

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING**  
**Annual Face to Face meeting: February 6-10, 2017**  
**APPROVED Minutes**  
**Alaska Office Building (AOB)**  
**350 Main Street, Room 115, Juneau, Alaska**

**February 6, 2017**

Call to order: Meeting called to order by Chair, David Blacketer, at 3:00 p.m.

Roll Call: ACoA Commissioners present:

David Blacketer, ACoA Chair, Marie Darlin, ACoA Vice-Chair, Mary Shields, Rachel Greenberg, Gordon Glaser, Linda Combs, Duane Mayes, and Anna Frank. By Phone: Bob Sivertsen and Katie Abbot

Excused Absences: Banarsi Lal,

ACoA Staff Present: Denise Daniello, Deirdre Shaw and Lesley Thompson

**ACTION: Adoption of the February 6-10, 2017 meeting Agenda. Motion was made by Rachel to approve the revised agenda, seconded by Marie to approve the agenda. Adoption unanimously approved.**

**Ethics Disclosures** – David reminded Commission members to email their disclosures to Denise.

**Safety:** Lesley briefed participants on safety procedures for the building, and other housekeeping items.

**ACoA Chair Report, David Blacketer**

David opened our meeting by welcoming Katie Abbot to the Commission, and thanking Paula for her years of service. He also welcomed Linda Combs to her first face-to-face meeting. David spoke about the legislature and that many of the legislators were new and that they needed to be educated about ACoA, its priorities, and issues of concern to seniors when we meet with them during the week. David urged Commission members to suggest legislators work on a long-term sustainable fiscal plan this year as well as a budget.

**ACoA Executive Director's & Staff Report** (Written report located on pages 97-101 in the board meeting packet)

**Denise Daniello, ACoA Executive Director**

Denise gave a detailed overview on ACoA's advocacy which included addressing Alaska's fiscal gap. The deficit is lower this year (estimated to be about \$3 billion currently) as compared to the approximate \$4 billion deficit last fiscal year which is due, in part, to increased Federal revenues from Medicaid reform, spending reductions to state government of which DHSS took a significant reduction (over the past three years DHSS budget has been reduced by \$191 million), and part due to increased revenues from oil. The Governor's proposed reductions to the budget will reduce the deficit by \$890 million. Additional projected revenues (estimated at \$1.4 billion) will include the use of the Permanent Fund and restructuring of the oil/gas subsidy. DHSS has seen the largest reduction of its total budget over the past four years.

The legislative session started in January with 25% of the legislation being new, 11 in the House and 4 in the Senate. The House has changed majority with a bi-partisan coalition, the majority in the Senate remains the same, with Republicans in control.

ACoA's Legislative Advocacy Committee has three priorities this year:

1. Preserve the Senior Safety net
2. Provide appropriate supports for family and other natural caregivers serving older Alaskans
3. Improve the capacity to serve persons with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias

One of our main goals is to educate new legislators and stress the importance on home and community-based services for seniors, not only to improve quality of life but to save on costs of long term care. The Alaskans Living Independently (ALI) waiver, for example, saves more than \$171 million annually by allowing seniors to remain in their homes and communities and receive services they need.

The ACoA presented to the Central Council Tlingit Haida Caregivers Workshop in January where Planners Lesley Thompson and Deirdre Shaw addressed fall prevention.

### **Review of Senior Snapshot HSS Planner II, Deirdre Shaw**

Deirdre gave a brief overview of the 2016 Senior Snapshot demographics:

Alaska continues to have the fastest growing senior population in the country at 60% but has the smallest population of seniors per capita. Southwest Alaska has the fastest growing senior population in the state, however the area with the highest population of seniors per capita is the Southeast, and it is worth noting that while the overall population in the Southeast is declining the senior population is increasing.

