

Alaska FASD Partnership Steering Committee
Wednesday, May 13, 2020 – FINAL MINUTES

I. Introductions. Shannon Cross-Azbill, Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ); Mike Jeffery, Advocate, Retired Judge; Lanny Mommsen, Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE); Hope Finkelstein, FASD Program/Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS); Jenn Wagaman, Alaska Center for Children and Adults (ACCA), Fairbanks FASD Diagnostic Clinic; Jean Gerhardt-Cyrus, Parent/Case Manager; Teri Tibbett, Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (AMHB-ABADA).

II. Approval of Agenda. Approved.

III. Approval of Minutes from 4.8.20. Tabled.

IV. Update on Five-Year Plan

Lanny reported that the statewide five-year planning group will be having a quarterly meeting in Juneau and a doodle will go out to pick the best time. The GCDSE was in the process of discussing combining their efforts related to FASD and Autism into one “Neurobehavioral” effort, but was interrupted due to COVID.

V. COVID Update

Lanny reported that the GCDSE is working to address rules and accommodations for people with disabilities related to sensory issues and wearing masks, and the “one family member only” rules in some public establishments, to allow for a family member or caregiver to accompany a person with a disability. The council is also working on educating the general public about these issues through messaging and communicating through stories. Also, helping people with disabilities advocate for themselves in these circumstances. The GCDSE has on their website a COVID-19 Toolkit and Guide to Resources, also has a sign-up for regular COVID updates related to people with disabilities. Go here for more info: <http://dhss.alaska.gov/gcdse/Pages/default.aspx>

Jenn reported she continues to coordinate the monthly online FASD family and caregivers support group that engages people with direct experience, not for providers. Topics so far have been: language, self-regulation, circles of security, IEP 101, and more. Contact jenn.wagaman@alaskacenter.org for more information.

Teri reported AMHB-ABADA last month started sending out a bi-weekly e-bulletin with COVID-related behavioral resources, including a section highlighting resources for both FASD and for Justice-Involved issues. The bulletins will be available via email (ask Teri to get on the distribution list) or on the boards’ main webpage (scroll to bottom left): <http://dhss.alaska.gov/amhb/Pages/default.aspx>

Hope reported the DHSS FASD program offers a link on their website to CanFASD, a Canadian website with resources: Go here for more information: <https://canfasdblog.com/2020/03/25/covid-19-tips-for-caregivers-of-individuals-with-fasd/>

VI. Member Updates

Teri is tracking legislative bills and budget items related to COVID spending, both federal and state funds. A bill passed [SB 241](#) that offers many provisions that will help Alaskans cope with financial and other stresses due to COVID. Federal COVID relief funds are being distributed via

state programs, such as rent and mortgage relief for people who have lost their jobs (through AHFC) and grants for small businesses that have been impacted by COVID (through AIDEA). Community Assistance funds are being distributed to municipalities who are currently at different stages for distributing those funds locally. Social services programs, families, providers, individuals are encouraged to contact their municipal leaders to indicate how they have been impacted by COVID so that their voices are at the table when the funds are distributed locally. Teri is the co-chair of the Juneau Reentry Coalition, which has been gathering and purchasing art materials for inmates at Lemon Creek Correctional Center, to help with stress relief, since all in-reach programs have been shut down due to the Coronavirus.

Mike reported the Alaska Center for FASD is organizing a Lunch & Learn for public defenders, put on by Marilyn Pierce-Bulger, Mike Jeffery, and Gina (self-advocate). Mike is the liaison between NOFAS and Alaska, through the Alaska Center for FASD. They are doing some work related to messaging and screening.

Jeanne is participating with Jenn's Zoom caregiver support group, and reported that it is growing and this is good. She's working on a workforce development course related to pediatric navigation and care coordination. GCDSE just had a spring meeting via Zoom. She is advocating that the Division of Senior and Disability Services considers an FASD Waiver.

Hope is working with FASD funding to be sure it is spent efficiently and effectively, to include adding reimbursement for case management and training to the existing reimbursement for the diagnostic teams—she is hoping to understand what the resources and funding sources are for all the state's FASD spending. Also working on revising the provider agreement to allow coordination, referral, and more services within the diagnostic team. She's working with Jenny Baker related adolescent programming and FASD prevention and to align and integrate FASD into other efforts, such as Substance Misuse Prevention, workforce development, and employment for people with FASD.

Shannon traveled to Oregon and visited the Oregon Youth Facility Neurobehavioral Health Unit, where youth with FASD are served. They don't do much training specifically on FASD, but rather focus on skill-building, training in trauma, etc. DJJ was hoping to bring them to Alaska to train staff, but this is on hold during the Coronavirus health emergency. Most of DJJ's focus right now is keeping youth safe and not exposed to the virus, which is a stressful situation for everyone. One of the challenges is helping youth with sensory issues cope with wearing masks and being scared/triggered by staff wearing masks. DJJ has had one staff test positive for the virus, and appropriate measures were taken, including daily screening, so the virus hasn't spread to other staff or youth. They have been using the nose test, which some youth refuse to take, so they are being quarantined separately for 14 days. School at the facility has started again, which has brought back structure to the youth's lives, which is helpful, but the Zoom format doesn't fit everyone's learning style, so that is a barrier.

Jenn reported her diagnostic team has not been seeing children or families in person, but plan to start up soon. They prefer in-person to remote for the diagnostic process. She continues to teach "FASD Diagnosis, Intervention, and Strategies" at the University of Alaska Fairbanks online. Jenn suggested we promote linking individuals who need help with navigating case management and other needs, to resources.

Next meeting: June 10, 2020 *NOTE: This meeting was subsequently cancelled.*