

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 2007-2008

SHES

12

# Automated Hospital HAI Scorecard

Nosocomial Infection Monitor (NIM v2006) Scorecard  
01/0000 - 7/01/0000

Export to Excel    All Printable Versions

Unit	Wound	Deep	Other	Wound	Deep	Other	Total	Wound	Deep	Other	Total	Occupancy
Acquired Location	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	NIM (%)	Admissions
1 GU07	10 (15%)	4 (9%)	30 (20%)	31 (20%)	9 (9%)	7 (7%)	106	52	86	1,741	0%	
2 G006	7 (7%)	17 (12%)	40 (43%)	64 (40%)	10 (10%)	7 (7%)	141	89	82	1,888	0%	
3 V003	25 (27%)	10 (11%)	30 (32%)	11 (12%)	10 (11%)	7 (8%)	83	89	74	891	0%	
4 V002	11 (15%)	1 (2%)	27 (35%)	12 (16%)	10 (13%)	0 (0%)	68	73	79	1,810	0%	
5 Y001	10 (10%)	2 (2%)	22 (20%)	14 (13%)	3 (3%)	4 (4%)	56	48	48	891	0%	
6 BCN	10 (20%)	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	4 (8%)	4 (8%)	48	37	30	700	0%	
7 BGJ7	1 (12%)	1 (12%)	11 (30%)	1 (12%)	0 (0%)	7 (19%)	43	37	30	490	0%	
8 V001	2 (8%)	2 (8%)	17 (65%)	7 (27%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	48	38	38	890	0%	
9 WJ J00	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	11 (40%)	0 (0%)	2 (7%)	0 (0%)	27	28	28	633	0%	
10 BMT0G	0	0	7 (50%)	1 (20%)	0	1 (50%)	13	13	13	1,373	1%	
11 CMV C	0	0	2 (20%)	1 (20%)	0	0 (0%)	10	8	8	1,191	1%	
12 V002	2 (8%)	0	0	2 (8%)	0	1 (4%)	5	4	4	389	1%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>277</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>890</b>					

Unpopulated a unique patient, add date when the location.

\*For patients in multiple locations on the estimated acquired date, the NIM is counted once for each of the locations.

All Locations	Wound (%)	Deep (%)	Other (%)	Wound (%)	Deep (%)	Other (%)	Total
(n = 890)	14 (16%)	14 (16%)	712 (80%)	121 (14%)	75 (8%)	52 (6%)	890

\*For patients in multiple locations on the estimated acquired date, the NIM is counted only once.

Total NIM: 890

Total Hospital Admissions with NIM acquired during the duration: 01/0000 - 7/01/0000: 5,873

Total Hospital Admissions (in locations selected for NIM analysis): 5,873

Total NIM / Total Hospital Admissions: 5.77%

Total Hospital Admissions with NIM / Total Hospital Admissions: 5.77%

Display Chart

Display Chart allows a graphic depiction of house-wide rates

# Goal Setting

What are the implications of a reduction in the HAI rate?

Rate Goal	% Decrease	Total # NIM Decrease	Admission With NIM Decrease	LOS Decrease	Cost Decrease	Improvement to Bottom Line Profitability
4.42%	5.4%	61	47	264.1	\$285,166	\$286,047
4.17%	10.7%	122	94	532.1	\$418,332	\$593,014
3.92%	16.2%	192	141	790.2	\$815,498	\$889,521
3.67%	21.4%	243	187	1,064.2	\$830,664	\$1,186,828
3.42%	26.8%	304	234	1,338.3	\$1,025,838	\$1,482,535
3.17%	32.1%	365	281	1,596.4	\$1,238,796	\$1,779,842

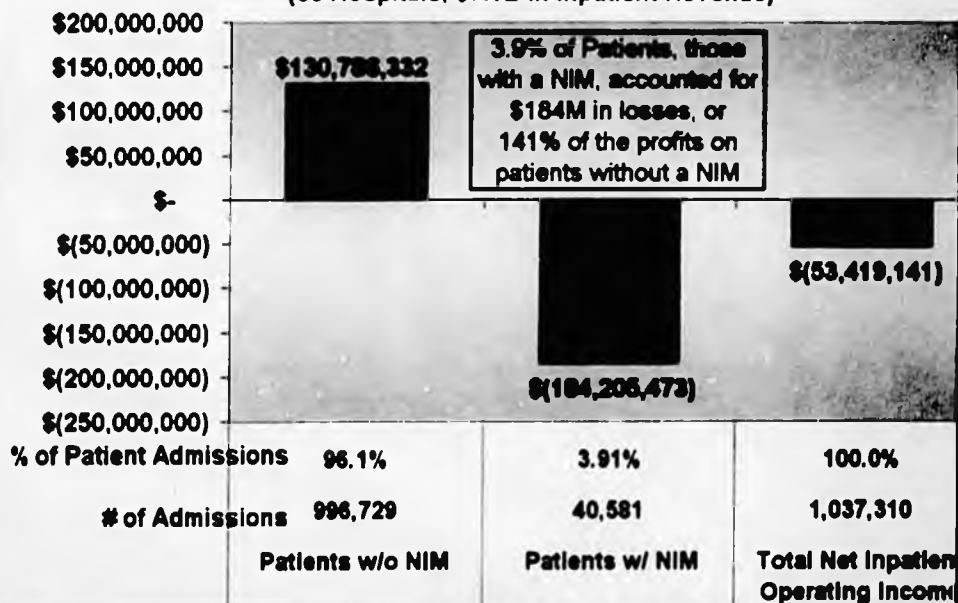
**1,019,161 Admissions**

NIM Set	Number	Frequency	DRG	Cumulative	DRG Adjusted	Cumulative	DRG Adjusted	Cumulative
			Adjusted	DRG Adjusted	Profit/Loss	DRG Adjusted	DRG Adjusted	
			Variable Cost	Variable Cost	Profit/Loss	Profit/Loss	LOS	DRG Adjusted
								LOS
urine(1)	13,243	32.42%	\$3,228	\$4,742,878	(\$1,057)	(\$67,797,918)	4.39	58,084
blood(1)	4,733	11.59%	\$8,096	\$36,319,819	(\$4,859)	(\$21,771,242)	8.13	38,485
resp(1)	4,324	10.59%	\$7,087	\$30,642,712	(\$5,582)	(\$22,162,978)	6.46	27,912
wound(1)	4,314	10.56%	\$4,161	\$17,650,141	(\$3,804)	(\$11,252,385)	4.94	21,290
stoc(1)	1,706	4.18%	\$4,389	\$7,468,342	(\$3,325)	(\$5,596,314)	5.19	8,659
blood(1).urine(1)	979	2.43%	\$8,885	\$5,658,774	(\$5,356)	(\$5,821,701)	10.33	10,116
other(1)	749	1.83%	\$4,227	\$3,165,741	(\$2,835)	(\$1,939,962)	5.11	3,830
urine(2)	736	1.80%	\$7,274	\$5,353,636	(\$2,395)	(\$4,412,630)	8.98	6,808
ent(1)	566	1.39%	\$5,264	\$2,975,281	(\$3,958)	(\$2,050,293)	5.46	3,000
abscess(1)	558	1.37%	\$3,542	\$1,978,332	(\$1,830)	(\$933,239)	4.98	2,778
blood(1).resp(1)	528	1.29%	\$19,416	\$10,251,729	(\$11,198)	(\$5,643,717)	14.18	7,486
resp(1).urine(1)	480	1.18%	\$14,029	\$6,733,650	(\$10,810)	(\$4,875,212)	11.49	5,517
blood(2)	474	1.16%	\$16,180	\$7,659,983	(\$7,569)	(\$3,481,651)	16.16	7,867
gi(1)	399	0.98%	\$5,326	\$2,124,942	(\$3,934)	(\$1,455,881)	5.88	3,378
resp(2)	385	0.89%	\$19,812	\$7,231,433	(\$1,159)	(\$4,460,920)	16.74	8,111
eye(1)	340	0.83%	\$4,468	\$1,519,195	\$982	\$324,166	7.01	2,385
urine(1).wound(1)	324	0.79%	\$11,126	\$3,604,725	(\$1,588)	(\$2,117,214)	11.90	3,857
blood(1).wound(1)	255	0.62%	\$12,737	\$3,247,813	(\$10,276)	(\$2,354,135)	13.11	3,343
stoc(1).urine(1)	252	0.62%	\$6,869	\$1,730,959	(\$1,164)	(\$1,798,237)	9.04	2,279
wound(2)	224	0.55%	\$9,458	\$2,118,516	(\$1,103)	(\$1,377,698)	11.17	2,501
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>40,847</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$8,058</b>	<b>\$329,145,126</b>	<b>(\$1,182)</b>	<b>(\$251,899,214)</b>	<b>8.10</b>	<b>330,861</b>

*NIM Sets with < 5% occurrence rate are omitted from table but included in Grand Total row*

**Net Inpatient Operating Income**

(35 Hospitals; \$7.1B in Inpatient Revenue)





March 5, 2007

The Honorable Bettye Davis, Chair  
Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 30  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 62 (Stevens)—Support

Dear Chair Davis:

On behalf of the members of AARP in Alaska, we encourage you and your colleagues on the Senate Health, Education and Social Services Committee to support SB 62, authored by Senator Gary Stevens.