### **ACoA FY2017 Budget Projections Jacqelli Ziegenfuss, Administrative Operations Manager, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services**

Jacqelli spoke about the FY2017 budget changes for ACoA. The has experienced a 38% decrease in funding which includes the elimination of two full-time staff, the administrative position ended in FY 17, and the Planner II position to end in FY18. During the same time, interagency service agreement costs increased considerably, a 36% increased since FY15, when compared to FY 14. A reimbursable service agreement (RSA) is an agreement between one state agency to another for payment in exchange for services. All state agencies have charge backs for services such as Human Resources, IT, telephone support services/infrastructure support, etc. RSAs is an annual agreement, signed at the beginning of the fiscal year, where each agency negotiates a "contract" in which they articulate the services that they are going to provide in exchange for payment. In regards to IT services, Jacqelli explained that we have seen an increase in costs due to the legislature's reduced UGF, in order to make up for the shortfall. They replaced UGF with interagency receipt authority and require that agencies pay for the support services they need from their budgets. Since ACoA's positions have been reduced by 50%, the costs of the RSA are supposed to be reduced as well, however nothing is guaranteed and an increase is possible. RSAs are allocated typically by computer count, and/or personnel costs.

Denise and Jacqelli worked closely to identify potential balance or deficit, and are working to brainstorm solutions or strategies, and have been able to employ some of those strategies. ACoA's projected deficit is now \$2,500, by curbing some spending from now to the end of the year, Jacqelli believes that those budget deficits can be absorbed.

### **ACoA Committee & Representational Reports**

#### **Executive Committee Report, David Blacketer, ACoA Chair**

David reviewed the destinations and the agencies to visit for the Commission's rural outreach travel. The purpose of this travel is to visit with seniors, providers and public members in designated Southeast rural communities to learn about services provided for seniors, discuss community issues of concern regarding senior services, and to

talk about possible strategies to address them with providers and public members. The rural outreach schedule consisted of five groups going to Ketchikan, Sitka, Juneau, Haines, and Kake.

Jim McCall, AHFC Senior Housing Office, informed the Commission that he will not be able to travel due to budget restrictions. Denise will seek travel approval to join the Haines group so that we have at least two ACoA members making that visit. The Sitka site visit, which consisted of a Commissioner and staff member, was cancelled due to one of the members not being able to travel.

#### **Planning Committee: Mary Shields and Rachel Greenberg, Co-Chairs**

Rachel provided information about ACoA's participation in the Senior Housing Workgroup presentations at the Alaska Public Health Summit which took place in Anchorage in January. These updates are detailed on page 104 in the meeting packet.

Mary and Rachel reported that the Commission hosted the *Alaska State Plan for Senior Services, FY2016-2019* implementation meeting in December. State Plan agency partners reported their efforts regarding the Goals objectives and performance measures in FY2016 in addition to their plans for further efforts in FY2017. This reported information was used to draft a written implementation report that would be reviewed by the participants for accuracy. After being finalized, the Commission included copies of the document in the legislative packets. The document will also be sent to other public officials, partner agencies, and made available to public members. The State Plan implementation report will be posted on the Commission's website.

The Trust and ACoA hosted the implementation meeting for *Alaska's Roadmap to Address Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias*, with the purpose of reviewing plans for the 1915(k) and 1915(i) Medicaid reform measures identified in SB 74. The meeting also included reports from the Roadmap's agency partners who described their efforts to implement the Roadmap's priority strategies. This information was used to create the 2016 Roadmap implementation report that was included in the Commission's legislative packet and provided to all legislators during the Commission's legislative visits. The Roadmap implementation report was also sent to several public officials, stakeholder agencies, and made available to public members.

#### **ACoA Legislative Advocacy Committee: Marie Darlin, Committee Chair**

Marie informed the group that there are 15 new legislators that will need to be educated about ACoA priorities and the needs of a growing senior population. A summary page of the Commission's three advocacy priorities is part of our packet for legislators. Individual position papers provide more details concerning each priority. Marie pointed out that there are not many bills of interest for seniors introduced as yet. ACoA's main priority is to protect the Senior Safety Net.

Rachel mentioned that a new legislator asked if there were any bills that ACoA wanted him to support. She noted Rep. Thompson's bill, HB 16, to provide training for public safety officers in their interactions with people with non-physical impairments including persons with hearing problems, memory challenges, and others who have a tendency to wander.

