor DFYS departmental budget; track supplemental funding request.

Key issues: (1) Support increase in base grant funding for Rural Mental Health Providers; (2) monitor Alaskan youth in out of state placement for treatment services and track funding issues related to expansion of in state capacity and infrastructure to meet the cost effective service demands of this population.

Providers are NON-PROFIT CORPORATIONS

With the knowledge and demonstrated results of positive audits in Quality of Care standards, ACMHSA members have turned attention towards business operations. In today's business environment, with increased operating costs, particularly in health insurance premiums, to remain the foundation of Alaska's mental health delivery system, we must insure the financial viability of our business entities.

To this extent, ACMHSA members are focusing on internal operations, and our interface with various divisions within the Department of Health and Social Services. We have established workgroups to resolve pended claims issues; facilitated technical assistance support to providers on claims submission and reimbursement issues; and will work earnestly with DMHDD to insure ACMHSA providers meet the reporting requirements established by the department. Several ACMHSA member firms have moved forward to develop comprehensive corporate compliance plans for their respective businesses.

ACMHSA has taken under consideration planning a two day financial management workshop for non-profit corporations in Alaska. In addition to general financial management, the workshop will focus on issues relevant to the unique challenges to the Alaska service delivery system. We are currently seeking co-sponsorship for such an event.

Key Issues

ACMHSA continues to be concerned with the number of children and youth in out of state placement for residential treatment. The cost of such care is a financial burden to the state; the cost to families in terms of family unification and preservation is far greater. Furthermore, the planning process to develop infrastructure and capacity within the state excludes the delivery system that can that can alleviate this problem.

The treatment planning process for youth in state custody is often cumbersome and fragmented. Coordination of care between key stakeholders (DFYS, DOE, DMHDD) is inefficient and offsets unnecessary costs to system participants.

The tacit approval of out of state residential placement of Alaskan children and youth inadvertently condones a policy of institutionalization vs. community care. This is a questionable standard when compared to the community based efforts to de-institutionalize API; provide community support programs to the chronically mentally ill adults; and provide a comprehensive continuum of care of community based services to developmentally disabled persons.

ACMHSA favors immediate, long term planning of an integrated management information system to manage data within Juvenile Justice, DFYS, DMA, DADA and DMHDD. Failure to move forward on this issue will impact Alaska's ability to attract federal grant funding that requires advanced integrated data management. There does not appear to be a consistent vision or operational plan to manage comprehensive data, methodology and treatment outcomes within the department.

Innovative Programs in Alaska

In conclusion, ACMHSA members have asked me to thank you for you continued support to consumers, family members, and the non-profit community.



RECORDS CERTIFICATION



I, the undersigned, an employee of the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the microfilm images on this microform are accurate reproductions of the original records of the State of Alaska as accumulated during the regular course of business, and that it is the established policy and practice of this State to microfilm its records and to dispose of the original documents after microfilm reproductions have been made.

William J. Carter

Signature of Camera Operator

10/14/2003

Date

OVERVIEW

AK

INSTITUTE

FULL

EMPLOY.



Alaska State Legislature

- Interim (May-Dec) -
10928 Eagle River Rd. Suite 140
Eagle River, Alaska 99577
☎ (907) 694-6683
FAX (907) 694-1015

- Session (Jan-May) -
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
☎ (907) 465-2199
FAX (907) 465-4587

Toll free (800) 342-2199

REPRESENTATIVE FRED DYSON

MEMORANDUM

March 19, 2001

To: All Legislators

From: Fred Dyson
State Representative

RE: American Institute for Full Employment

I would urge you to attend the House HESS meeting today, Tuesday March 20, at approximately 4pm.

This group has worked with 12 other states to utterly revolutionize their Welfare to Work programs, starting with Wisconsin. They recommend taking food stamps and TANF cash grants and using that money to subsidize employers who are putting welfare recipients to work immediately. They are offering to audit Alaska's present welfare system and make recommendation. All at no cost to us.

Participating in the presentation will be Sandie Hoback, former State Welfare Director of Oregon.

Please come and see, send a staffer—let's see if we can do better.

- E-mail -
Representative_fred_dyson
@legis.state.ak.us

- Internet -
<http://www.akrepublicans.org>

AMERICAN INSTITUTE FOR FULL EMPLOYMENT

The American Institute for Full Employment is a privately funded, not-for-profit policy research and development center, a major purpose of which is to develop programs that expand and enhance employment and retirement opportunities for American workers. The Institute, chartered as an Oregon (501)(c)(3) corporation in 1994, has offices in Klamath Falls, Oregon.

The Institute's goal is full employment – universal access to jobs with career potential for all who can work, especially those who are receiving public assistance as a substitute for the opportunities and rewards of paid work. The Institute believes that goal can best be met by building public/private partnerships that encourage the efforts of private sector employers, large and small, to train and employ new workers.