Nosocomial infections are infections that are acquired in a hospital. Depending on the facility, 6 to 17 % of hospitalized patients will acquire a new infection after hospitalization. Older patients are particularly at risk for contracting these infections due to the declines in their physiologic reserves and declining immunity, and because they commonly have longer hospital stays and multiple treatments.

SB 62, authored by Senate Majority Leader Gary Stevens, will create a task force to assess public reporting of health care associated infections. Consumers should have access to information about infection rates in health care facilities. The goal of SB 62 is not just to be able to provide helpful consumer information but to reduce infections. Some of these infections are systemic problems and, if known, our health professionals can address them and find ways to prevent them.

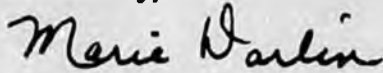
Reporting of and eventual reduction of medical infections is in the best interest of all Alaskans. SB 62 is good public health and good common sense.

AARP recommends an "AYE" vote on SB 62.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me (586-3637) or Patrick Luby, AARP Advocacy Director (907-762-3314).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Marie Darlin, Coordinator  
AARP Capital City Task Force  
415 Willoughby Avenue, Apt. 506  
Juneau, AK 99801  
586-3637 (voice)  
463-3580 (fax)

CC: Senator Joe Thomas  
Senator John Cowdery  
Senator Kim Elton  
Senator Fred Dyson  
Majority Leader Gary Stevens

**SB**

**65**

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: SB065-DHSS-HCS-03-06-07  
 Bill Version: SB 65  
 ( ) Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Dept. Affected: Health & Social Services  
 RDU Health Care Services  
 Component Medicaid Services

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title MEDICAL FACILITY CERTIFICATE OF NEED

Sponsor HUGGINS  
 Requester SENATE (HES)

Component No. 2077

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims	.	.	.	.	.	.
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	.	.	.	.	.	.

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES (0)</b>						
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
Other(Specify Type-do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2007) cost: \_\_\_\_\_

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2008 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

In state fiscal year 2006, the department paid \$1.06 billion in Medicaid claims for health care services. Approximately \$353 million of that amount was paid to health care facilities subject to the certificate of need program including hospitals, residential psychiatric treatment centers and nursing homes. Of the \$353 million, approximately 42% was expended from the state general fund. It is not possible to predict with any certainty the impacts of passage of the proposed legislation including the cost to the state through the Medicaid program. Therefore, an indeterminate fiscal note is being submitted. There will also be an indeterminate fiscal impact on Behavioral Health Medicaid Services and Division Support Services. (Cont. on page 2)

Prepared by: Janet Clarke  
 Division Finance and Management Services  
 Approved by: Karleen Jackson, Commissioner  
 Agency Department of Health and Social Services

Phone (907) 465-1630  
 Date/Time \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date 03/06/2007

**STATE OF ALASKA  
2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

**ANALYSIS CONTINUATION**  
(Cont. from page 1)

However, the experience of two states suggests that the rapid expansion of some specialty health care facilities and services may be linked to the elimination of certificate of need requirements (Presentation to the Department of Health and Social Services, August 2006, Mr. Dean Montgomery, HSANV). If Alaska's experience proved to be similar, significant additional Medicaid costs would likely result.

**STATE OF OHIO (Phased-out CON requirements for most services between 1995 and 1998)**

	Before CON Repeal	After CON Repeal	
Hospitals with cardiac catheterization	86	94 (2005)	
Hospitals with open heart surgery	38	55 (2005)	
Mobile or Free-Standing MRIs	23	126 (1999)	400 (2006)
Hospitals with fixed MRIs	35	150 (1999)	All (2006)
Freestanding Radiation Therapy Ctrs	10	28 (1999)	40 (2006)
Ambulatory Surgery Facilities	31	186 (2001)	224 (2006)
Outpatient Dialysis Stations	1,053	2,100 (2001)	3,087 (2006)

**STATE OF VIRGINIA (Eliminated CON requirements for most services between 1989 and 1992 - CON restored by Legislature in 1992)**

Hospitals with cardiac catheterization	26	44 (1992)
MRI Services (all settings)	28	58 (1992)
CT Services	86	103 (1992)
Radiation therapy facilities	27	44 (1992)
Lithotripsy services	19	27 (1992)

**Don Burrell**

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**From:**

**Sent:**

**To:**

**Subject:**

RECEIVED  
MAR 23 2007

akroses@alaska.net

Thursday, March 22, 2007 11:11 AM

Sen. Bettye Davis

SB65

SB65 is waiting to be heard by the HESS Committee. I was curious as to why there is a holdup? This bill would allow greater patient choice as to where they would receive services in the communities that they live. I have a daughter that has Down syndrome. She also has scoliosis. Right now, if she needs another MRI, I have no choice but to go to Fairbanks Memorial Hospital to receive it. My other choice is to go to Anchorage. I much prefer going to Anchorage which by the way, is actually less expensive for me to do so. If we had more choice in Fairbanks, the cost would go down not only for me but for my insurance as well. I am tired of FMH/Banner Health, and the government telling me where to go for my health services. Please let SB65 go through your committee.

Thank you

Janet Maddox

**adn.com**

Anchorage Daily News

Print Page

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**Imaging firm awaits ruling: Is it physicians' office?****SIMILAR: Court said no in another case, sparking a review of its status.**By BECKY STOPPA  
Anchorage Daily News*(Published: April 25, 2007)*

It could be another week before Imaging Associates of Providence learns whether it can continue operating its Mat-Su and Anchorage facilities or whether it must close both centers within the next six months.

The state health commissioner, Karleen Jackson, in August 2006 ordered Imaging Associates to file for a certificate of need, a permit issued by the state to health care facilities with capital investments of more than \$1 million.

Imaging Associates appealed and asked for an administrative hearing to overturn Jackson's order.

The certificate-of-need law applies only to independent diagnostic testing facilities, the group contends.

Imaging Associates, which is owned jointly by Providence Health Systems and a group of physicians, is exempt from the law because it is a physicians' office, the Providence group contends.

What's more, it contends, Jackson's August order to apply for the certificate violates state statutes, since she twice in 2006 deemed Imaging Associates a physicians' office and exempted it from the law.

Jackson's August decision came on the heels of a Fairbanks Superior Court ruling in another certificate-of-need case between Banner Health Systems, which owns and operates Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, and Alaska Open Imaging.

As with Imaging Associates, Jackson had determined Alaska Open Imaging's Fairbanks facility to be a physicians' office and exempted it from the certificate. The judge in that case, though, deemed the center an independent diagnostic testing facility and accused Jackson of misinterpreting the intent of Alaska's certificate-of-need laws.

The Alaska Department of Administrative Hearings had been expected to rule on Imaging Associates' appeal by mid April.

But Neil Roberts, an assistant from the department's Juneau office, said the decision will likely come sometime after the first week in May.

The Providence Mat-Su facility sits near Mat-Su Regional Medical Center on Woodworth Loop near Trunk Road and the Parks Highway.



The Imaging Associates of Providence building, a Providence partner, is located a few blocks south of the Mat-Su Regional Medical Center, which is the light-colored brick building in the background, off South Woodworth Loop. (JOSHUA BOROUGH / Daily News archive 2007)

Since it opened in June 2006, it has pulled diagnostic imaging customers away from the hospital, according to Norman Stephens, Mat-Su Regional's chief executive officer.

[Print Page](#)

[Close Window](#)

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# Anchorage Fracture & Orthopedic Clinic

3260 Providence Drive, Suite 200  
Anchorage, Alaska 99508  
(907)563-3145, Fax 561-3967  
www.afoc.com

March 19, 2007

LESLIE P. DEAN, MD  
*Surgery of the hand and wrist*

RICHARD W. GARNER, MD  
*Foot and ankle, arthroscopy  
Arthritis, total joint replacement*

JOHN E. LAPKASS, MD  
*Total joint replacement  
Arthroscopy and sports medicine*

RICHARD D. MCEVOY, MD  
*Knee and shoulder surgery  
Arthroscopy and sports medicine*

DECLAN R. NOLAN, MD  
*Non-surgical orthopedics*

DAVIS C. PETERSON, MD  
*Spinal disorders*

GEORGE D. RHYNEER, MD  
*Cartilage transplantation  
Knee and shoulder arthroscopy*

ADRIAN B. RYAN, MD  
*Knee and shoulder arthroscopy  
Hip and knee replacement*

UPSHUR M. SPENCER, MD  
*Spinal disorders  
Trauma*

STEPHEN S. TOWER, MD  
*Primary joint replacement  
Revision joint replacement*

THOMAS P. VASILEFF, MD  
*Knee arthroscopy, ACL reconstruction  
Hip and knee replacement*

TIMOTHY J. FAGGIONATO, PA-C  
DAVID P. WONCHALA, PA-C  
GREGG ZAPORZAN, PA-C  
*Physician Assistants*

BETH A. BALEN, MBA, FACMPE  
*Administrator*

Senator Bettye Davis  
State Legislature  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

RECEIVED  
MAR 23 2007

Re: State of Alaska Certificate of Need

Dear Senator Davis:

As a member of Anchorage Fracture and Orthopaedic Clinic and as a practicing orthopedic surgeon in the state of Alaska, I would like to strongly recommend that you seriously consider eliminating the requirement for a Certificate of Need.

My practice involves a moderate amount of surgery in the variety of facilities in the Anchorage area. It is not infrequent that I am required to shift from one institution to another in order to obtain reasonable access to operating room space and time. Without the requirement of a Certificate of Need other entities could develop small, efficient ambulatory outpatient surgery centers which would better meet the needs of practitioners such as myself. Doing so would appreciably improve access to care for my patients and allow more expeditious return to a productive lifestyle.

