

**Alaska FASD Partnership  
Steering Committee – MINUTES  
Thursday, March 13, 2014**

**Introductions:** Amy Hansen, Shannon Cross, Wendy Barrett, Deb Evensen, Vinkie Tinker, Sean O'Brien, Lakota Holman, Mike Jeffery, Art Dulane, Wendy McCaleb (guest of Stone Soup Group), Monica Leinberger, Jeannie Yuman, Jeanne Gerhardt-Cyrus, Michael Baldwin, Teri Tibbett.

**Approval of Agenda.** Approved.

**Approval of Minutes 2.12.14.** Approved.

**Member updates:**

Wendy - Stone Soup Group just finished providing an FASD Into Action training this week; also planning a 2-day session June 17-18 FASD Into Action.

**Deb** – Anchorage School District continues to develop its FASD program, including sponsoring a parent support group that Deb and district FASD mentors are leading; Kenai School District continues to move ahead serving students, teachers, and families impacted by FASD using a grassroots strategy, “working from the ground up” that invites teachers to brainstorm on and decide what is needed, and seeing them lead the effort. Kenai is also looking at starting a parent support group.

**Vickie** – Through her work at Frontier Community Services, Vickie said she attends a lot of IEP (Individualized Education Plan) at school and is seeing the results of Deb’s work because the teachers “are really getting it” and starting to make appropriate accommodations. In the past it’s been “a battle of wills” for them to understand FASD is a brain-based disability that needs a different approach.

**Mike J.** – Is involved in the upcoming FASD conference April 9-12 in Vancouver B.C., presenting on a panel and a break-out session related to FASD and the courts. It is an international conference, this year focusing on adults and adolescents. He noted they will be looking the ethical aspects of FASD, why judges and legal professionals needs to deal with it ethically once they have the information that someone is affected by FASD. He noted that Vickie Tinker is working on a case in Kenai with success. On the topic of FASD as a mitigating factor in Alaska and why it is not being utilized in the courts, Mike suggested the reason is not related to DOC’s lack of screening (as mentioned in the FASD resolution, SCR 13 because mitigating factors are used during the sentencing before a person enters DOC), but because the defense attorneys are not asking for it. Amy confirmed this is the case with defense attorneys she’s talked to. She’s heard their fear is that an FASD diagnosis could be used against the client, and there are strong feelings about this. Also, Mike noted getting a diagnose takes so much time, and that the diagnosis is usually needed in a timely manner. Mike noted that in order to apply the mitigating factor, there needs to be a diagnosis, but it doesn’t have to come from one of the state’s diagnostic teams. He suggested DOC could utilize a screening tool, that would good, but the people who need the screening/diagnosis to use for the mitigating factor are the attorneys.

**Monica** – Worked with Kay Kelly to develop articles for a national webpage that will help train juvenile justice judges on FASD. In the Winter 2014 issue of The Judges' Page, an on-line journal for judges and other court professionals, each article is designed to expand the judges' and others' knowledge of FASD.

The Judges' Page is jointly sponsored by the National Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges (NCJFCJ). It has a 9,000 member subscriber list, receives 30,000 visits annually to its archives and is frequently used in judges' training. To read the articles, go to: [www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPlsE/b.5301323/k.8E21/Judges\\_Page.htm](http://www.casaforchildren.org/site/c.mtJSJ7MPlsE/b.5301323/k.8E21/Judges_Page.htm)

### **FASD news in the Legislature**

There are several pieces of legislation that address FASD, including SCR 13, SCR 14 (sponsored by Senator Pete Kelly (R-Fairbanks), and SB 64 (sponsored by Senator John Coghill (R-Fairbanks)). She reported on Senator Kelly's "Empowering Hope" group whose mission is to "eradicate FASD in Alaska." He has stated publicly that he intends to take steps toward this goal, starting with the measures outlined in the "Resolves" section of SCR 13 and SCR 14. Click on the links below to review the resolutions and the back-up documents:

- Link to SCR 13 = <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/PDF/28/Bills/SCR013B.PDF>
- Link to back-up documents on SCR 13 = [http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_documents.asp?session=28&bill=SCR13](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_documents.asp?session=28&bill=SCR13)
- Link to SCR 14 = <http://www.legis.state.ak.us/PDF/28/Bills/SCR014B.PDF>
- Link to back-up documents on SCR 14 = [http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get\\_documents.asp?session=28&bill=SCR14](http://www.legis.state.ak.us/basis/get_documents.asp?session=28&bill=SCR14)
- Language related to FASD in SB 64 Omnibus Crime bill, introduced by Senator John Coghill, this bill includes several provisions to address recidivism, including language that would require the Department of Corrections to provide "necessary assessment or screening of the risks and needs of offenders who may be vulnerable to harm, exploitation, or recidivism as a result of fetal alcohol syndrome, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or brain-based disorder."