Toward this end, the Institute has developed the Full Employment Program, a welfare, unemployment, and food stamp benefit replacement concept that has been developed and refined over the last seven years. The program moves public assistance recipients into the active work force by converting public assistance benefits to wage subsidies for transitional, training-oriented, predominantly private sector jobs. It has been adapted to meet a wide variety of specific state and local needs and circumstances. Two states that have implemented it on a statewide basis, Oregon (JOBS Plus) and Mississippi (Work First), have shown dramatic success in obtaining productive permanent employment for public assistance beneficiaries, thus significantly reducing welfare caseloads and costs. In addition to assisting public assistance recipients achieve self-sufficiency, the Full Employment Program has proven to be a valuable economic development tool for small businesses, especially in economically-depressed remote areas with high unemployment.

The Institute has been the driving force in the development and implementation of these programs, and has provided nationally-recognized experts and a full complement of resources to assist states and local governments to design, implement, and assess the performance and effects of their Full Employment programs.

Other issues currently being addressed by the Institute include:

- Development of fully funded individual retirement accounts as a replacement for pay-as-you-go Social Security
- Restoration of state control of the Unemployment Insurance system, including return to the states of unemployment taxing and spending power and the ability to contract with private employment service providers.

ASSESSMENT SERVICES

The mission of the non-profit education and research center, the American Institute for Full Employment (AIFE) is to promote full employment—universal access to jobs with career potential for all who can work, especially those who are receiving public assistance as a substitute for the opportunities and rewards of paid work. Toward this end, AIFE provides, at no cost to states and with no obligation for future work, an assessment of the state's public assistance programs, with prioritized recommendations to improve performance.

The purpose of the assessment is not to criticize a state's welfare program, but to evaluate goals and performance, and suggest improvements that fully utilize TANF opportunities. AIFE believes strongly in a "work-first" philosophy, but we also advocate successful "mixed strategies" and support services that encourage and promote job retention, self-sufficiency, career development, and accumulation of wealth.

Our assessments are conducted by a team of our staff and other welfare experts with whom we have worked previously. These consultants are all nationally-known specialists in the field of welfare and public assistance.

The assessments include a review of state statutes, regulations, operating policies and procedures, and other pertinent documents such as the TANF state plan. We will also interview key Department of Health and Social Services managers and staff, and observe day-to-day operations at a number of regional or field offices. In most cases, our assessments can be completed within 45-60 calendar days from notice to proceed. At the conclusion of the assessment, we will submit a report that will include the findings and conclusions of the assessment, a prioritized list of recommendations, and a recommended action plan.

OVERVIEW OF THE FULL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Full Employment Program was designed in Oregon by an individual who desired that all Americans have the opportunity to work, earn an income, and be self-sufficient.

Recognizing that people needing public assistance need work, and knowing the best training to enhance skills is on-the-job-training, the design was simple. Instead of giving people public assistance, provide real jobs, subsidized jobs, with real employers to everyone needing unemployment compensation, welfare and food stamps.

Ultimately, the goal is to eliminate the need to qualify for any of these programs, and assist any person who needs work, to find a job promptly (subsidized or non-subsidized).

History

For 25 years, from the early 1960's to the mid-1980's, the federal government waged war on poverty by providing obligation-free benefits to poor people. The expectation was that the more government aid people received, the better off they'd be.

It didn't work. Millions of people became dependent on public assistance, and the poverty rate did not fall. By 1985 it had become clear that reducing poverty would require a different approach. It was also understood that, after 25 years of encouraging dependency, it would take time, patience, and persistence to restructure the welfare paradigm.

A New Approach

The new approach was tied to work. The hypothesis was that the ability to get and hold a job is the key to economic and social well being, for individuals and families. The first form of public assistance to employ the new approach was cash welfare payments. Success was unexpected and immediate. Through work requirements and "diversion" (meeting temporary needs instead of swelling the welfare rolls) the new paradigm has decreased national welfare caseloads by more than 40 percent in three years. States, which control the new welfare policies, have succeeded in reducing dependency beyond all expectations.

The American Institute for Full Employment (AIFE) has been both a pioneer and a major force in developing, promoting, and implementing

the work-based approach to welfare reform. Its Full Employment Program has been enacted into law or implemented without legislation in 12 states, and the first three to fully implement it – Wisconsin, Mississippi, and Oregon – have experienced caseload declines of 77 percent, 75 percent, and 60 percent, respectively.

The Principles of Full Employment

The principles of the Full Employment Program are simple and tested:

- Quick and permanent attachment to work.
- Emphasis on private sector jobs.
- Temporary wage subsidies for those not immediately qualified for unsubsidized employment.
- Employment-related services (child care, transportation) until wages are high enough for self-sufficiency.
- Adequate counseling and mentoring during the transition.