#### **Pioneer Home Advisory Board Report (PHAB): Bob Sivertsen, Chair**

Bob Sivertsen noted the PHAB's concerns about the budget and what that means for the Pioneer Homes. In March, there will be a 1.5% rate increase for residents. As it stands the budget for the Pioneer Homes is the same as last year, which means an \$800,000 reduction in funding due to increases in costs (including personal costs). In FY 16, the Legislature reduced the Pioneer Homes' budget by approximately \$1.8 million dollars. The Senate proposed a \$100 wait list fee to offset the reduction. The waitlist fee was not implemented because it was not allowed by the Pioneer Homes' statute. The \$1.8 million reduction was never put back into the budget.

Bob also reported that there are 34 unfilled beds because of reduced staffing levels. In total, the Pioneer Homes have 499 beds with 34 not available. To date 395 people are on the active waiting list. Ketchikan alone has over 80 people on the active wait list. Only two beds are available.

The PHAB is still figuring out how Medicaid 1915(i) can work for the Homes. They recognize that Alzheimer's and other related dementia do not qualify a person for nursing home level of care as required by the waiver.

Ketchikan's senior population grew 3% in the last year. However, the number of available beds in the Ketchikan Pioneer Home is declining. This places a strain on communities to keep up with the demand for care and housing for an ever growing senior population. Bob noted that this message was conveyed in the PHAB's letter to the Governor.

Staffing: Vickie is planning to retire soon and there are no plans as yet about the future status of her position. There is also concern that retaining staff will be difficult under the current financial climate.

**Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, ("Governor's Council): Duane Mayes, Director for Senior and Disabilities Services, provided the report in the absence of ACoA Commissioner Banarsi Lal**

Duane Mayes: The Governor's Council put together a packet of legislative priorities that included HB 16, which ACoA also supports, and HB 10 which has to do with streamlining the process for children in foster care. Another Governor Council's priority was a proclamation to address the legislature and request passage of a sustainable fiscal plan. They also reinforced the "ABLE Act" which allows eligible persons who work to save money without impact to their Social Security benefits.

Duane reported that the Governor hosted a reception for the Governor's Council and the State Independent Living Council at the Governor's mansion. The event was well-attended by members of both organizations. DHSS Commissioner Valerie Davidson also attended the reception.

Duane also informed the Commission of plans approved by the Inclusive Community Choices Council (ICC) to initiate a 1915(c) limited supports waiver to refinance grant-funded services for persons with developmental and intellectual disabilities who do not meet level of care.

Denise added that transportation is another priority for the Governor's Council. They are advocating for the establishment of a dedicated fund for community transportation services within the Department of Transportation.

Duane noted that he serves on the Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board. This board would like to create a consistent definition for coordinated transportation to be used across all divisions and departments and to develop a set of performance measures to evaluate outcomes. Duane also noted that he met with the Chief of Staff on the Advisory Board asking for the Board to consider passing a resolution that would create a standardize definition for coordinated transportation and a set of performance measures. Duane also suggested that a letter be drafted by the Governor to bring about consistency between all stakeholders for coordinated transportation.

Rachel discussed the problem of public transportation nationally for special populations. She noted that normal public transportation does not work for this population. In the State of Alaska even, the best public transportation systems still do not work well for seniors. Rachel's concern is that putting the bulk of efforts into public transportation will divert funds away from a significant portion of the underserved senior population.

Gordon noted the merits of the public school transportation system which are efficient, inclusive, and work. It is also easier to put in a vehicle modification ahead of time rather than retrofit a vehicle to accommodate those with special transportation needs.

**Medicare Ad Hoc Committee**

Rachel brought up Duane’s suggestion to work to change state regulations that would require medical providers to serve a certain percentage of their patients who are insured by Medicare in order to get state licensure. In order to go through with this there must be buy-in from providers. Rachel and Denise spoke with a local physician, Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Administration, and Chelsea Holt staff to Senator Murkowski’s office about attending those meetings. Rachel and Denise will continue to research additional interested parties for input.

Linda Combs added that it is difficult for seniors living in the MatSu to find a primary care provider who will serve them due to the lower reimbursement rates and additional paperwork requirements.

**ACTION: Establish ACoA FY2017-2018 Meeting Dates**

David said that action on the meeting dates will be moved to the end of the meeting on Friday, February 10.

**Recess to Tuesday, February 7 at 8:30 a.m.**

\*\*\*\*\*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING  
Annual Face to Face meeting: February 7, 2017  
Alaska Office Building (AOB)  
350 Main Street, Room 115, Juneau, Alaska**

Call to order: Meeting called to order by Chair, David Blacketer, at 8:30 a.m.