Please contact me with further concerns that you might have on this issue.

Respectfully yours,

Richard W. Garner, MD

RWG/lml

**Richard Benavides**

---

**From:** Sen. Charlie Huggins  
**Sent:** Tuesday, March 20, 2007 4:40 PM  
**To:** Sen. Battye Davis; Richard Benavides  
**Cc:** Michael Sica (Michael\_Sica@legis.state.ak.us)  
**Subject:** CON  
**Importance:** High

*Dear Sen. Davis and Richard,*

*I'd like to update you on the Certificate of Need situation since I last spoke with you. Governor Palin met with Commissioner Jackson last week and discussed CON and her support for a change and flexibility regarding the CON regulations. Governor Palin then called our office to let us know that Commissioner Jackson would be supporting our legislation, and offered assistance if needed.*

*Sen. Huggins and I have a meeting with Commissioner Jackson and Dept. of Law Asst. AG, Stacie Kraly, on Thursday, March 22, at 11:15am. It is my understanding that some amendments are going to be requested by the Dept. that will hopefully create a win-win situation for all.*

*I respectfully request a brief meeting with Sen. Davis, Sen. Huggins, and myself to discuss the Certificate of Need issues, answer any questions, and hopefully, obtain a firm date for a committee hearing in the next two weeks. Is it possible to set up a time for us to meet next Tuesday - anytime between 3pm and 5pm? Please contact me at extension 2661. I appreciate your consideration.*

*Karen Sawyer, Staff  
Office of Senator Charlie Huggins*

---

*907-465-2661 Direct  
907-465-3878 Main  
907-465-3265 Fax*

*Alaska State Capitol, Room 119  
Juneau AK 99801-1182  
Karen\_Sawyer@legis.state.ak.us*

**SB**

**76**

# SENATE COMMITTEE REPORT First Committee of Referral

DATE: 2/7/07

FURTHER: Finance

Date of 5-Day Notice: \_\_\_\_\_  
(in accordance with Uniform Rule 23)

DATE TURNED  
IN TO OFFICE: 3/13/07

Health, Education and Social Services Committee considered

SENATE BILL NO. 76

## SB 76 TUITION FOR CERTAIN CHILDREN

"An Act establishing a higher education savings program for eligible children who were placed in out-of-home care by the state; and providing for confidentiality of identifying information of a beneficiary under the program."

and recommends:

- be replaced with  SCS or  CS SB 76 (HES)
- adopt previous  SCS or  CS \_\_\_\_\_ (\_\_\_\_\_)
- attached amendment(s)
- adopt \_\_\_\_\_ Letter of Intent
- further referral to \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

<b>SENATE BILL:</b>	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title
<hr/>	
<b>HOUSE BILL:</b>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Same Title
<input type="checkbox"/>	Technical Title Change
<input type="checkbox"/>	New Title w/ SCR # _____

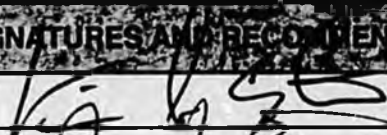

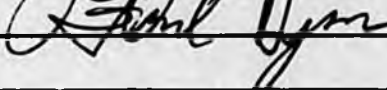
**NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):**

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet	Zero	FN#
UAA	3/2/07			✓	

**PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S):**

Department	Date	Fiscal	Indet	Zero	FN#

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS	PRINTED LAST NAME	DOES IT PASS?	DOES IT PASS?	NO RES.	AMEND.
	Elton	✓			
	Thomas	✓			
	Dyan	✓			
CHAIR: Betty Davis	DAVIS	X			

James F. Lynch  
Associate Vice President  
Phone: (907) 450-8121  
Fax: (907) 450-8023  
jim.lynch@alaska.edu

Butovich Building  
910 Yukon Drive, Suite 207  
PO Box 755120  
Fairbanks, AK 99775-5120

**UNIVERSITY**  
*of* **ALASKA**  
*Many Traditions One Alaska*

February 22, 2007

The Honorable Johnny Ellis  
State Senate  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

RE: SB 76, An Act establishing a higher education saving program for eligible children who were placed in out-of-home care by the state

Dear Senator Ellis,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 76 authorizing the creation of a higher education savings program for children placed in out-of-home care. Essentially the bill provides a structure and authorizes the Department of Health and Social Services to open accounts for selected individuals in the University of Alaska College Savings Plan with donated funds from private sources. As you may recall, I testified in support of a predecessor to this bill last year.

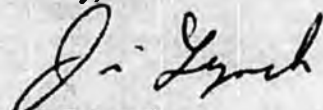
The UA College Savings Programs has been ranked as one of the top college savings programs in the country. The funds can be used for college or vocational/technical education at any eligible school across the country.

The motivation for starting the UA College Savings Plan was not merely financing education, but also the success of the "I have a dream" program in New York, where Eugene Lang awarded college scholarships to a class of "at-risk students" on the condition that they successfully complete high school. Changing the perspective of these children and their families regarding the opportunity to go to college had a major impact on success rate of those students. The primary goal of the college savings program has been to change the mindset for our children and their families from "If I go to college" to "When I go to college."

Alaska has been more successful than any other state at attracting low to modest income families into its college savings program (primarily due to the exclusive Permanent Fund Dividend Check-off for the UA College Savings Program). Approximately 56% of the participants in the Alaska plan are from households with family incomes of less than \$50,000 per year compared to 17% for our national plan participants. Almost half of families in the UA Plan are saving for a child who may be the first college graduate in their family while in our national plan that number is only about one fourth of the families.

I have strong hopes that SB 76 will extend this opportunity and aspiration to those who are perhaps less fortunate than most. The real value may not be in the college education, but the child's perception of what the future holds.

Sincerely,

  
James F. Lynch

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2007 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: SB76-UA-Sysbra-3-02-07  
 Bill Version: SB76  
 () Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: University of Alaska  
 Title Tuition for Certain Children RDU \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ Component \_\_\_\_\_  
 Requester Senator Ellis Component No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( )</b>						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2007), cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2008 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill would have no fiscal impact on the University.

Prepared by: Michelle Rizk  
 Division: University of Alaska  
 Approved by: Pat Pitney  
 Agency: University of Alaska

Phone 450-8187  
 Date/Time 3/2/07 5:00 PM  
 Date 3/2/2007

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Senate Labor and Commerce  
Committee, Chair

•  
Legislative Budget and Audit  
Committee

•  
Senate Rules Committee

•  
Committee on Committees



*While in Session*  
State Capitol, Rm. 9  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-3704  
Fax: (907) 465-2529

*While in Anchorage*  
716 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Ste. 440  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 269-0169  
Fax: (907) 269-0172

SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** February 16, 2007

**TO:** Senator Bettye Davis, Chair  
Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee

**FROM:** Senator Johnny Ellis *J.E.*

**RE:** Hearing Request for Senate Bill 76 *Tuition for Certain Children*

---

I am requesting that SB 76 *Tuition for Certain Children* be scheduled for a hearing in the Senate Health, Education & Social Services Committee at your earliest convenience.

SB 76 establishes the **ASPIRE** program, an acronym for Alaska's youth Succeed when People Invest Resources in Education. This program will give children in the custody of the State of Alaska an opportunity to pursue education and training after high school that they may not normally have.

Included in this packet:

- A current version of SB 76 25-LS0443\C (with suggested CS 25-LS0443\E)
- Sponsor Statement
- Sectional Analysis
- Letters of Support
- Anchorage Daily News Compass piece by Senator Ellis and Chip Wagoner of AK Conference of Catholic Bishops
- Voice of the Times article by Elise Patkotak
- Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study prepared by Casey Family Programs, Office of Children's Services, Tribal State Collaboration Group, and UAA School of Social Work
- Legislative Research Report titled "College Savings Plans for Foster Children"
- UA College Savings Plan Account Agreement

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Chair, Senate Labor and  
Commerce Committee  
•  
Legislative Budget and Audit  
Committee  
•  
Senate Rules Committee  
•  
Committee on Committees



*While in Session*  
State Capitol, Rm. 9  
Juneau, AK 99801  
(907) 465-3704  
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716 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Ste. 440  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
(907) 269-0169  
Fax: (907) 269-0172

SENATOR JOHNNY ELLIS

## SPONSOR STATEMENT SB 76

For children in long-term foster care, one of life's most significant hurdles occurs when the child "ages out" of the state's care. Foster children are often ill prepared for life as an adult, whether they choose to pursue education beyond high school or seek the necessary training to join the work force.

SB 76 establishes the **ASPIRE** program, an acronym for Alaska's youth **S**ucceed when **P**eople **I**nvest **R**esources in **E**ducation. This program will give children in the custody of the State of Alaska an opportunity to pursue education and training after high school that they may not normally have.

The purpose of the bill is to allow churches, community organizations, non-profits, businesses and individuals to establish education savings accounts in the name of foster children. This bill would create a program in which these organizations or individuals could contact the Alaska Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and make a donation that would establish a savings plan for a child who has been in out of home care for more than two years.

SB 76 would, upon request, allow the Office of Children's Services to release required information for the Alaska Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives to open a 529 savings account in the name of a foster child. The bill provides a confidentiality clause that would prohibit the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives from using the personal information of foster children for any purpose other than the establishment and maintenance of an education savings plan.

Under the provisions of this bill, the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives would be responsible for the promotion of the program throughout the state.