The Integrated Full Employment Program

Building on its successes in welfare reform, AIFE has recently developed the Integrated Full Employment Program (IFEP). It addresses a broad range of federal programs aimed at people able to work including, in addition to TANF, Food Stamps, Unemployment Insurance, Employment Related Child Care, and other food, housing, education, and service programs that have proliferated since 1965. IFEP integrates these programs at the state level and ties their benefits to work.

How many low-income persons and families will respond positively to these reforms? Welfare caseload declines under TANF are illuminating. Two states have experienced caseload declines of more than 80 percent and seventeen additional states have experienced declines of more than 60 percent, all from TANF recipients who represent the most welfare-welfare-dependent and least job-ready part of the low-income population. AIFE estimates that 90 to 95 percent of the below-poverty population can be moved successfully into long-term above-poverty level jobs with advancement potential.

And what about the remaining five to ten percent? AIFE's answer is skill-specific education. Not the old model of the failed Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), but locally controlled job-oriented training for available work, coupled with temporary aid tailored to individual needs. And no more entitlements!

The resources to carry out such a program are already available, but need to be reallocated. Excess TANF funds from the TANF caseload declines can be used without alteration. UI trust fund surpluses can be diverted by Congress for these purposes. And Workforce Investment Act (ex-JTPA) funds can be used for incumbent worker training vouchers to move people up the job ladder.

AIFE consultants stand ready to tailor its IFEP to the specific needs of any state as the next generation of public assistance reform gathers momentum.

JOBS Plus Letter Comments
March 16, 2001

AFS DISTRICT

1. **Employer:** "As volunteers in Tillamook County Habitat for Humanity, we have seen many young housewives who need to enter the job market get excellent office training in our affiliate office. We couldn't have built 6 houses in 3 ½ years without their help in logistics – volunteers can't provide the constancy they do..." Elaine Hungerford, Habitat for Humanity, Tillamook

2. **Employer:** "We've hired an employee through this program and for us it's been an absolute Godsend! In addition, rather than the State just handing over money each month to keep someone out of poverty, it's invested in the future of the recipient and gotten them out of the house and into the workplace where self esteem can be nurtured." Sherry Mezzie, Yours Truly Caterers, Portland

Participant: "In 1999 my employer sold his company and I was let go. I was out of work for almost six months. I heard about JOBS Plus and within 10 days I had a good job. I think JOBS Plus gave me that little extra boost I needed to get that job. Now, 18 months later, I am the one interviewing prospective new employees." Chris Reese, Dennis Moving and Storage, Lake Oswego

3. **Employer:** "...we have been able to hire and train six different employees who have since been placed in permanent positions with other companies, positions that pay a living wage and provide benefits. We are proud of our record, and feel good about the opportunity to help people move from public assistance to the private sector and to provide for their families." Phil Lackaff, Advance Personnel Services, Salem

Employer: "...I've used the JOBS Plus program several times when looking for 'key' employees. All employees that we've hired through the program have stayed on in permanent, productive positions. It has helped me find good people quickly. I value this resource." Patrick Glancy, Pacific Custom Products, Salem

4. **Jobs skills trainer:** "Let me describe a typical client: early twenties – early thirties, two or more children, never worked, unhealthy relationships, transportation in unreliable, low self-esteem, health issues and the majority have no work experience or a little as a housekeeper. Many of these individuals have been on public assistance for many years. JOBS Plus provides jobs training to these individuals allowing them to learn new skills, they gain a positive self-esteem, take care of their families needs and be contributing members of the community... They gain a respect for themselves that is wonderful to see develop because then they can do so much more." Christine L. Bellavita, Oregon Coast Community College, JOBS Plus skill trainer, TANF Clients, Waldport

Employer: "I am a District Manager for Farmers Insurance Group. Our agents are independent contractors. It is nearly impossible to afford staffing, while starting a new business. This program has allowed our new agents to afford employees, and therefore enables them successfully to grow their business. In our entrepreneurial society, this program helps not just the person on unemployment and the government, but also the small business owner." Jennifer Marshall, District Manager, Corvallis

Employer: "It has been a great program for us, and we have hired 3 out of 4 employees through JOBS Plus." Steve Allen, Allen & Sons Sealcoating, Newport

Employer: "I don't know where I found the courage to get a second mortgage and then actually start a business from scratch, but I did. I could have applied for welfare and I qualified for food stamps, but I did neither...Those first months were grueling...I needed an employee desperately to say the least, but I couldn't afford even paying me a salary... What a 'God sent' JOBS plus has been to me. It wasn't very long before I could leave [my JOBS Plus employee] in the office alone and I was able to go out into the community and grow my business...[and] I am able to be with my children in the evenings because of JOBS Plus. How grateful I am!!!" Gaylyn Gelleagante, GoFigure Salon, Albany