Roll Call: ACoA Commissioners present:

David Blacketer, ACoA Chair, Marie Darlin, ACoA Vice-Chair, Mary Shields, Rachel Greenberg, Gordon Glaser, Linda Combs, Duane Mayes, and Anna Frank.

Excused Absences: Banarsi Lal, Bob Sivertsen and Katie Abbot

ACoA Staff Present: Denise Daniello, Deirdre Shaw and Lesley Thompson

**Office of the Governor, Rebecca Braun, Policy Advisor**

Rebecca Braun opened with a statement about Alaska’s budget, addressing the fact that the budget shortfall is driving policy at the moment. She provided a summary of tax revenue statistics. From FY2014 to FY2015, Rebecca noted, Alaska’s tax revenues fell by 75% which was caused by a 96% drop in oil severance taxes. By comparison, the second largest drop in oil tax revenues was in North Dakota when their tax revenue fell by 6%. These statistics highlight Alaska’s unique revenue situation.

Rebecca spoke about this Administration’s philosophy on budgets, emphasizing that budgets are not just about dollars, but a reflection of our values. Currently, the largest percentage of our budget is allocated to education and health care.

Rebecca shared some of the Governor’s vision in his words from the State of the State address:

“I envision an Alaska with the lowest rates of domestic violence and sexual assault and the highest rates of high school graduation and employment;

An Alaska where our youth have hope for their future and turn to training and education – not

drugs, alcohol, or suicide;

An Alaska where the work force is made up of 100 percent Alaskans; where the shift workers commute from Minto, not Mississippi;

An Alaska with thousands of new value-added jobs – let’s start exporting finished products rather than raw materials;

I envision an Alaska boasting the lowest cost of energy, not the highest;

An Alaska where the cost of health care is not out of reach for small businesses and individuals;

An Alaska where we set the standard for environmental stewardship and responsible resource development;

An Alaska where local governments have the authority and resources to meet their communities’ needs;

An Alaska where education funding is not a cliff hanger each year – and teachers don’t get pink slips every spring.

A vision of a strong economy, vibrant communities, healthy families and a healthy environment is worth fighting for. It is worth sacrificing for. It is our sacred obligation to future generations.”

**Department of Health and Social Service, Commissioner’s report  
Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, Duane Mayes and Lisa Morley**

Lisa provided an overview about the purpose of the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) purpose explaining that it is a national program supported by the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS) and the Administration for Community Living that provides individuals who seek services and supports with information and options counseling. DHSS wanted to test the effectiveness of having somebody go through the ADRC prior to applying for Medicaid waiver services or Personal Care Assistant (PCA) services. The pilot project found cost savings could be achieved when individuals are given options for service. The pilot also found a 75% decrease in applications for the Medicaid waiver, which is where the cost savings were actualized.

Lisa further noted that SDS is working to use Medicaid admin claims to help support the ADRCs which have been, for the most part, supported by General Funds and funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. Using Medicaid admin claims will help sustain the ADRCs and put less strain on GF for funding direct services.

Due to the federal requirement for “conflict free services,” many organizations no longer can provide care coordination and Medicaid services.

The Medicare Information Office (MIO): Duane noted that his suggestion about modifying licensing regulations to require doctors to have at least 10% of their patients insured by Medicare was actually a recommendation made by Judith Bendersky, the previous Medicare Information officer. Jeanne Larsen has now stepped up to that position. The Medicare Information Office is also supported by many Medicare volunteer counselors

Duane also reported about the request from two firms for a Certificate of Need who are planning to construct two new nursing facilities in the MatSu, with one in Palmer and the second in Wasilla. The Mat-Su region has the fastest growing senior population state, and there is no Nursing Facility in the valley. For in order for people to comfortably age in place there must be appropriate housing. The DHSS approved 144 beds in total although the request was for a higher amount. The private firms have appealed the DHSS's decision. The repeal process can take anywhere from six to twelve months.