In accordance with the rules of the UA college savings program, the money in these accounts could be used not only for college and university tuition, but also for vocational training and other education related expenses. Under the terms of the UA college savings program, foster children could use this money at the eligible institution or training program of their choice.

Many of Alaska's foster children have faced extremely tough challenges, and deserve a program that encourages Alaskans to invest in their potential. This is important legislation for the children who represent the future of Alaska. I urge you to support the passage of SB 76.

25-LS0443VE  
Mischel  
2/13/07

**CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 76( )**  
**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**  
**TWENTY-FIFTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

**BY**

**Offered:**  
**Referred:**

**Sponsor(s): SENATORS ELLIS, McGuire, Davis**

**A BILL**  
**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act establishing a higher education savings program for eligible children who were**  
2 **placed in out-of-home care by the state; and providing for confidentiality of identifying**  
3 **information of a beneficiary under the program."**

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 **\* Section 1. AS 47.05 is amended by adding a new section to read:**

6 **Article 4. Alaska Higher Education Savings Program for Children.**

7 **Sec. 47.05.400. Higher education savings program. (a) The department shall**  
8 **administer a program to encourage investment by a person or entity in the higher**  
9 **education of eligible children in the state. The program must include**

10 (1) **a central office, dedicated to faith-based and community services,**  
11 **for development and marketing of the program;**

12 (2) **a mechanism for the department to establish and maintain a**  
13 **University of Alaska college savings plan under AS 14.40.802 - 14.40.817 for an**  
14 **eligible child who is a beneficiary of the program;**

1 (3) a process for identifying donors and eligible beneficiaries;

2 (4) a process for distributing nonidentifying information about an  
3 eligible beneficiary to a potential donor, including the age, sex, and general location of  
4 the beneficiary, unless the information readily leads to the identification of the eligible  
5 beneficiary;

6 (5) terms and conditions for participation in the program that are  
7 consistent with the University of Alaska college savings plan restrictions and with  
8 federal law pertaining to higher education savings accounts; and

9 (6) a procedure for monitoring success of the program, for record  
10 keeping, and for maintaining confidentiality of records as required by federal and state  
11 law.

12 (b) A person is eligible for participation in the higher education savings  
13 program for children as a beneficiary if the person was ordered committed to the  
14 custody of the department under AS 47.10.080(c) or AS 47.12.120(b)(1) or (3), was  
15 placed in out-of-home care for not less than two years, and is a resident of the state.

16 (c) The commissioner or the commissioner's designee may name a new  
17 beneficiary to an existing college savings plan established under (a) of this section if  
18 the new designation is not prohibited under federal law or under the University of  
19 Alaska college savings plan and if the named beneficiary dies, fails to enroll in an  
20 eligible program before the beneficiary becomes 30 years of age, or fails to meet  
21 conditions established in regulations adopted by the commissioner.

22 (d) Identifying information of a beneficiary contained in records related to the  
23 program is confidential.

24 (e) In this section,

25 (1) "beneficiary" has the meaning given in AS 14.40.802;

26 (2) "college savings plan" means a post secondary education savings  
27 program or advanced college savings tuition savings contract established under  
28 AS 14.40.802 - 14.40.817;

29 (3) "donor" means the person or entity who contributes to the higher  
30 education savings program for children for the purpose of establishing or contributing  
31 to a college savings account established for a child under this section;

1 (3) a process for identifying donors and eligible beneficiaries;

2 (4) a process for distributing nonidentifying information about an  
3 eligible beneficiary to a potential donor, including the age, sex, and general location of  
4 the beneficiary, unless the information readily leads to the identification of the eligible  
5 beneficiary;

6 (5) terms and conditions for participation in the program that are  
7 consistent with the University of Alaska college savings plan restrictions and with  
8 federal law pertaining to higher education savings accounts; and

9 (6) a procedure for monitoring success of the program, for record  
10 keeping, and for maintaining confidentiality of records as required by federal and state  
11 law.

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15 placed in out-of-home care for not less than two years, and is a resident of the state.

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17 beneficiary to an existing college savings plan established under (a) of this section if  
18 the new designation is not prohibited under federal law or under the University of  
19 Alaska college savings plan and if the named beneficiary dies, fails to enroll in an  
20 eligible program before the beneficiary becomes 30 years of age, or fails to meet  
21 conditions established in regulations adopted by the commissioner.

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26 (2) "college savings plan" means a post secondary education savings  
27 program or advanced college savings tuition savings contract established under  
28 AS 14.40.802 - 14.40.817;

29 (3) "donor" means the person or entity who contributes to the higher  
30 education savings program for children for the purpose of establishing or contributing  
31 to a college savings account established for a child under this section;

1 (10) the child support services agency established in AS 25.27.010 as  
2 necessary to establish and collect child support for a child who is a child in need of aid  
3 under this chapter;

4 (11) a parent, guardian, or caregiver of a child or an entity responsible  
5 for ensuring the safety of children as necessary to protect the safety of a child; [AND]

6 (12) a review panel established by the department for the purpose of  
7 reviewing the actions taken by the department in a specific case; and

8 (13) the University of Alaska under the Alaska higher education  
9 savings program for children established under AS 47.05.400, but only to the  
10 extent that the information is necessary to support the program and only if the  
11 information released is maintained as a confidential record by the University of  
12 Alaska.

13 \* Sec. 3. AS 47.12.310(b) is amended to read:

14 (b) A state or municipal agency or employee shall disclose

15 (1) information regarding a case to a federal, state, or municipal law  
16 enforcement agency for a specific investigation being conducted by that agency;  
17 [AND]

18 (2) appropriate information regarding a case to

19 (A) a guardian ad litem appointed by the court;

20 (B) a person or an agency requested by the department or the  
21 minor's legal custodian to provide consultation or services for a minor who is  
22 subject to the jurisdiction of the court under this chapter as necessary to enable  
23 the provision of the consultation or services;

24 (C) school officials as may be necessary to protect the safety of  
25 the minor who is the subject of the case and the safety of school students and  
26 staff or to enable the school to provide appropriate counseling and supportive  
27 services to meet the needs of a minor about whom information is disclosed;

28 (D) a governmental agency as may be necessary to obtain that  
29 agency's assistance for the department in its investigation or to obtain physical  
30 custody of a minor;

31 (E) a law enforcement agency of this state or another

1 jurisdiction as may be necessary for the protection, rehabilitation, or  
2 supervision of any minor or for actions by that agency to protect the public  
3 safety;

4 (F) a victim or to the victim's insurance company as may be  
5 necessary to inform the victim or the insurance company about the arrest of the  
6 minor, including the minor's name and the names of the minor's parents, copies  
7 of reports, or the disposition or resolution of a case involving a minor;

8 (G) the state medical examiner under AS 12.65 as may be  
9 necessary to perform the duties of the state medical examiner;

10 (H) foster parents or relatives with whom the child is placed by  
11 the department as may be necessary to enable the foster parents or relatives to  
12 provide appropriate care for the child who is the subject of the case, to protect  
13 the safety of the child who is the subject of the case, and to protect the safety  
14 and property of family members and visitors of the foster parents or relatives;

15 (I) the Department of Law or its agent for use and subsequent  
16 release if necessary for collection of an order of restitution on behalf of the  
17 recipient;

18 (J) the Violent Crimes Compensation Board established in  
19 AS 18.67.020 for use in awarding compensation under AS 18.67.080; and

20 (K) a state, municipal, or federal agency of this state or another  
21 jurisdiction that has the authority to license adult or children's facilities and  
22 services; and

23 (3) to the University of Alaska under the Alaska higher education  
24 savings program for children established under AS 47.05.400, information that is  
25 necessary to support the program, but only if the information released is  
26 maintained as a confidential record by the University of Alaska.

# LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES  
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY  
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450  
FAX (907) 465-2029  
Mail Stop 3101

State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182  
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

## MEMORANDUM

February 13, 2007

**SUBJECT:** Sectional Summary (CSSB 76( )  
(Work Order No. 25-LS0443\E))

**TO:** Senator Johnny Ellis  
Attn: Gabe Aceves

**FROM:** Jean M. Mischel  
Legislative Counsel



You have requested a sectional summary of the above-described bill.

As a preliminary matter, note that a sectional summary of a bill should not be considered an authoritative interpretation of the bill and the bill itself is the best statement of its contents. If you would like an interpretation of the bill as it may apply to a particular set of circumstances, please advise.

**Section 1.** Establishes a program within the Department of Health and Social Services to encourage investment in savings for the higher education of eligible foster children.

**Section 2.** Provides for the disclosure of appropriate confidential information pertaining to a case involving a child in need of aid, including a foster child, to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska to the extent necessary to support the program established under section one.

**Section 3.** Provides for the disclosure of appropriate confidential information pertaining to a case involving a child who is adjudicated as delinquent, to the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska to the extent necessary to support the program established under section one.

JMM:lmb  
07-020.lmb



Making Children a National Priority

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*Gable*

**PRESIDENT/CEO**

Gray Becha

Senator Johnny Ellis  
Alaska State Legislature  
716 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Ave., Suite 440  
Anchorage, AK 99501

**BOARD CHAIR**

George W. Swan III

May 4, 2006

**PAST CHAIR**

Timothy F. Neelbar

Dear Senator Ellis,

**VICE CHAIRS**

Kate Sides Flather

Charles A. Haas

Thank you for your leadership in helping foster youth in Alaska make a successful transition to adulthood. The Child Welfare League of America commends your vision and commitment to these youth. Your legislation, Senate Bill 287, addresses critical issues for these young people and we applaud your efforts.