5. **Employer:** "The two employees we have hired through this program have done a great job for us. They were able to quickly pick up several clerical skills that will help them as they seek permanent employment." Kristi Berg, Office Manager Admissions, University of Oregon, Eugene

Participant: "...I have had to make a career shift from being a therapeutic pre-school teacher, to a more sedentary office position. JOBS Plus has given me the work experience I needed to find a position that will meet my needs. Working in a law office has also exposed me to other ways to use my past experience and prevent costly re-training...benefits that most likely would have been funded by State government sources." Jennifer Orchard, Legal Assistant, Eugene

Employer: "Although the person receiving is no longer employed by us, she has a better job. The schooling she received helped make her employable." Molly Hansford, Controller, Visions Technology Education, Eugene

6. **Participant:** "While receiving Unemployment Insurance and going through what could have been a devastating career ending nightmare, instead I received training, a paycheck and the dignity of self-sufficiency. My employer would have been unable to hire me and keep me in the position while the sales caught up to my salary if it wasn't for him receiving the subsidy. Additionally, I have a scholarship fund of \$800 available for me to get further training, good for a period of up to 5 years." Karla Sinclair, Legal Assistant, Roseburg

Participant: "I had been unemployed (for months) in search of a permanent job until I came across the JOBS Plus program via the Oregon Unemployment [sic] Department's web site. I immediately called the office in Roseburg to verify that I was eligible to participate, which was confirmed. To make a long story short, thanks to JOBS Plus I am now employed." Marilyn R. Marshall, Tenmile

7. **Employer:** "Our current staff has three JOBS Plus graduates, one is our kitchen supervisor. [Name] began on the program as a dishwasher in August 1997. He has progressed and continued his training until now he earns over \$11 per hour plus benefits. The JOBS Plus program has allowed us the opportunity to give employees that extra training time that can be beneficial in their overall performance and advancement." Beverly Rice and Gary Goodson, Pancake Mill Restaurant owners, North Bend

Employer: "...coming from a state that does not have this program, I can assure you that JOBS Plus is very beneficial. When someone is on welfare, it is very debilitating, and the incentive of having a job to go to can break the cycle of familial welfare. Many people remain on welfare because they honestly have never seen anyone outside their immediate family hold jobs and act in a responsible way. With JOBS Plus intervention, the cycle is broken as individuals see themselves as employable and learn new skills." Kim Maxwell, Educational/Employment Specialist, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, Coos Bay

8. **Participant:** "I was an Unemployment Insurance recipient following a car accident, which left me unable to return to my usual employment in health care. The JOBS Plus Program was of great benefit to me (and my two kids) and I didn't need to get welfare assistance (which I needed in the past). I received training (I have college education with no on the job experience), a paycheck and the dignity of self-sufficiency. The subsidy employers receive enabled me to have this job opportunity and my new employer, a small business, to have a much needed office worker... The JOBS Plus program gave me an opportunity to gain on the job experience and be trained in updated office skills." Janet M. Shults, Office Manager, American whitewater products, Central Point

Employer: "Of the nine JOBS Plus participants working with [name of organization] over the last couple of years, four have been hired as regular full-time employees. The four were hired for positions within the agency other than the original JOBS Plus position." Deborah Tipton, Human Resources Manager, Community Works, Medford

Participant: "...like me, so many people have been benefited with it [JOBS Plus], I was hired and never have to go back to [a] welfare program." Carmen McFarland, Grants Pass

Employer: "We have used the program and are currently looking at using it again to create a position in Klamath Falls." Eugene Schulke, Hometown Mortgage, Medford

Employer: "I have used this program for the last 5 years...I have trained & hired many people that would not have been qualified to enter my profession. Several of my trainees have gone off to start a business of their own because of the training they received." Sherri Smith, Kids Kastle Day Care owner, Grants Pass

10. **Participant:** "I am a single mother of two small children and have been recently hired in a wonderful position through the JOBS Plus program. At this time I am currently off any State assistance." Stormie Nelson, Prineville

Employer: "The JOBS Plus program has been very beneficial to my company...It has allowed me flexibility that I normally may not have enjoyed, and as a result saved my company a considerable amount of money, while offering opportunities to those that otherwise may not have applied for our position." Trevor T. Berg, Dearborn Classics, Bend

Employer: "I'm on my 4th JOBS Plus employee. My first now has his own business. [Numbers] 2 & 3 are still in my employment and running crews." B.J. Fisher, Construction Company owner, Redmond

11. **Employer:** "JOBS Plus is a program that you need to be involved in to truly understand it. It is about people working and caring about people, accepting them as they are into the work place and helping them to be all that they can be." Susan McDaniel, Court Operations Supervisor, Klamath Falls

Participant: "I came back to the work force after a serious injury and lots of therapy. I could not find a job on my own. I was on food stamps and getting a State grant. I'm a single mother of two wonderful teenage boys. I was at the lowest a person could get. I had some computer training but not enough for this modern world of today...after many weeks of computer training and upgrade, I got a job. With the JOBS Plus position and computer classes I now have better people skills, computer skills and upgraded on areas that needed improvement. The program is wonderful..." Ruth Truppner, secretary, Klamath Falls