### **Alaska Legal Services (ALS), Holly Handler, Attorney**

Holly started her presentation with an overview of ALS services. ALS has attorneys in 11 offices statewide. They provide low or free civil legal assistance to Alaskans with modest incomes, seniors, and veterans and provide help with establishing wills, powers of attorney, defense against predatory lending practices that can lead to foreclosures, and assistance to clients to obtain/maintain their public benefits. ALS also provides Community Education and Outreach. All the attorneys based in staff offices do rural travel. They collaborate with senior centers and tribal governments. ALS provides probate estate planning, advanced life planning, power of attorney and health care directives. They also educate about Medicaid and Medicare and why Medicare is so important for health coverage for older Alaskans, they also educate about social security benefits and disability benefits for disabled seniors. ALS has hired a new staff attorney, Glenn Shidner, based in Anchorage, who will be serving seniors full-time. He is developing educational resources with a focus on senior civil matters. ALS has also engaged a one-year AmeriCorps equal justice fellow who is based in Fairbanks. Her Fellowship focuses on representing seniors across the state facing abuse neglect and exploitation.

#### Updated Power of Attorney Form

Holly then talked specifically about the changes to the Power of Attorney form that were implemented as the result of legislation passed last session to modernize Alaska's POA statute and make it inter-state compatible. The updated Power of Attorney form is on the ALS website in printable form. One significant change on the form is the requirement for the principal to initial every power they transfer to their agent. The new form provides principals with the power to transfer different powers to different agents. In the previous form, the principal just needed to sign the bottom of the form to transfer all powers to a single agent.

In addition, the updated form includes a new category for "hot powers." These are powers that are particularly sensitive to financial exploitation and include additional reporting requirements for agents.

### **Public Comment**

Kerri from Palmer commented on the ADRCs. She wanted to make sure that ADRC staff are trained on senior issues and senior services.

### **Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training Program (MASST) – Rita Gray**

The program is trying to break down age discrimination by using computer applications in order to increase anonymity. The MASST program experienced a 50% reduction in federal funding this fiscal year. The program used to assist about 500 older workers, now it is down to helping 187. The law states that 25% of participants must be placed in jobs.

One innovation the MASST program is working on is putting job centers within the prison system in order to help returning seniors for work. The MASST program is working with partners in order to break down silos. The program uses Department of Labor Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding to prepare older worker for jobs.

### **Preparing for Legislative Visits**

#### **Overview of ACoA Legislative Advocacy Priorities and Targeted Messages, Denise Daniello**

Denise provided a brief overview of ACoA's legislative priorities and the legislative information packet in order to prepare for the legislator visits.

**ACTION: Resolution 2017-001**

**Resolution to Support the Governor's Capital Request for the AHFC Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund**

David read the AHFC resolution to the group. Rachel took issue with the funding amount in the resolution expressing that \$1 million dollars was not enough. Gordon asked if funding from the Rasmuson Foundation was contingent upon funding from the State. The answer is yes but there is no matching amount specified.

Gordon moved to table the resolution until after the Rural Site visits. Rachel seconded the motion. All, all were in favor.

**Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority: Greg Jones, Interim CEO; Jeff Jessee, Legislative Liaison; and Amanda Lofgren, Program Officer**

Amanda reported about the Project Forest Home project as a place to transition individuals who have been at Alaska Psychiatric Institute for an extended period of time, for more than 90 days, or 3 admissions. The program suffered a \$40,000 setback that will briefly delay their opening.

ACoA took the lead on the Governor's Housing Summit. Denise and Amanda have been working closely with the division on the Dementia Care Initiative and the ADRD Roadmap. During the summit Duane Mayes from SDS talked about the 1915i Medicaid option focusing on data, and how SDS is working on a way for Pioneer Homes to get more people on the waiver. The Trust is working with the Pioneer Homes to determine how many Pioneer Home residents are on payment assistance who have dementia and challenging behaviors that require substantial intervention as these individuals may be eligible for services through the proposed 1915(i) option. In addition, SDS has been running data on individuals who have been assessed for both PCA as well as a Medicaid waiver.

The Trust has been working really closely with the Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities and the Governor's Council to develop a unified vision for the intellectual and developmental disabilities service system. The Trust sponsored an extensive stakeholder process that included focus group sessions. The group came up with a shared vision as well as five key priorities. The group wanted to move forward with putting their vision into a bill to solidify those priorities within the Home and Community Based Services statute. One of the things that they feel is really important is that it is not really a great time to open a statute with Medicaid in the title. The organizations will work over the next year to come up with a unified vision for all of services to that can potentially go into a bill next year. This will focus on the whole person centeredness system, currently the Trust is getting some baseline information and will spearhead the project in the near future.

