

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING
Quarterly Board Meeting
Held by Teleconference on May 5, 2016
APPROVED Meeting Minutes

Call to order: Meeting called to order by Chair, Mary Shields, at 9:30 a.m.

Roll Call: ACoA Commissioners present: Mary Shields-ACoA Chair, David Blacketer, Rachel Greenberg, Bob Sivertsen, Paula Pawlowski, Anna Frank, Marie Darlin, Edna DeVries and Gordon Glaser.

Members absent: Duane Mayes and Eleanor Dementi.

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

ACTION: Adoption of the Meeting Agenda. Motion was made by Gordon, second by Rachel, to approve the agenda as presented. Adoption approved.

ACTION: Adoption of the February 8 – 11, 2016 meeting minutes. Motion made by Gordon, second by Rachel to approve the minutes as written. Adoption approved.

No ethics disclosures were made.

ACoA Chair Report, Mary Shields

Mary noted that the Commission has been working hard on senior legislative advocacy. We have been working at the national level to assist with the passage of the Older Americans Act. We sent letters to Representative Young, Senator Murkowski, and Senator Sullivan. Senator Sullivan and Senator Murkowski used some of the information that we sent about Alaska's seniors in their remarks during the Older Americans Month in Alaska festivities at the Anchorage Senior Activities Center.

Executive Director's Report, Denise Daniello

Advocacy Priorities

ACoA Legislative Priorities: The Legislature was scheduled to adjourn on Sunday, April 17 but extended session to work on the budget, oil, and tax revenue bills, in addition to Medicaid Health Care Reform (SB 74) and Criminal Justice Reform (SB 91). The budget deficit is estimated to be \$4.2 billion. Although the Legislature has made substantive budget reductions, we will not know how much progress has been made on the deficit until the Legislature adjourns as the budget and legislative items remain pending.

Below is a status report of legislation and budget items that ACoA supported through letters of support and committee testimony. For budget, our advocacy efforts have focused on preserving funding for the senior safety net. A final report will be presented during the May meeting by the ACoA Legislative Advocacy Committee.

Operating Budget HB 256, Conference Items for Senior Services

- **Senior Community Based Grants:** The Conference Committee reduced GF funding for Senior Grant-Funded Services by **-\$112,500 GF** (or 1.25%). The Senate originally proposed a \$450,000 reduction (5% cut), which was later adjusted to \$225,000 (2.5%) following public testimony on the budget and concern that seniors who would no longer be eligible for Senior Benefits may be subject to reduced services that would impose even greater strain on low-income seniors.

- Personal Care Assistance (PCA): The Senate proposed a \$9 million reduction (\$4.5 million GF / \$4.5 million Federal or 10% cut) however, the Conference Committee chose the House's recommendation of **\$0 funding reductions**, comparable to the Governor's budget. PCA services provide critical support for seniors and other vulnerable Alaskans with disabilities who require assistance with activities of daily living (eating, bathing, dressing, toileting, transferring) and instrumental activities of daily living (preparing meals, shopping, laundry, and light housework) to assist them to live in their own homes and communities.
- General Relief Assistance (GR): The Conference Committee chose the Senate's recommendation of a - **\$182,500 GF funding reduction** (or 2.5% cut) over the House's recommendation of reduced funding in the amount of \$365,000 (5% cut). The GR program, administered by SDS, provides a safety net for vulnerable Alaskans who are low-income and not eligible for other services or are waiting for an eligibility determination. General Relief provides a funding source for temporary assisted living place. The program served 940 vulnerable Alaskans in FY2015, according to SDS.
- Senior Benefits: The Conference Committee accepted the Senate's language of **no further reductions** for the two remaining tiers of Senior Benefits in FY2017.

The following operating budget items were not conference-able as the reductions were supported by the House and Senate and will therefore be implemented beginning July 1, 2016. The Commission submitted letters of information and testified in opposition to budget reductions affecting services for seniors during Finance Committee hearings.

Non-Conference Operating Budget Items

- Medicaid Adult Dental: Funding was reduced in the total amount of \$6,044,400 (\$3,161,700 GF / \$2,882,700 Federal) for this Medicaid State Option service. Implemented in April 2007, Medicaid Adult Dental provides dental care for many low-income seniors including routine care, tooth extraction, and dentures. Medicare does not cover the cost of most dental care for seniors.
- Alaska Affordable Heating Program: Funding in the amount of \$9,174,300 GF will be eliminated in the FY2017 budget for this 100% state-funded heating assistance program that provides energy assistance for households up to 221% federal poverty level. In FY2015, 815 households that received assistance through this program had at least one elderly member age 60 years and older. Funding for the Federal Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) that provides assistance for households up to 151% federal poverty level will not be affected.
- Alaska Pioneer Homes: Funding was reduced in the amount of \$741,000 GF which will result in the elimination of 11 staff positions, according to the Pioneer Homes. In addition, the operating budget (HB 256) adds a new provision for a \$100 annual fee for seniors who want to reserve a place on the Pioneer Home waitlist. This fee is projected to generate \$532,500 GF for the Pioneer Homes annually based on the current number of 5,325 seniors on the waitlist.

Capital Budget Items, SB 26

- Public and Community Transportation State Match: This program provides a local match for community public transit services applying for Federal transit grants that serve Alaska's vulnerable populations, including seniors and persons with disabilities.