Employer: "I am a small business owner in a small town and have used JOBS Plus more than once when I needed an employee but couldn't afford to pay them while they were getting their training. It gets the employee off welfare and gives them an opportunity to learn a trade..." Diane L. Perkey, Diane's Corner cafe owner, Lakeview

12. **Employer:** "The JOBS Plus program was brought to my attention and I decided to give it a chance. I had varied success with the first couple employees I tried, however in each case I benefited and so did the employee. I currently have a young lady working for me that successfully completed the JOBS Plus program...[she] has been full time since November 2000 and has subsequently been given a raise. I intend to place her in school to get her insurance license and she will probably use her JOBS Plus education funds to pay for the schooling." Quinten C. Blinn, Blinn Insurance Agency, Hermiston

Employer: "This program is invaluable in allowing untrained employees [to] get the skills they need to land jobs and get off public assistance. Not only has our agency benefited by using JOBS Plus trainees, but many of our trainees have been able to get and keep jobs in the community..." Kricket Nicholson, Executive Director, Domestic Violence Services, Pendleton

Employer: "I personally have used people from the program here in my real estate office several times. The person I have now is wonderful, but was almost unemployable because of her lack of job skills. She is so excited as she learns to become computer literate and accomplishes many new skills that she is learning. She just beams and her family is so excited for her and very proud." Donna M Bieber, Broker/Owner, Century 21 Real Estate, Hermiston

Employer: "This program has been a tremendous help to us as a small business, and the men on the program have greatly benefited as well. We definitely would not have been able to hire them without the JOBS Plus program." Jim Schroeder, Owner, Northwest Building Contractors, Athena

13. **Employer:** "Here in Wallowa County, unemployment is among the highest in the State. This program has helped [name] provide jobs. Most of the employees who began working for our company through the JOBS Plus program still work for us, and at higher income levels." Jeff Harman, Owner, Joseph Bronze Art, manufacturer, Joseph

Employer: "I hired my first JOBS Plus person in late October. I pay her \$? an hour more than required, so you can see we're not 'using' her. I have nothing but good things to say about the person and the program...I have yet another position opening up next week and based on past performance, I will try to fill it through the JOBS Plus program." Carolyn Stout, Manager, Grant County Fair and Rodeo, John Day

14. **Employer:** "JOBS Plus helped [us- public agency] stay open during the budget cuts of the '90's. I would be interested in seeing it continued, even under revised conditions." Faith Adams, Librarian, Nyssa Public Library, Nyssa
15. **Employer:** "The program gave our company the financial incentive to take a chance on individuals that normally may not have made it through our screening process. These individuals did not come with the computer/technical skills, clerical skills or even all the social skills necessary to be successful in the working world. What they did come with was the overwhelming desire to make their life better. That desire, coupled with training time has developed positive employees for our company. In all cases we have had successful relationships. Of the six JOBS Plus employees we have hired, three are still working for our company at a salary range of \$25,000-\$40,000, two moved away, and one went on to finish college and develop a new career path." Lauren Dailey, CFO, The Studio Resource, Inc., Clackamas

"I saw a need and I realized that, through the periods of struggles in my life, there was always someone there to help me."

Anita Moore



Woman *to* Woman

MENTORING

By VALEREE LANE
H&N Lifestyles Editor

During the past 18 months, a quiet revolution has been staged in the Klamath Basin.

A campaign to provide resources for citizens who would normally be

his belief in the women's program and continues to support its efforts, he knew that a man could not meet or understand the



Kim
Brooks
— are
prepar-

for citizens who would normally be marginalized was launched in the Woman-to-Woman Mentoring program and the success of the endeavor is being enjoyed by participants and organizers alike.

"We respect ourselves more and know that we are better than other people thought we were," said Melissa Watley, a recent graduate of the program and now training to be a mentor herself.

Many of the participants are new to the workforce, having previously provided for their families via public assistance. Through the Jobs Plus program, which provides employment training opportunities in partnership with government agencies and local employers, many of the women are in a place they never imagined being and are in need of additional emotional support.

"It's darn hard to make it on minimum wage," said mentor Amy Hathaway. "These ladies are in need of additional social support and this network is vital to their success."

The statewide welfare-to-work initiative focused on the self-actualizing need for human beings to be engaged in productive work, but there was no means to provide a resource for the newly employed to acquire the life skills necessary to maintain employment and improve their circumstances.

In 1989, Robert Kingzett, Jeld-Wen's assistant director of public affairs, was touring the United States providing information to others about Oregon's Jobs Plus program. In his travels, he found a non-profit women's program in Kansas City, Kan., which focused on the total person — addressing employment needs, development of functional skills for every-day life and providing the network of support necessary to assure success.