Greg Jones, Interim CEO, reported that Chris Cook will serve as a new Trustee, pending legislative confirmation. This year the Trust appointed a new Trustee, Chris Cook. Mr. Cook is still awaiting confirmation which usually doesn't happen until the end of session. The Trust is still preparing for the legislative audit that hasn't begun the audit as yet. They have been working on their legal analysis by being prepared to answer questions and turn over papers; the audit will be able to inform the public about the inner workings of the Trust.

Mr. Jones is working on an Organizational Review and advertising for the vacant CFO position. The Trust has not started advertising for a CEO as yet. The Trust has been spending a fair amount of time with the Trust Land office, mostly working on the timber project.

Jeff Jessee provided the legislative update. He noted that Medicaid reform is going to continue to be a topic that is a challenge. The dilemma that we have with large-scale reform like that is the legislature passed this bill last

session is not complete. The process is quite complicated in itself. In addition, there could be new changes coming on the Federal level that has not been factored in.

### **AgeNet, Marianne Mills**

AgeNet is made up of numerous provider agencies throughout the state. AgeNet convened for their annual legislative visits, the visits were divided up based on constituencies. AgeNet had legislative priorities that they presented to each legislator.

1. Protect current funding levels for senior home and community-based grants and Medicaid waivers
2. Fix the problem of Alaska's fiscal crisis

AgeNet had a productive meeting with the Governor. He was very responsive to supporting Home and Community-based Services.

### **Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL – Joan O’Keefe)**

SAIL recently began implementing the Nursing Home Facility Transition program in communities it serves. This program provides funds in order for individuals to move from the nursing home back into the community. SAIL is a recipient of a new three-year Federal demonstration project “IL STAND” which is an acronym for “Independent Living Services to Alaska Natives with Disabilities.” There is also a new partnership with the VA, for veterans directed home- and community based services that is now in its infancy. SAIL administers the STAR (Short Term Assistance and Referral) program for the Southeast that serves people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

### **Alaska Housing and Finance Corporation, Jim McCall**

Jim updated the Commission on AHFC’s latest housing data. Jim provided detailed information in AHFC’s meeting report provided to all Commission members.

### **Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman (OLTCO), Teresa Holt**

Teresa updated everyone on the status of long-term care facilities in Ketchikan. Detailed information is provided in the written report she provided.

Teresa noted that there will be a Long-Term Care Ombudsman bill introduced shortly to the Legislature. She did not have the details of the bill as yet but promised to pass the information along as soon as possible. The OLTCO received an increase in their budget by \$14,000, however, that the increase was due to the increase in full-time employee insurance costs.

### **Alaska Training Cooperative, Lisa Cauble**

Alaska Training Cooperative promotes Career Development opportunities for direct support to professional supervisors and providers. More information was provided in the report that everyone received. The program focuses on targeting the workforce who may be working with older adults and understanding what they can do as a caregiver or community member, or as an actual direct service provider. The programs provide training for Mental Health First Aid and the resources that are available. So far there are only 3 certified trainers for this Mental Health First Aid training. All three trainers were able to train 42 individuals. However last fall’s training was canceled due to low enrollment. The goal is to have at least one training each season.

### **Alaska Personal Care Assistance Providers Association, Allison Lee, President**

Allison Lee provided an overview of the Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Medicaid program. PCA provides in-home services for a person who meets Medicaid income eligibility criteria and requires hands-on assistance so that they may continue to live safely in the community. There are two models for delivering PCA services in Alaska:

Consumer-directed Personal Care Services model and an Agency-based model where the care is administered by a PCA agency. In Consumer directed PCS, the individual is responsible for hiring and firing their worker. The Alaska Personal Care Assistance Providers Association work as training partners with consumer-directed care participants, in order to identify suitable attendants, however, there is very little regulatory oversight for the programs and very little difference between the agency base model and which of the agency provides the worker and does his scheduling and the Consumer Directed model in which the agency is the individual receiving services.