**TREASURER**

Ross E. Wales

CWLA supports all attempts to assist youth in their transition to adulthood. The data show the difficult challenges they face in a number of areas, particularly in pursuing higher education. We'd like to suggest, however, additional ways to support these youth in this important time of transition.

**ASSISTANT TREASURER**

Andrew M. Esau

**SECRETARY**

Faith Ransell

We know that in addition to education youth face other serious challenges when they leave foster care. Housing and transportation are enormous hurdles. Other challenges include access to health care services and securing and maintaining employment. While a 529 savings account provides critical support for vocational training or education expenses it wouldn't be available for these other necessities. A more flexible account is needed to help address this wider array of issues. Individual Development Accounts provide more flexibility, which is necessary to address these multiple issues. These accounts or some other similar approach could be used for a wide variety of uses depending on the individual needs.

**ASSISTANT SECRETARY**

Frank N. Mabry

We would be happy to discuss these approaches further if you like. We applaud your leadership and know that with efforts such as yours there will be progress in Alaska for youth transitioning out of foster care to a productive and fulfilling adulthood.

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Sincerely,

Shay Bilchik  
President/CEO



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS**

www.bgcalaska.org

Senator Johnny Ellis  
State Capitol Room 9  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

April 19, 2006

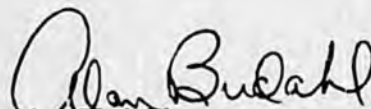
Dear Senator Ellis,

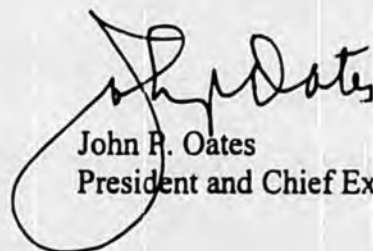
On behalf of Boys & Girls Clubs Board of Directors and professional staff, we are writing to extend Boys & Girls Clubs' support for Senate Bill 287, legislation designed to help provide higher education opportunities for foster children. As you are well aware, our organization has been operating youth development programs for 40 years. In 1998, we eagerly undertook a Statewide Expansion Initiative that has developed Clubhouses in 29 rural Alaskan communities. This initiative, combined with our steady expansion in urban communities, has broadened our total impact to 30,000 youth in 38 Alaskan communities.

Our members' challenges range from peer pressure to poor grades, hunger, abusive homes, or multiple foster home placements. For every child that walks through a Clubhouse door, we listen, we comfort, we challenge and cheer. Many of our staff, volunteers and program partners establish personal connections and mentor relationships with our members in foster care. SB 287 will provide them with an avenue to have a lasting impact on these children well into adulthood.

Again, thank you for sponsoring this legislation. Boys & Girls Club appreciates your support of our programs and your commitment to Alaska's youth.

Sincerely,

  
Alan Budahl  
Board of Directors, Chair

  
John P. Oates  
President and Chief Executive

**Main Office**  
2300 W. 36th Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99517  
Tel: 907-248-5437  
Fax: 907-248-0047

**President & CEO**  
John P. Oates  
Tel: 907-770-7337  
Fax: 907-770-7348  
joates@bgcalaska.org

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Kristin Melling, ASRC Energy Services  
Bill Meszaros, Pacific Alaska Forwarders Inc.  
Kevin Meyer, Alaska House of Representatives  
Scott Miller, KPMG  
Bryan Quinn, Capital Office Systems  
Cathy Richter, Wells Fargo Bank N.A.  
Dale Shaw, Fed Ex  
Mary Shotton Witte, Northern Air Cargo  
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**ALASKA  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES, INC.**

*Helping Alaska's Seniors — Help Alaska*

April 13, 2006

**ANCHORAGE**

1057 W. Fireweed Lane, #103  
Anchorage, AK 99503

Phone: (907) 276-6472  
Fax: (907) 276-6475

[www.akcommunityservices.org](http://www.akcommunityservices.org)

Senator Johnny Ellis  
Minority Leader  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol, Rm 9  
Juneau, AK, 99801

Dear Senator Ellis,

**FAIRBANKS**

**HOMER**

**JUNEAU**

**ENAI**

**KETCHIKAN**

**SEWARD**

**WASILLA**

Thank you for your letter concerning Senate Bill 287. I am very pleased that you are proposing legislation that offers increased opportunities for Foster Children in the state of Alaska. I too believe that these children deserve and should be able to take every advantage of programs that enhance their ability to succeed in life and become responsible, productive adults.

Alaska Community Services volunteers provide services to these and many other children across the state through our Foster Grandparent Program. I am certain that they are also concerned with the future of these children, and will lend their support to this legislation. I will request the support of my legislators for SB 287 and also ask that my colleagues do so as well.

During this time when most of our focus seems to be primarily on pipelines and taxes, I thank you for your ongoing support of and commitment to programs that address the needs of disadvantaged or devalued Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Mike Saville  
Executive Director



## **Alaska Conference of Catholic Bishops**

**415 Sixth Street, Suite 300**

**Juneau, Alaska 99801**

**Ph (907) 586-2404 / Fax (907) 586-2405**

**E-mail [citw@alaska.net](mailto:citw@alaska.net)**

March 3, 2006

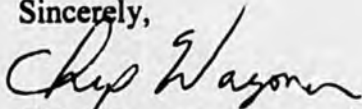
The Honorable Johnny Ellis  
State Senate  
Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Dear Senator Ellis:

On behalf of the Alaska Conference of Catholic Bishops, I would like to thank-you for sponsoring Senate Bill 287, an act establishing a higher education savings program for children in state foster care. The Alaska Conference of Catholic Bishops is the official public policy voice of the Roman Catholic Church in Alaska.

We appreciate your thoughtfulness in proposing an innovative way to assist eligible children in foster care to pursue educational opportunities beyond grade 12. Foster care children, like many other vulnerable persons, are often out of sight and out of mind of those of us who have the financial resources for a dignified life. We also commend you for proposing a mechanism by which Alaskans who have the financial ability can help to contribute to the higher education costs of those who do not have the financial ability. Turning from self-love toward love of neighbor is a central teaching of the Gospel message. S B 287 provides another way for Alaskans to put this teaching into practice and we support it.

Sincerely,



Chip Wagoner

Executive Director

Alaska Conference of Catholic Bishops



**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**  
**Establishing Education Savings Accounts for Foster Children in Alaska**

Children in the foster care system face significant challenges when they age out of state care. Often, these children do not have a plan or the means to access job training or post-secondary education. With a program in place whereby concerned organizations and citizens can establish savings accounts in the names of foster children, these children will have opportunities beyond high school.

Alaska's foster children deserve a program that invests in their potential. Alaska should create a program designed to give children in foster care the opportunity to pursue education and job training past the age of 18.

**Please add my name/organization to the list of supporters.**

Name Walter Majors  
Organization Juneau Youth Services  
Title Executive Director  
Signature Walter Majors  
Address PO Box 32839 Juneau AK 99803  
Phone 907-796-4131 Fax 907-789-2106  
Email walterm@jys.org Website www.jys.org

I/We would also be willing to:

Publish an article in our newsletter  
 Participate in media events  
 Contact legislators

Mobilize our membership  
 Help to build a coalition

**Please return this form to:**  
Office of Senator Johnny Ellis  
State Capitol, Rm. 9  
Juneau, AK 99801

Sounds like a good bill.  
Thanks, Johnny!  
Walter

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**  
**Establishing Education Savings Accounts for Foster Children in Alaska**

Children in the foster care system face significant challenges when they age out of state care. Often, these children do not have a plan or the means to access job training or post-secondary education. With a program in place whereby concerned organizations and citizens can establish savings accounts in the names of foster children, these children will have opportunities beyond high school.

Alaska's foster children deserve a program that invests in their potential. Alaska should create a program designed to give children in foster care the opportunity to pursue education and job training past the age of 18.

**Please add my name/organization to the list of supporters.**

Name Mertis Johnson  
 Organization EAST Living Adult Care  
 Title Owner  
 Signature Mertis Johnson  
 Address 7710 Main Street  
 Phone 333-1846 Fax 333-3562  
 Email mertis@east Website \_\_\_\_\_

I/We would also be willing to:

Publish an article in our newsletter  
 Participate in media events  
 Contact legislators

Mobilize our membership  
 Help to build a coalition

**Please return this form to:**  
 Office of Senator Johnny Ellis  
 State Capitol, Rm. 9  
 Juneau, AK 99801

**STATEMENT OF SUPPORT**  
**Establishing Education Savings Accounts for Foster Children in Alaska**

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Alaska's foster children deserve a program that invests in their potential. Alaska should create a program designed to give children in foster care the opportunity to pursue education and job training past the age of 18.

**Please add my name/organization to the list of supporters.**

Name Eileen M. Lally  
 Organization \_\_\_\_\_  
 Title \_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature Eileen M. Lally  
 Address 6508 Fairweather Dr Anchorage 99518  
 Phone 907 786 6731 Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_ Website \_\_\_\_\_

I/We would also be willing to:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publish an article in our newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobilize our membership   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in media events          | <input type="checkbox"/> Help to build a coalition |
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STATEMENT OF SUPPORT  
Establishing Education Savings Accounts for Foster Children in Alaska

Children in the foster care system face significant challenges when they age out of state care. Often, these children do not have a plan or the means to access job training or post-secondary education. With a program in place whereby concerned organizations and citizens can establish savings accounts in the names of foster children, these children will have opportunities beyond high school.