Everyone needs someone to lean on at one point or another.

"We begin by addressing the issue of self-esteem," Kingzett said, following the monthly Women-to-Women meeting June 16, which also marked the inaugural meeting for Men-to-Men Mentoring. "Without improved self-esteem, these people's problems become insurmountable."

While Kingzett is quick to affirm

understand the needs of a woman the way another woman could. Enter Anita Moore, an employment specialist with Jobs Plus, working for Jeld-Wen under the umbrella of the American Institute for Full Employment.

"I saw a need and I realized that, through the periods of struggles in my life, there was always someone there to help me," Moore said, explaining her initiative to take the program from concept to reality.

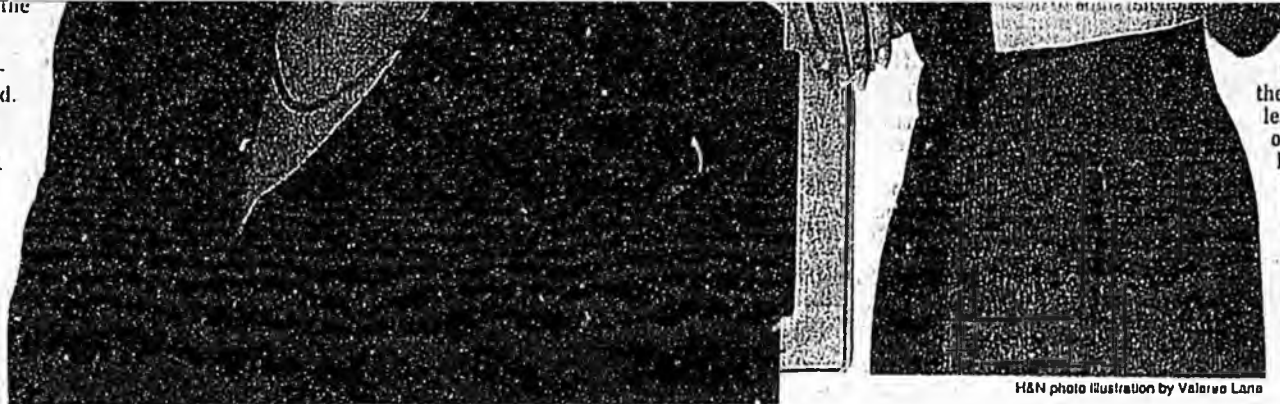
"Anita has done a fantastic job putting this together," Kingzett said. "There is very little cost involved, because it is all volunteer and Anita is able to get donations when necessary. She does this over and above her regular job and it is successful because she has the gift of being able to see the needs of the whole person."

She has been assisted in the facilitation of the program by Tracy Jeffers of Adult and Family Services and a board of directors dedicated to helping others improve their lot in life.

Moore said that there has been a conscious decision for the program to be run on a basis of volunteerism and requests for goods and services when needed. "It takes us back to the days when communities pulled together to help each other and did not rely on the government for help," she said, noting applying for a grant would be limiting the possibilities of the program.

"If we apply for a grant, how can we go to other communities and say: 'This is how it can be done?'" said Moore, who has traveled to other Oregon cities in recent weeks discussing the program with those interested in making a difference in their own communities.

"People do not participate



H&N photo illustration by Valeria Lana

preparing to share the lessons they've learned with others. Cool helped lead the home decoration discussion June 16, a marked improvement from her initial days in the program when she seldom

Mentoring makes a difference

Many of the participants in a statewide meeting held last fall were concerned that working with the harder-to-place portion of public assistance recipients will require more training and mentoring.

One means of addressing the need is a program called Woman-to-Woman, which was developed in Klamath Falls 18 months ago. The program was designed to help women develop skills that will lead to better job retention. Its focus is to develop self-esteem and self-sufficiency and assist women in setting goals for themselves.

The program involves women mentoring women outside the workplace and draws on community volunteers to partner and

meet weekly with specific participants.

Participants also take monthly classes in a wide array of topics including budgeting, time management and personal presentation. In Klamath Falls, the program also partners with YMCA so participants have easily accessible child care. After one year, participants graduate and become mentors for the next group of participants.

The program has now grown large enough that applications are being taken in advance. A men's program is now underway, too.

Those interested in participating, either as a mentor or being mentored, may call Anita Moore, 850-2600 ext. 2, or Tracy Jeffers, 883-5511 ext. 211.

because they are drawn to some political agenda," Hathaway said. "They believe in the ideal of helping others and in turn helping themselves."

Debi Catron, another mentor, says the program is very good for her. "It gives you a reality check and makes you assess what you are doing, as you are encouraging someone else to set goals and plan," she said, noting

that everyone needs a mentor.