**Review of the Rural Site Visit Schedule**

Commission members and Amanda Lofgren reviewed their schedule and itinerary for the upcoming rural outreach site visits.

**Recess**

The meeting recessed at 5:00 pm until Friday, February 10 at 8:30 a.m.

\*\*\*\*\*

**ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING  
Annual Face to Face meeting: February 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
Alaska Office Building (AOB)  
350 Main Street, Room 115, Juneau, Alaska**

Call to order: Meeting called to order by Chair, David Blacketer, at 9:00 a.m.

Roll Call: ACoA Commissioners present: David Blacketer, ACoA Chair, Marie Darlin, ACoA Vice-Chair, Mary Shields, Rachel Greenberg, Gordon Glaser, Linda Combs, Duane Mayes, and Anna Frank.

Excused Absences: Banarsi Lal, Bob Sivertsen, and Katie Abbot

ACoA Staff Present: Denise Daniello, Deirdre Shaw, and Lesley Thompson

**Duane Mayes - Senior and Disabilities Director**

Duane talked about the plan to revise Medicaid Waivers so the state can improve the infrastructure capacity to care for vulnerable Alaskans in home based settings delaying the need for institutional care. Like the DD waiver, Duane has had many meetings with providers to discuss the value of the Community First Choice option (1915(k) that will bring in an additional 6% federal reimbursement to the State.

Duane noted that we need to protect our investment in home- and community-based services as these are difficult budget times.

Duane also commented on the operational aspects of the Commission on Aging. Last year during the reauthorization, we lost two positions due to budget cuts. Sherice is now with SDS but shares some time with ACoA. Duane has directed Sherice to help Denise with the Commission’s administrative responsibilities. SDS and ACoA will draft a Memorandum of Agreement to describe the responsibilities. The Planner II position will end soon and SDS can help with the Planner II workload as needed.

Gordon concerned that one can work on the red line so far and then you either have to decrease the workload or increase the staffing. We don’t want to collapse or have our work decline. Too many people rely on the products.

Gordon still felt that we need to either reduce the work load or find other resources to continue with the same amount of work the commission is currently doing. We can no longer do more with less as we are at the red line. How that is done is not the Commission concern but with the Department. Mary stated that they want more money to keep the position.

Anna was able to do legislative visits with legislators in the morning filling in for Gordon while he was absent. She was able to speak as an elder especially to Alaska Native people. Gordon was able to meet with several legislators all of whom were supportive of our priorities. He was invited by Senator Berta Gardner to attend an evening performance at the Juneau Perseverance Theater where he was able to talk to other legislators about ACoA's legislative priorities.

## **Legislative Visits**

Marie was able to visit with Rep. Seaton and had a good discussion about the Senior Benefits program sun setting in 2018. He was also interested in the Senior Snapshot which his staff uses quite often.

Denise and Sam Trivette met with Representatives Guttenberg, Thompson, Kawasaki and Senator Wielechowski plus staff members of other legislators. She overall had 8 great visits and that the legislators liked the packets of information that were put together plus the implementation report. During the meetings many of the staff and/or legislators shared stories of their families. Senator Coghill shared his story about his father and how he now needs around the clock care. Senator Coghill's wife is the fulltime caregiver.

Rep. Kawasaki wants to introduce a bill to extend the Senior Benefits program, which sunsets on June 30, 2018.

Commissioners discussed the need to protect Medicaid optional services which may be targets for funding cuts because they utilize General Funds. We need to identify the optional services most important to seniors and the savings they provide to the state.

## **Site Visits**

### **Gordon Glaser and staff member Lesley Thompson, Ketchikan, Alaska**

We started at the Ketchikan Pioneer Home which has been facing many budget cuts. They have already closed down the respite unit which is very unfortunate. They have a preschool unit within the home which is a very successful intergenerational program. Because of the budget cut salaries are no longer competitive with the hospital so they are struggling to recruit staff. They have a very bare bones staff. They were just recently were able to update the kitchen.

Lesley mentioned that there is not behavioral health program for seniors in Ketchikan. The Pioneer Home would be willing to use an office for a tele-health program.

They also visited The Manor, having 13 beds, is an assisted living home serving seniors and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities. The residents told Gordon and Lesley they enjoyed living there. The director has plans for a major extension.