**Other statewide efforts** (Anchorage FASD Council, Juneau Working Group, FASD Workgroup of the DD Committee of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education)

FASD Workgroup of the DD Committee of GCDSE (Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education). Jeanne reported they have formed a workgroup that is advocating for access to DD (Developmental Disabilities) services within the SDS (Division Senior and Disability Services) system. She noted the services are available theoretically, but not in practicality to people with FASD. Their group is working to address that. Other priorities of the workgroup include: finding a category for FASD because it doesn't fit anywhere, more screening, more *FASD Into Action* training, and pursuing setting up a SAFA (Self-Advocates for FASD Action) affiliate in Alaska. The workgroup has had three meetings and are working on bullet points and looking for someone to do research in the field. Art reported the workgroup is looking to see how the GCDSE might work with the Partnership to focus and collaborate efforts. He noted the GCDSE workgroup is interested in focusing on intervention. The workgroup has discussed an interest in becoming a workgroup of the AK FASD Partnership. Mike expressed that there are plenty of issues and work to go around and that the more workgroups working on them the better. Teri expressed that because the workgroup was formed under the DD committee of GCDSE, and the workgroup was formed in response to public input from stakeholders of the GCDSE, it is likely most appropriate for the workgroup to stay under the auspice of the GCDSE. She will contact the executive directors of the GCDSE and Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse for their input. Teri suggested it is probably most appropriate for can report to the AK FASD Partnership as an entity similar to the Anchorage FASD Council, Juneau FASD Working Group, etc.

Juneau FASD Working Group. Teri reported the group is working on several items: 1) opening a Juneau FASD diagnostic clinic through the local Developmental Disabilities provider REACH; 2) developing a

Juneau FASD resource center; 3) monthly articles for the Juneau Empire; 4) development of inclusion of FASD in UAS Special Education curriculum; 5) planning for a Juneau International FASD conference; 6) creating classroom training opportunities in the Juneau School District; and 7) developing a Whitecrow Alaska camp in Juneau.

### **Other announcements**

Monica expressed concern about complications with reimbursement for the Bethel FASD diagnostic clinic related to a requirement by the state that people with certification from UW must be present at the meeting they're billing for. Vickie clarified that a training can be taken in a 20-hour online course to fulfill this requirement. Mike talked about the nature of the provider agreements and the binding nature of the legal contracts and some of these issues are related to that.

Wendy McCaleb asked about what is the delivery system for FASD statewide? Vickie replied it's different from community to community. Kenai Peninsula usually works through the school district to address FASD. Deb reported that there are master teachers who are working to change the system. Wendy from Stone Soup Group travels a lot to do FASD trainings and they're getting more requests from around the state, which is progress from what it was several years ago, and reiterated we are moving ahead in baby steps, and that the communities are delivering at the level they are ready and capable. Jeanne G. supports *FASD into Action* and trauma-informed care, but it's not happening as prevalent as it could be. Monica noted it's a huge step forward for policymakers to be addressing it because alcohol and brain-based disorders affects so many systems in our state, including social services, corrections, domestic violence, and other alcohol-related consequences. Jeanne noted that people with FASD who come from rural areas often end up in API because appropriate services aren't available locally, and API doesn't have the appropriate understanding of what to do with people affected by FASD. Wendy noted that many rural communities are requesting trainings and information and SSG is working to expand even further, but it's always an issue to have enough funding to do this. People are calling in droves asking for basic strategies for dealing with children with extreme behaviors who don't yet have a diagnosis, but SSN needs the resources to provide it. She noted Stone Soup Group has started a blog where families can tell their stories. Go to: [www.stonesoupgroup.org](http://www.stonesoupgroup.org), click on blog.

**Next meeting:** Wed. April 9, 2014 at 3pm.