"I don't believe there is a time in my life when I don't need mentoring," she said. "People in my life have taught me and I may never be able to repay them directly, but I can pass the knowledge on to someone who will pass it on to someone else and we will all benefit."

Watley and other recent graduates — Toni Clark, Charity Cool and

spoke, according to Moore.

"I've never been a people person, but (speaking in front of others) is not as difficult as it would have been before," Cool said. "The mentoring has been very beneficial to me. It's been great and a lot of fun. Tracy and Anita have been very supportive and we've all become good friends."

Shelley Ryan-Aungst is a mentor and a member of the mentoring board of directors. She says that she is excited about the progress she's seen the women make and can relate to some of the alienation they may feel, as she is disabled.

"I love the program. It is so wonderful. Here are some ladies with big battles in life and they are receiving the support they need to keep going," she said. A recent article she wrote for the program's newsletter focused on Toni Clark, who recently was married and is managing a video store.

"It's been a lot of hard work for her, but her life is really coming together," said Ryan-Aungst.

Catron notes that the weekly contact outside the monthly group meetings is integral to the women's success. "Something devastating can happen in one day, but they are able to call and talk things through."

"It's an extremely trusting environment," Hathaway said. "Some of these women are overcoming incredible obstacles, like drug and alcohol addiction, but they are learning they can do a lot more than they gave themselves credit for and have support in doing it."



RECORDS CERTIFICATION



I, the undersigned, an employee of the State of Alaska, do hereby certify that the microfilm images on this microform are accurate reproductions of the original records of the State of Alaska as accumulated during the regular course of business, and that it is the established policy and practice of this State to microfilm its records and to dispose of the original documents after microfilm reproductions have been made.

William J. Carter

Signature of Camera Operator

10/14/2003

Date

OVERVIEW

AK

NATIVE

HEALTH

BOARD

HOUSE HESS COMMITTEE
Presentation Material
By
Alaska Native Health Board Representatives

February 19, 2002
4:00 p.m.

OPENING REMARKS

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, Representative Fred Dyson, and all of the House HESS Committee Members. On behalf of the full board of directors of the Alaska Native Health Board, we thank you for providing us the opportunity to provide you an overview of some of the Alaska Native Health Board 2002 & 2003 Statewide Priorities.

As you may already know, the Alaska Native Health Board is the Statewide Native Health Advocacy Organization with membership to include all 638 Compact members, large and small across our Great State. We represent a well-organized, complicated and intricate health care system that many, many Alaska residents, Native & Non-Native rely on for their daily health care. The Board uses a comprehensive definition of health, which includes water and sewer, infrastructure, prevention and education. We feel strongly that all matters concerning Alaska Natives, Rural Alaska and all public health matters affect our ability to deliver the best health care possible and thus, we come before you today to discuss our State Priorities, which include: Suicide Prevention, Rural Sanitation, Rural Community Runway Lights, Support for Long Term Care for Elders, Support for Behavioral Health Services Programs, Maintaining the Medicaid Program and the Denali KidCare Program.

RURAL SANITATION

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, the most significant needs in rural Alaska with respect to water and sewer systems and solid waste management include the need to:

1. To have the ability to plan and pay for on-going operation and maintenance systems. To do this we must maintain state-funded programs, such as the Remote Maintenance Worker (RMW) and Rural Utility Business Advisor Program (RUBA).

The Alaska Native Health Board encourages the legislature and state government to look at creative alternatives for increasing the capacity of the RUBA program by supporting contractual or partnership relationships with organizations that can provide the needed training and assistance to rural communities. ANHB would be happy to assist in this effort and provide advice, technical support as well as a communication network unlike any currently existing in the State.

ANHB further encourages the legislature to increase funding to an adequate level to meet demand. Our populations are growing, current systems must be maintained to keep up with the growth and expansion and old systems are being replaced with more complicated systems that require higher levels of expertise and technical abilities.

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation's Remote Maintenance Worker Program assists rural communities with:

- Sanitation facility operation and maintenance
- Operator and utility manager training
- Emergency troubleshooting
- Repair of water and wastewater systems,
- And Sanitation facility project assistance.

2. Mr. Chairman, we must also have the technical, financial, and managerial capacity to plan for the sanitation needs so that communities can manage and operate their systems in an effective manner for the expected life of the system. Without this, the investment the State and our organizations have made or will make will be put in jeopardy. The Alaska Native Health Board has a long-standing committee, The Rural Alaska Sanitation Coalition or RASC as you may know them, that has the ability to advise us, the State, the Governor's Rural Sanitation Council and others interested in what they have to offer in regards to Statewide planning, financial funding availability and expert, rural sanitation management. Alaska Native Health Board encourages the State Legislators to support the continued funding for RASC through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.
3. We must also have adequate funding and financial support to plan, design, construct, and operate and maintain community based rural sanitation projects for sewer and water infrastructure systems and solid waste management. For these efforts, the Alaska Native Health Board requests State Legislators to take action on:
 - Support the Governor's Council on Rural Sanitation's efforts to recognize the need for separate funding for solid waste management in communities throughout Alaska.
 - Designate funding for solid and hazardous waste management and projects that does not compete or take away from existing funding for rural sanitation.