Alaska's foster children deserve a program that invests in their potential. Alaska should create a program designed to give children in foster care the opportunity to pursue education and job training past the age of 18.

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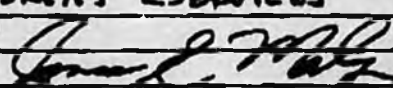
## STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

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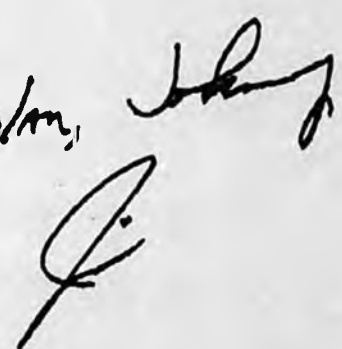
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Great plan, Johnny  


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**Coleen Turner**  
Executive Director

A Chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America  
and a Member Agency of United Way of the Tanana Valley

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# Anchorage Daily News

COMPASS: Points of view from the community

## Bill offers hope to kids in foster care

By SEN. JOHNNY ELLIS and CHIP WAGONER

With so much focus this year dedicated to the state's oil and gas resources, it is important that other issues concerning Alaska's future not be overlooked. According to the Department of Health and Social Services, there are nearly 2,000 children in Alaska's foster care system. Most of these children were placed in foster care because they were neglected or abused in their homes and it is unsafe for them to return.

Unfortunately, the reality of the situation for most foster children is that they will be in the custody of the state for a significant period of time, an average of 23 months, according to DHSS. Some of these children will be placed back in their primary homes and some will be adopted, but many remain in foster care until they turn 18, when they are released from the state's custody.

Foster parents around the state should be applauded for the job they do, providing positive role models for children in need. They take up the challenge of caring for children daily when no one else will. Acting as the primary caregivers for these children, foster parents sacrifice their time and efforts for children in need and expect little in return.

These foster parents, however, are usually not prepared or expected to shoulder the burden of caring for the children after they exit the foster care system. In many cases, foster children are ill prepared for life as adults, whether they choose to pursue education beyond high school or seek the necessary training to join the workforce. These children face significant barriers during the transition to adulthood and find a lack of support services available to them during their time of need.

It is troubling that Alaska has nearly 500 children in state custody that are high



Ellis

school age or older. Without a plan for their future, our fear is that many of these children will not be ready to lead responsible lives and be proud, productive members of our society and citizens of our state. It would be wise for Alaskans to help these foster kids make the most of their futures.

We believe the key to helping these young Alaskans realize their full potential lies in preparing them for life as adults through education and job training. Senate Bill 287 would establish a plan to assist foster children when they are released from state custody.

SB 287 allows churches, community organizations, nonprofits and businesses to establish education savings accounts in the name of a foster child. Our vision is to create a system in Alaska in which any individual or entity can make a tax-deductible donation that will directly impact the life of a foster child and provide that child with opportunities they would not otherwise have. Imagine a system in which a church or nonprofit organization could sponsor a foster child in Alaska who has faced difficult personal challenges.

As Alaskans, we are fortunate to have what many experts believe is the best education savings plan in the nation. Man-

*SB 287 allows churches, community organizations, nonprofits and businesses to establish education savings accounts in the name of a foster child. ... The flexibility of these accounts gives children in foster care options when they leave the state's custody.*

aged by T. Rowe Price, the UA College Savings Program allows individuals and organizations to open 529 savings accounts for a beneficiary of their choice.

The beauty of the UA savings accounts is that they can be used for nearly all education-related expenses at any educational institution or program. If the key to successful youth is opportunity, this program is an excellent option. The money in these accounts can be used for college, university, technical and vocational education and all related expenses. The flexibility of these accounts gives children in foster care options when they leave the state's custody.

In many instances, foster children who have aged out of the state's foster care system have essentially been left by the wayside. SB 287 allows these children, with the help of local community organizations and businesses, to explore opportunities in education and vocational training that they normally would not have.

Our goal, as Alaskans, is to pass this important legislation for the children who represent the future of our state.

■ Sen. Johnny Ellis is the minority leader of the Alaska Senate. Chip Wagoner is the executive director of the Alaska Conference of Catholic Bishops.

# Voice of the Times

A CONSERVATIVE VOICE FOR ALASKANS

Foster children need extra help at age 18

## Senate Bill 287 could help them succeed

By ELISE PATKOTAK

April is Child Abuse Awareness Month. This year, it's also the month in which Christians celebrate Easter, a time that honors the death and resurrection of a man who famously said in Mark 10:14, "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."

As a child growing up Catholic, I never doubted that those words were literally as well as figuratively true. Pictures hung all over our grade school of Christ sitting on a rock with little chubby boys and girls running towards his open arms with joy on their faces.

That picture brought great comfort to my childhood because it was accompanied in reality by a loving father and uncles whose arms were always open and welcoming to any child needing a hug or reassurance or just a moment feeling the warmth of their shirts, the roughness of their hands and the strength of their grip.

Not that any of my uncles would have ever admitted to this.

They would grumble and gripe and say we were making too much noise or getting in the way of their bocce ball game or running too close to the grill. But we knew that they were all welcome havens so long as we didn't



Patkotak

abuse the privilege and bother them while they were eating or the Phillies were on TV. And woe betides the child who did not remember to offer a kiss to them at the start and end of a visit.

The kids I work with in state custody through either social services or juvenile probation usually don't have such positive frames of reference when it comes to family. If they came from a home in which drinking, drug abuse and domestic violence were part of the problem, there is every chance a "hug" from an uncle, older brother, father or cousin holds a much more sinister meaning.

And the mothers, aunts, sister and other female relatives who choose to drink to the point of incapacitation so that little children are left on their own



to fend off sexual predators and physical abusers are equally at fault. While I am very aware that many of these women are also victims, the bottom line in these situations is that children have no escape. If the adults do not protect them, they have no protection.

The unfortunate result of the epidemic of violence and abuse in our families in Alaska is that children by the thousands are being raised in state custody. Many of these kids will never be able to go home because their parents will not take the steps needed to provide for their safety.

The state ultimately makes a lousy parent. Not only does it rarely take its turn in hosting the family holiday dinner, but it also tends to cut the apron strings rather abruptly when the child turns 18. One day you are considered dependent and in need of protection; the next day the door is opened and the state basically says, "It's been nice knowing you. Stay in touch."

More often than not, social workers, guardians and foster parents find themselves scrambling to help these kids make the transition to independence with little in the way of services available. Which is why I think the Legislature should drop everything else it is doing right now and pass SB 287 introduced by Sen. Johnny Ellis to allow churches, community organizations, non-profits, and businesses to establish education savings accounts in the name of a foster child.

This bill requires no money from state coffers. It demands no additional revenues be raised. It just gives people with big hearts and generous souls a way to help a kid. It might be a kid they know because the foster parents belong to that church or community organization. It might be a kid that shows some special talent and just needs some help getting the education needed to foster that talent.

Whatever it is, it makes sense that we do everything we can to help these kids make it as adults after we poured so much time and energy into them as children. The state can't do what a parent does when a kid turns 18. It can't provide a home for them to fall back on if things get rough. It can't provide a safe haven if the road to adulthood gets rockier than first imagined. If they blow it as adults, the only home the state provides for them is usually jail.

But the state can allow caring and concerned people to take on that role in some little way to let these kids know that they are not forgotten. And passing this bill would certainly live up to the spirit of the man whose death and resurrection is so widely observed this season.

Elise Patkotak, an Anchorage freelance writer and author of *Parallel Logic*, a humorous look back at her 28 years in Barrow, lives in Anchorage and owns Precious Cargo Ltd, a writing/graphics company. Her Web site is [www.elisepatkotak.com](http://www.elisepatkotak.com).



Casey Family Programs



Casey Family Programs, Alaska State Office of Children's Services  
Foster Care Collaboration Group, University of Alaska, Anchorage School of Social Work

# Alaskan Foster Care Alumni Study





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# Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study

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CASEY FAMILY PROGRAMS

TRIBAL STATE COLLABORATION GROUP

STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES



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# **Alaska Foster Care Alumni Study**

Conducted by

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA ANCHORAGE  
School of Social Work  
Child Welfare Evaluation Program**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Study Overview**

The Alaskan Foster Care Alumni Study examined the outcomes of young adults who had "aged out" of State custody after spending much of their adolescence in foster care. The study team, composed of representatives from the State of Alaska Office of Children's Services, Casey Family Programs, the Tribal-State Collaboration Group, and the University of Alaska Anchorage, sought to answer the following questions about a cohort of Alaskan foster care alumni: where are they living, how they were faring socially, economically, and emotionally, and how do they perceived their experiences in foster care? Alumni eligible for the study were 19 to 29 years of age, had spent at least one continuous year in out-of-home care in state protective custody, with that year being between 15 and 18 years of age, and had left care on or after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Of the 140 alumni who met these criteria, nearly 53% were female and 50% were Alaska Native. Sixty-six interviews were conducted between May and December 2004, representing an adjusted response rate of nearly 60%.

