

Family Voice Report – November 2007

Teleconferences:

Join us each month to discuss issues of concern to parents and youth.

Time: 2nd Thursday of each month, noon to one

Place: 1-800-315-6338, when the operator answers, enter: 2854#

Who: Families of Alaskan children and youth facing social, emotional and behavioral challenges

We continue to meet every month. Topics discussed recently include: Prevention programs, FASD resources, Youth programs, and Youth Drug and Alcohol Information School.

Participants have also identified concerns that we address through a variety of channels. These include:

- The need for services that is available before problems become severe. This includes parenting training, mental health services, respite care, family therapy, relationships and substance use disorder prevention & treatment.
- Concerns about parents having sufficient input in the decision making process as children move from acute care settings to further treatment, particularly to RPTC's.
- Continued concern about coordinating services as children return home.
- The desire that services could be more readily available in schools and coordinated with services offered outside the school setting.
- Problems with finding treatment programs that are appropriate for children and youth with FASD.
- Problems with accessing services in villages and small rural areas.

Advocacy:

We are preparing for the next legislative session. As we did last year, we will bring youth and families to Juneau in conjunction with the next BTKH meeting and let them talk about their experiences of behavioral health need and treatment. We will do training in advocacy, work with youth to build their stories, and then talk to legislators and committees. Young people are powerful advocates for the services that serve them best.

Family Voice advisory committee:

We are bringing together stakeholders to provide a more consistent voice to policy makers. Scheduling problems have made this move slowly, but this group will serve several functions:

- Sharing information among family and youth about policy issues that affect them directly.
- Finding opportunities for a shared voice to reflect needs and concerns.
- Representing families and youth on various policy-making bodies, and participating in such things as proposal evaluation committees.
- Identifying opportunities for families and youth to help each other.
- Supporting providers and policy makers in delivering the best available service.

For further information, please contact Marilyn Irwin or Carol Greenough, Alaska Mental Health Board and The Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, 1-888-464-8920.