IMPLEMENT RURAL COMMUNITY RUNWAY LIGHTS

As you know, Mr. Chairman and Committee members, and probably as you or your family members have experienced in rural Alaska there are many communities without adequate runways, runway lights, let alone Medevac capability. We urge State Legislators to prioritize and plan for placing runway lights, beacons, and instrument approach lights in the remote communities with runways.

The dependency on rural Alaska runways was emphasized on September 11, 2001. The Alaska Statewide Health Care Delivery System was crippled when the 'no-flight regulation' was implemented due to the terrorist attacks on the United States. In order to implement an effective Statewide Emergency Preparedness Plan, basic needs such as runway lights should be provided to ensure that residents in rural Alaska are provided Medevac service when life and death situations occur.

Over 200 Alaska communities do not have road access to the nearest inpatient medical facilities. Over ½ of the user population within the Alaska Area Native Health Service live in these rural communities. The lack of adequate runway lights is one of the most critical factors affecting aviation access to these communities.

There are 202 Alaskan communities that rely entirely on air transport to the nearest inpatient medical facilities. Runway lights are provided at 113 airports at these remote communities. There are beacons at 94 of the airports. 12 airports have instrument approach lights. There are not lights at 63 airports.

The Alaska Native Health Board requests the State Legislature to become a partner in advocating and funding Alaska's Rural Community Airports. It truly is a life and death matter.

MAINTAIN MEDICAID AND DENALI KIDCARE PROGRAM FUNDING

It is true that we, as Indian Health Service beneficiaries are a large user of the Medicaid and Denali KidCare Program. But did you also know that this fact has a positive impact on our States economy? The State of Alaska receives 100% reimbursement for IHS beneficiaries that utilize both of these programs. The positive effects from this reimbursement include:

- Broader user-access to the non-native population; and,
- Creates employment opportunities in the private sector that would otherwise not be available.

The detrimental effects of cutting the programs would be:

- 17% of the employees within the private healthcare sector are funded due to the Medicaid and Denali KidCare Programs. Cutting back the programs will begin an unhealthy cycle. It equals a reduction in jobs, individuals losing their employment, then those families seeking to access these very programs due to the loss of private health care insurance and unemployment.
- Reducing the Medicaid and Denali KidCare Program would also actively harm people receiving care by eliminating services for adults; pregnant women, and children
- Lastly, reimbursement to providers would also be reduced.

In all these incidents reduce access to healthcare, and are detrimental to our health. *The Alaska Native Health Board strongly urges the House HESS Committee to support maintaining the Medicaid and Denali KidCare Programs.*

SUPPORT FOR LONG-TERM CARE FOR ELDERS

We want our elder's home. The last years of life should be with family and loved ones. The State of Alaska Division of Senior Services program for Rural Long-Term Care is attempting to address this need. Kay Branch and her staff work to increase the number of assisted living homes in Rural Areas and to ensure broad availability of other home and community based programs statewide. The benefits of these programs to the State of Alaska and our rural communities are that:

- They are more cost effective than placing elders in a skill nursing home.
- They keep elders in their communities or region and close to family, which keeps a community whole and increases the well being of the family; and,
- Provides for increased economic development in our rural communities through sustainable jobs for village residents.

The Alaska Native Health Board requests the Legislature support this program through:

- *Increased funding to state housing programs for senior and special needs housing projects;*
- *Increasing or a maintaining funding for services to elders through the Alaska Commission on Aging Programs and Personal Care Service programs;*
- *Additional funding for Medicaid waiver services; and,*
- *Increase funding allocations for the State Personal Care Services Program to allow for higher pay and benefit packages for worker.*

SUPPORT FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICE PROGRAMS

The Alaska Native Health Board encourages the legislature to support the implementation of a Behavioral Health Aide Program into Rural Alaska.

We suffer from extremely high rates of alcoholism and other substance abuse dependencies. We suffer from escalated rates of suicide. We know in our hearts that we can help ourselves. Our goal with the Behavioral Health Aide Program is to model it after our highly successful Community Health Aide Program. We want to train and hire our own community members to assist in the healing our families and individuals, like only we know how. We need the support from our Alaska State Legislature to endorse our vision.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

As mentioned before, suicide incidents among our family and loved ones is 274% higher than the national average and 117% higher than other Native American Groups. On average there are 46 suicides per year or a suicide in a native community every 8 days. These are our brothers, our uncles, our sisters, and our aunts; sometimes our children and our mothers and fathers.

We strongly encourage the legislature to increase funding to address the high rate of Suicide in Alaska through prevention.