### **Findings**

Despite the hardships of abuse and neglect, removal from biological family, multiple moves and transitions, and minimal preparation for adult living, many Alaskan foster care alumni were thriving. Through persistence, emotional support and connections, and their own resourcefulness and that of others, they have grown into contributing members of the communities where they live. The outcomes below represent both the successes and difficulties experienced by the Alaskan foster care alumni studied. Most participants spent their time in foster care before Chafee funds were readily available for educational and other transitional services. In addition, regional independent living services have recently been expanded by the State Office of Children's Services to provide more foster youth with the resources to successfully transition into adulthood.

#### *Whole Population Outcomes:*

- Nearly three-quarters of the foster care alumni remain in Alaska. These alumni were predominately clustered in the Southcentral region of the state, followed by the Southwestern and Southeastern regions.
- Nearly one in five alumni had been involved in the criminal justice system at some point in their lives.

### *Outcomes from Interviewed Alumni:*

#### **Socio-Emotional:**

- Positive relationships formed while youth were in care continued to be an important source of support later in life. Nearly 76% of alumni reported having had a positive close relationship with an adult while in foster care. Almost three-quarters of these alumni reported still being in contact with these adults.
- Fewer than 10% of alumni were placed with their siblings in their first foster home. Nearly three-quarters of these alumni were *never* placed with their siblings. Study participants reported that sibling relationships continued to be important to them into adulthood.
- Rates of early parenthood were high. Nearly 10% of interviewed females became pregnant before age 17. By age 19, 57% of females and 41% of males were parents.
- Alumni reported having a wide social network of family and friends. The average number of friends alumni reported having was nearly eight. Contact with friends was frequent—82% reported talking on the phone or visiting with friends a few times a month or more, including 38% with daily contact.
- In general, most alumni reported being happy with their current living situations. More than 8 in 10 alumni reported feeling “happy” or “very happy” in each area of a life satisfaction rating. A relatively substantial proportion, however, reported extremely poor mental health.

#### **Physical and Behavioral Health:**

- Use of mental health resources among alumni was high. Nearly 80% reported lifetime use of behavioral or mental health services, including 35% reporting overnight treatment stays and 68% seeing a professional (such as a psychologist, social worker, or minister) outside of an overnight stay. About 27% reported using any of these services in the past year, while nearly 17% of the total reported that they were *currently* seeing a professional.
- Alcohol use by alumni was slightly below the average for statewide alcohol use figures for people of similar age, while their rates of marijuana use were slightly higher than the statewide rate. Although nearly 50% of alumni reported drinking in the past month, 21% reported being drunk during the same time period. Use of illicit drugs other than marijuana was rare.
- Most alumni rated their overall physical health at the same level as the general population. A small number, however, reported very poor health.

#### **Education, Employment, and Health Insurance:**

- Few alumni received financial, employment, or educational assistance as they made their transition out of state care to living on their own. Compared with the Wisconsin or the Northwest alumni studies, Alaskan alumni received fewer services in most areas as they exited state care. However, the exception was in finding contact persons to help with future problems.
- Nearly 38% of alumni reported being homeless after leaving care. This is higher than the homeless rates of 12-25% from other foster care alumni studies.

- The high school completion rate for foster care alumni was slightly below the statewide average. Many Alaskan alumni took longer to achieve their high school diploma (often finishing between 19 and 25 years of age), but few went on to complete post-secondary education.
- Many alumni were struggling financially. Although some were doing quite well, average income was low, and the proportion lacking health insurance coverage doubled state and national rates.

#### Costs to Society:

- Nearly 30% of alumni were incarcerated for some period of time after leaving care. Nearly 21% of interviewed alumni reported being placed in juvenile corrections while in care, but only 64% of these were jailed again after leaving care.
- Alumni reported a high utilization of public assistance resources in their households. Over 77% of alumni (including 73% of those who live alone and 78% of those living with others) reported that someone with whom they lived received some form of public assistance in the last six months.

#### Recommendations

The following recommendations address the outcomes revealed in this study. They are based on policies, programs, and practices that have been shown to be effective in other research. Stakeholders (representing members of the research partnership) participated in refining and clarifying these recommendations, as well as adding their own list of actions which they believe will improve foster care in Alaska.

- **Increase early intervention:** In general, early intervention efforts are recommended to minimize most of the poor outcomes described in this report. Research has shown, for example, that family support programs are more successful the younger the children are.
- **Involve youth in planning:** Simply being more informed can help increase a youth's sense of predictability, while having a say can increase the sense of control.
- **Provide comprehensive assessment:** A comprehensive assessment—covering physical and emotional development, cognitive functioning and academics, life-skills, social relationships and functioning, etc.—can result in a detailed service and support plan, a road map for all concerned with helping the youth return to an optimal developmental path.
- **Maximize placement stability:** A comprehensive assessment can help match youth to foster parents. Better matching can improve relationships with foster families, which in turn results in improved outcomes during and after care.
- **Encourage positive adult relationships:** The development of a consistent adult relationship can have a variety of positive effects, including socio-emotional, educational, and employment outcomes.
- **Promote legal ties, such as adoption and guardianship, throughout adolescence and even into adulthood:** Subsidized guardianship may be an especially appropriate choice of permanency options for adolescents and/or

children in kinship care placements, particularly in Native communities that might disapprove of termination of parental rights.

- **Support relationships with foster parents after youth reach 18:** In order to promote maintenance of adult connections, the State should work to remove barriers to having young people remain in the home or in contact after emancipation.
- **Promote sibling contact, as appropriate:** Optimally, sibling groups would remain intact. There is a slowly growing body of research supporting the benefits of keeping sibling groups together when appropriate.
- **Provide sexuality education to all foster youth:** Foster youth appear to be relatively likely to engage in early sex, often resulting in pregnancy and/or sexually transmitted diseases.
- **Provide parenting support for youth who do become parents:** Once a young person does have a child, they need support and training to avoid the poor outcomes common to young parents.
- **Improve mental health treatment:** Proper assessment can help develop a treatment plan to be implemented by caseworkers, foster parents, teachers, and others, in the home and out. Proper training, for example in cognitive-behavioral interventions, will maximize the effectiveness of this plan.
- **Extend foster care services:** Intact families do not expect their children to live alone at 18. Given the array of difficulties faced by foster children, as well as the negative short-term outcomes found in this and other studies (e.g., 30% homeless within a year of leaving care), some form of extended service is warranted.
- **Use the Chafee Medicaid option to extend health coverage:** Given the health problems, poor finances, and lack of health insurance experienced by many alumni, they appear to be at risk of joining the tens of thousands of Americans who die each year due to a lack of health insurance.
- **Develop a detailed transition plan with each youth:** Youth often express anxiety over the prospect of leaving care and being on their own. Having a plan can help alleviate that anxiety.
- **Facilitate communication across roles and functions:** The benefits of assessment and thorough planning can come only if parties communicate. Thus, information must pass from professional to professional and also from caseworker to foster parent, caseworker to new caseworker (if necessary), school to school, child welfare agency to educational system, caseworker and foster parent to therapist, and so on.
- **Support caseworkers in their efforts to help youth transition to adulthood:** Training should include developmental issues and information on accessing the wide variety of resources, within OCS and without, that are available. Only if a worker is aware of a service and of how to pay for it can a youth or young adult take advantage of opportunities that are available to them. Worker-youth relationships can also be improved by matching trained and interested workers with adolescents.

***Stakeholder Recommendations: Strategies to Improve Foster Care in Alaska***

In addition to the recommendations above, various advocates of improved foster care emphasized the following strategies to improve foster care in the state:

- Increase the number and cultural diversity of resource families.
- Expand targeted recruitment of resource families to reach underrepresented cultural groups, with particular emphasis on reaching out to Alaska Native families.
- Increase the number of resource families with the capacity and expertise to provide care to adolescents, with the goal of maintaining relationships into adulthood.
- Expand efforts to more carefully match children's needs with the culture, style, and capabilities of foster families
- Increase kinship care; provide support and training to families providing this care.
- Expand the use of the Team Decision Making model currently used in the Anchorage OCS office (from Family to Family by the Annie E. Casey Foundation). This process involves families and community members actively in case planning and decision-making.
- Reduce the reliance on emergency shelter care.
- Reduce the use of residential care.
- Provide more agency and respite support to resource families.
- Build academic support for foster children through working with schools and other community resources.
- Increase post-secondary education and vocational training for foster youth and alumni, including job training, job shadowing, and apprenticeships.
- Increase the number of safe, affordable transitional housing options for foster care alumni.

### **Conclusions**

The intent of this study was to provide insight into the experiences of foster care alumni with the hopes of improving the lives of current and future generations of youth who find themselves removed from their birth families and placed in state custody. This responsibility does not rest solely with the State of Alaska, but with communities, families, caregivers, tribal programs, caseworkers, residential youth facilities, schools, and even the youth themselves. This study's findings support those of several other studies supporting the need to promote key ingredients that, if provided to youth early, can greatly enhance their chances of success.

These are, among many others: positive, consistent adult relationships; youth participating in their own planning; early and on-going preparation for independent living; on-going connection to family members when appropriate; and allowing youth to receive the economic and emotional benefits of remaining in care until 21. Care, support, mentoring, training, and financial assistance will ultimately benefit foster youth, their communities, and all of us.

## **INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

As many as 45% of children living in foster care are teenagers who do not return home before reaching the age of majority (Mech, 1988). Concerns have been raised by professionals, advocates, and legislators about these youths' readiness for emancipation (English, Kouidou-Giles & Plocke, 1994; McDonald, Allen, Westerfelt, & Piliavin, 1996; Mech, 2003).

