



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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March 29, 2017

Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
Policy Unit
P.O. Box 110680
Juneau, AK 99811-0680

Subject: Public Comment on Adult Protective Services General Relief Assisted Living Home Care Program Proposed Policies

Dear Policy Unit:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comment on the proposed policies for the Adult Protective Services General Relief Assisted Living Home Care Program administered by the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. General Relief is an important program for vulnerable Alaskans who are in need of protective placement as determined by Adult Protective Services; for individuals who have been discharged from institutional placement such as a long-term care facility, hospital, psychiatric institution or a Department of Corrections facility; and others who are in a destitute condition and unable to care for themselves. In FY2016, the General Relief program served 871 vulnerable Alaskans of whom more than half (451) were Alaska seniors.

The Commission recognizes the gravity of the State's current fiscal situation and appreciates the Division's efforts to sustain the General Relief program for as long as possible to provide critical assistance to persons who require emergency care so that they may live safely in the least restrictive possible setting. We propose the following recommendations for consideration:

- Eligibility Determination and Emergency Placement – Initially, we had much comment to share with respect to eligibility determination and emergency placement, however, our concerns have been satisfactorily addressed by the SDS policy unit based on the questions we submitted concerning emergency, protective placement of vulnerable adults at risk of harm. We do recommend, however, that the final policy be more clearly stated that an emergency placement can be made prior to an eligibility determination.
- Waitlist and Funding Availability – For situations in which there are insufficient funds to serve both existing individuals receiving GR benefits and new applicants, SDS may want to consider employing a monthly resource allocation for the General Relief program over a 12-month period in order to provide a means that would allow the Division to address the waitlist on a consistent

basis and avoid running out of money before the end of the fiscal year. We recommend this strategy to accommodate the needs of vulnerable Alaskans requiring emergency placement so that they may receive some level of immediate support throughout the year.

- Information and Referral - Engage the Aging and Disability Resource Center to assist the vulnerable person by providing information and help with completing applications for appropriate assistance programs such as Adult Public Assistance, heating assistance, food stamps, Senior Benefits, long-term supports, and related programs while they are on the waitlist for General Relief and before exhausting their GR benefits. The Commission recommends the inclusion of a section for information and referral in the proposed policies for General Relief.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment and for the Division's good work administering the General Relief programs for Alaska's most vulnerable adults. Please contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director, for additional information at denise.daniello@alaska.gov or 465-4879.

Sincerely,



David A. Blacketer
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director