Rendezvous Adult Day has a great manager who has really improved the program and quality of the place. There is a challenge with transportation going to Ketchikan. The executive director, Licha Kelley-King was really took time to serve the people.

Lesley noted that they moved the senior meals program from downtown Ketchikan to the Native village of Saxman. The outcome has been that not as many people go to the congregate meeting site.

### **Anna Frank and David Blacketer – Kake, Alaska**

Anna and David went to the village of Kake. They started out at the new senior center, went to the Tribal Corporation office, health clinic which included a behavioral health clinic. They praised the paratransit van at the Kake Senior Center as it had a lift for people who are wheelchair bound. There are other transportation issues with elders such as having to take a small plane to leave the island. Small airplanes pose challenges for passengers with limited mobility to get on and off the plane. The senior center is rented from the Tlingit Haida Native Corporation. The Senior Center is open Monday through Thursday and provides the social hub for elders in the village. The Senior Center is not allowed to use Native food donations in preparing senior meals. The kids come over from the high school to get to know the elders.

Anna encouraged Kake elders to try and get on the ACoA Commission. The past mayor is going to apply to try and get on the Commission.

### **Mary Shields and Denise Daniello – Haines, Alaska**

Mary and Denise had productive meetings with many senior providers and seniors in Haines. Haines has the largest concentration of seniors per capita. Senior housing and long-term support services were centrally located in one large building that occupied about a street block.

Mary and Denise spent the morning in a joint meeting with representatives from all of the senior providers. Providers discussed the issues in addressing senior need which included, among other issues the absence of a long-term care facility and no public transportation. Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium is considering the options of providing this care.

The Haines Independent Senior Housing is actively raising money to pay off a balloon payment that is coming due this year.

The Haines senior center is open for 4 days a week and serves about 15 seniors per day. They have exercise and other programs in the center. They are currently building a pre-school next to the senior center with a grant from the Rasmuson Foundation.

Lucy Harold, a long-time Haines resident, helped to fundraise for Saint Lucy's Senior Living. She now lives in the assisted living that is named after her.

Denise encouraged Haines providers to participate in the senior legislative advocacy teleconferences to learn about legislation and budget items being considered for seniors.

### **Rachel Greenberg and Linda Colms – Juneau, Alaska**

Rachel and Linda started their Juneau tour of long-term support services with a visit to Wildflower Court, the only non-profit nursing facility in Alaska. Most of the skilled nursing facilities have about 91% of the residents on Medicaid. Wildflower Court has about 90% of their residents on Medicaid. During their time at Wildflower, they had a town hall meeting with the residents and then received a tour of the non-profit facility. Rachel reported that Juneau is very supportive of senior programs.

They talked to representatives of the Tlingit Haida Native Corporation who provide a weekly meal for elders.

Then they went to the Juneau Pioneer Home and talked about the wait lists and had lunch with residents. Afterwards they went to the Adult Day program, a part of Southeast Senior Services, which is very similar in the level of care of the other programs that they had already visited.

The last program they were able to participate was the virtual dementia tour sponsored by the Alzheimer's Resource Agency to provide an experiential learning experience of how it feels to have dementia. Rachel said this tour was "wonderful" and encouraged people to participate in the tour.

Linda was so impressed with every provider and their level of commitment to seniors. She will remember the person she had lunch with at the Pioneer Home. It was hard for him not to be closer to his family as he is not from Juneau. He would love to have an assistive living home in every community.

David thanked everyone for giving their report. He feels strongly that senior providers are working for seniors and they are definitely underpaid. The care and the longevity of the staff are amazing. Next year, David suggested, we need to think about doing our visits earlier in the week and to provide more time to discuss the visits.

**The Commission took action on the next meeting date: Tuesday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2017.**

**Ken Helander, Advocacy Director, AARP Alaska Report**  
***Back in the Closet? The Unfortunate Choice for LGBT Older Adults***

Ken Helander made a presentation about the needs of LGBT older adults. Commissioners appreciated the information and recognized the unmet needs of this special population.

**11:15 a.m. Wrap-Up & Closing Comments by Commissioners**

Commissioners enjoyed the meeting, especially the integration of the legislative visits with rural visits to Southeast rural communities.

**11:30 a.m. Adjourned**