The older wards are sometimes overlooked in the attention surrounding foster care. Often they have been in care for years, and aggressive efforts for reunification or adoption have been abandoned. The child welfare system waits for the child to "come of age" and come out of government care....Children "emancipated" from foster care leave when the calendar marks their 18<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup> birthday regardless of their level of preparation (Blome, 1997, p. 42).

### **History of Independent Living Preparation**

In the past, preparation for adulthood for these youth occurred informally, with foster parents providing most of the guidance in the foster home (North, Mallabar, & Desrchers, 1988). There were small, local programs providing training, subsidies, or other assistance (Ansell, 2001). In the 1980s, concern for the developmental needs of youth in care resulted in federal legislation to support independent living skill programs nationwide (Allen, Bonner, & Greenan, 1988; Mech, 1994, 2003; Moynihan, 1988; Pizzagati, 2001). Unfortunately, funding for the 1986 Federal Independent Living Initiative required periodic reauthorization, leading many states to believe the funding would not last long enough to establish and support a permanent program of any sort (Ansell, 2001). A General Accounting Office review of independent living programs in 1999 (as cited in Collins, 2001) found a number of weaknesses: many did not provide connections to employers, affordable vocational training, or apprenticeships; transitional housing was rare; and life skills training was overly focused on classroom-based activities rather than hands-on practice. Research continued to show the plight of former foster youth. Investing in young adults as they prepare for independence became more of a priority with the goal of helping them make the transition into adulthood successfully. Further legislative attention came in 1999 with the passage of the Chafee Foster Care Independence Act, which expanded funding for independent living services and the breadth of for what the funding could be used (Pizzagati, 2001).

### **Difficulties of Emancipating Youth (Risk Factors and Outcomes)**

Why all this effort and concern? The problems of youth maturing out of care have been the focus of numerous studies (Barth, 1990; Collins, 2001; Courtney & Barth, 1996; Courtney, Piliavin, Grogan-Kaylor, & Nesmith, 2001; McDonald, Allen, Westerfelt, & Piliavin, 1996; McMillen et al., 2005; Pecora et al., 2005a; Reilly, 2003; Stoner, 1999). Risk factors for teens in foster care are varied and indicate a significant need to help these youth prepare for adulthood (Courtney et al., 2001; Fanshel, Finch, & Grundy, 1989,

1989b; McMillen et al., 2005; Pecora et al., 2005a). The outcomes that have been related to child abuse and neglect are extensive, including:

- delinquency and criminal behavior (Briere, 1992; Chalk, Gibbons, & Scarupa, 2002; Widom, 1989)
- poor health behaviors in women, including risky sexual experiences (Rodgers et al., 2004)
- physical health problems, including neuropsychological handicaps and sexually transmitted diseases (Chalk et al., 2002)
- reduced cognitive functioning and educational difficulties (Chalk et al., 2002)
- cognitive distortions, including hypervigilance and hyperreactivity, learned helplessness, and a negative, dysfunctional worldview (Briere, 1992)
- emotional difficulties, including hopelessness (Chalk et al., 2002), depression, anxiety disorders (including post-traumatic stress disorder; Briere, 1992, Chalk et al., 2002), and eating disorders (Briere, 1992)
- substance abuse (Briere, 1992; Chalk et al., 2002)

Children who have experienced maltreatment require optimal healing environments characterized by continuity, consistency, predictability, love, attention, and appropriate discipline to overcome these effects and help return the children to a positive developmental path (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000).

Unfortunately, such an optimal environment can be hard to find. "Many children in the child welfare system not only come from but are placed in high-risk home environments characterized by poverty, instability, and parents or caregivers with poor psychological well-being" (Kortenkamp & Ehrle, 2002, p. 1). While many youth do have positive experiences in foster care, with minimal disruption, many are placed in situations that are a poor match for their particular needs, leading to further disruption and replacement. Multiple placements, including returning to the birth family only to be removed later for another spell of foster care, are common (Pecora et al., 2005a). The effects of maltreatment or simply the trauma of being removed from one's family can result in behavioral problems and difficulties in developing trusting relationships (Briere, 1992; Chalk et al., 2002; Downs & Williams, 2003), which may be further compounded by replacement and by high caseworker turnover (Mech, 2003). The foster parents may be ill-equipped to handle the child's particular issues, or may experience little help and support from the child welfare agency (Downs & Williams, 2003). Because of multiple placements and restrictions, foster youth often have their educational progress and coursework interrupted (Evans, Scott, & Schulz, 2004) and miss out on enriching experiences (such as youth development programs or other extracurricular activities), instead becoming isolated from the larger community and its resources (Mech, 2003). As

a youth grows up in foster care, he or she may stray further and further from an optimal developmental path.

A number of issues faced by foster youth while in care can further impede their progress. Children in out-of-home care are often separated from not only their birth parents but also their also-in-care siblings. Even when an initial placement (e.g., emergency foster care) finds all the siblings together, they are often subsequently separated (Leathers, 2005), adding yet another source of trauma and disruption. Herrick and Piccus (2005) describe a variety of intrapsychic (attachment, grief and loss, guilt and concern over a sibling left with an abusive caregiver, etc.) and interpersonal issues (comfort and protection, positive regard, etc.) related to siblings in care. Siblings can provide a stabilizing force in an otherwise chaotic existence (Downs & Williams, 2003; Herrick & Piccus, 2005; Leathers, 2005). Maintaining placement with at least one sibling was found to be related to improved mental health and socialization among girls in out-of-home care (Tarren-Sweeney & Hazell, 2005). Leathers (2005) found that children in sibling groups consistently placed together (not necessarily all of the sibling group, but the same number of siblings in all placements) exhibited better adaptation to foster care placements and thus improved stability of placement than children never placed with any of their siblings or children inconsistently placed with siblings, and were more likely to be adopted than children who were never placed with their siblings.

Birth parent contact is also an important factor in foster care. Youth in care or adults formerly in care often note that they would have liked more contact with birth family members (e.g., Johnson, Yoken, & Voss, 1995). Regular contact with birth parents is often viewed as essential to a child's chances of reunification, and some research has found this to be true (e.g., Leathers, 2005). Many newer models of practice, such as family group conferencing and Family to Family, advocate incorporating the birth parents as a new policy. Birth parent visitation must, however, be balanced against the developmental status and needs of the child (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000).

Many youth find the healing and stability they need in foster care, but as a group foster children are at risk for negative short- and long-term outcomes (Downs & Williams, 2003; Wertheimer, 2002). They are more likely than their peers to have poor development and poor physical, mental, cognitive, and behavioral health (Altshuler & Gleeson, 1999; American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000; Evans et al., 2004; Harman, Childs, & Kelleher, 2000; Kortenkamp & Ehrle, 2002; Vandivere, Chalk, & Moore, 2003). Foster youth are relatively likely to experience:

- reactive depression (Anderson & Simonitch, 1981), anxiety disorders, ADHD, and bipolar disorder, and the use of psychotropic medications (Harman et al., 2000)
- school problems, including multiple school changes, underachievement, and drop-out (Ayasse, 1995; Blome, 1997; Evans et al., 2004; McMillen & Tucker, 1999)

- oppositional-defiant and conduct disorders (Harman et al., 2000) and truancy, running away, aggression or suicide attempts (English et al., 1994)
- stigmatized identity (Kools, 1997) and other identity issues (Downs & Caldwell, 2003)
- risky sexual activities at an earlier age (Wertheimer, 2002) and teen pregnancy (Downs & Caldwell, 2003; McDonald et al., 1996)

Despite these risks, it is still expected that most of these youth will no longer be part of the child welfare system after the age of 18, whether they are ready or not (Mech, 2003). In effect, we as a society ask our least prepared young adults—those behind their peers in education, training, and so many other ways—to go it on their own, with significantly less support, long before we expect that of young people who were not removed from their homes (Blome, 1997; Collins, 2001; Kools, 1997).

Given these risk factors, it should come as no surprise that foster care alumni have been shown to on the average have poor outcomes in terms of:

- **Unemployment:** In the Wisconsin Foster Youth Transitions to Adulthood study (Courtney et al., 2001), 81% of the young adults had held a job in the 12 to 18 months since leaving care, but only 61% were employed at the time of the interview. The Northwest Alumni Study (Pecora et al., 2005a) found a workforce unemployment rate of 20%, as compared to a national rate of about 5% for adults aged 20 to 34.
- **Homelessness:** Previous research has found that former foster youth are overrepresented in the homeless population (Mangine, Royse, Wiehe, & Nietzel, 1990), and that foster care alumni are more likely to experience homelessness than adults never in care (Downs & Caldwell, 2003). In the national independent living program study (Cook, Fleishman, & Grimes, 1991), 25%, or approximately 8500 young adults, had experienced at least one night without a place to live in the two-and-a-half to four months since leaving care. While nearly half (45%) of these young adults reported staying with friends, 55% reportedly relied on homeless shelters or spent the night on the street or in a car. Similarly, 12% of young adults in the Wisconsin study spent at least one night on the street or in a shelter (Courtney et al., 2001). Over one in five alumni (22%) in the Northwest study experienced homelessness (as defined by the respondents) for at least one night within a year of leaving care (Pecora et al., 2005a).
- **Financial hardship:** Pecora and colleagues (Pecora et al., 2005a) found that one-third of their sample had household incomes at or below the poverty level, and less than 10% owned their home. The average weekly wage for those working in the Wisconsin study was between \$54 and \$613 in 1998