- AHFC's Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund: Pending a legislative match, the Rasmuson Foundation proposed an increment in the amount of \$1,750,000 for the Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund. SB 26 identified a GF cash match of \$1,750,000 using re-allocated funds from AHFC's Energy Rebate Program that closed on March 28, according to AHFC Senior Housing Office. In FY2016, funding for the senior housing program was zeroed out.
- Joint Capital Budget Items: Funding is included for the joint capital budget items supported by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the statutory advisory boards (Alaska Mental Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, and the Alaska Commission on Aging):
 - Coordinated Transportation - \$1,050,000 (\$250,000 MHTAAR / \$800,000 GF/MH)
 - Assistive Technology - \$350,000 GF/MH
 - Essential Program Equipment - \$500,000 (\$250,000 MHTAAR / \$250,000 GF/MH)

Funding for Senior Benefits, which is funded 100% with General Funds (GF), is approximately \$15 million. Funding for the program was reduced by \$5.1 million in the FY2018 operating budget which will result in the elimination of the third income tier (household income from 101% to 175% federal poverty level) and impact 5,438 seniors. Seniors who qualify for the two lower income categories corresponding to 75% and 100% federal poverty level will continue to receive the \$250 and \$175 monthly payment, respectively. Senior Benefits is up for reauthorization in FY2017 with a sunset date of June 30, 2018.

ACoA Commissioner Gordon Glaser and Denise participated in site visits with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority. They visited the Providence Emergency Room Psych Department which has 7 beds. This department is used for observation and evaluation where 350 – 400 people are served each year. Most seniors are served in other areas of the hospital.

They also visited Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). According to API staff, the hospital is at capacity. In the past, API had a separate area for gero-psych patients with dementia and challenging behaviors which has since been converted to use by all patients. The API director, Melissa Ring, announced that she would be leaving in the near future. API is more of an acute care hospital where patients stay for less than 30 days. API is looking at sending more people down to Juneau and up to Fairbanks because they are at full capacity.

Staff Resignation: ACoA's Administrative Assistant, Sherice Cole, submitted her two-week notice of resignation that was received on April 22. Sherice was employed by ACoA for 8.5 years as the Admin Assistant. The fiscal note for SB 124 removed funding for the Administrative Assistant position in FY2017. SDS provided a lateral transfer for Sherice which she will begin on May 9, 2016. SDS has graciously offered to provide some administrative support to ACoA. ACoA and SDS will draft a Memorandum of Agreement/Understanding that describes those services to be provided going forward.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

State Plan Advisory Committee Funding Formula Task Force: During the planning process, the State Plan Advisory Committee agreed to remove the hold harmless provision in FY2017 and to continue work on the funding formula however, it was recognized that this work could not be accomplished in time for the FY2016-2019 State Plan submission. The State Plan Advisory Committee decided to continue work on the funding formula after the State Plan was adopted.

The ACoA Planning Committee held several meetings to prepare recommendations for the State Plan Advisory Committee Funding Formula Task Force to amend the funding formula. Public comment and findings from the senior provider survey were incorporated in the recommendations. The following recommendations were

presented and approved by members of the State Plan Advisory Committee Funding Formula Task Force on April 18. Specifically, these recommendations include:

- Recommendation #1: Implement the "Urban-Rural-Remote Factor" (to replace the rural-urban factor) and remove the cost of living factor;
- Recommendation #2: Remove the hold harmless provision and implement methodology to provide for base funding regional allocation using existing federal funds for FY2016;
- Recommendation #3: Subdivide Region V into two subsets that consist of Mat-Su (Region Va) and Kenai/Cordova/Valdez (Region Vb);
- Recommendation #4: Consider proposals to modify factor weights and approve a set of weights for the funding factors going forward.

The Funding Formula Task Force voted unanimously to approve recommendations #1 through #3. In addition, they approved the following weights for the revised funding formula factors: Population age 60+ (12.5%); population age 80+ (25%); minority (12.5%); poverty 65+ (27.5%); and urban-rural-remote (0%, 11.25%, and 22.5%). The revised weights emphasize funding for the oldest old and those living in poverty.

The next step will be to draft a formal request for the changes to the funding formula for review and approval by the Department of Health and Social Services and the U.S. Administration on Community Living in order to move forward with a 30-day public comment process planned for mid-May. Our goal is to implement the revised funding formula by July 1, 2016 (FY2017).

ACoA INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Executive Committee: This Committee met on April 12 to review and take action on the draft May 5, 2016 meeting agenda. The Committee confirmed with David Blacketer and Marie Darlin their interest to serve as ACoA's Chair and Vice Chair, respectively. In discussing FY2017 assignments for ACoA Committees, Marie asked for a list of duties to go with the Committee assignments for the meeting binder. The Committee reviewed the ACoA roster to note the Commissioners with terms expiring. Mary and Denise offered to contact those Commissioners (Edna DeVries, Anna Frank, and Mary Shields) to ask about their interest in serving another term. Anna and Mary expressed interest in their desire to continue service on the Commission. Edna indicated that she will need to step down to make time for another commitment. Eleanor Dementi's term expires in September 2016 after serving the maximum of eight consecutive years. Eleanor indicated her interest to apply again for service to the Commission after waiting out the required one-year.

INTERAGENCY COLLABORATION

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority: The Trust will meet in Anchorage on May 3-4. The Commission's presentation will focus on an overview of legislative session and the impacts from legislative sessions on providers and Senior Trust beneficiaries as well as perceived gaps in services going forward from future budget reductions. (A copy of ACoA's presentation is attached under Tab 2.)

May is Older Americans Month in Alaska & the Alaska Centenarian Project: The theme for Older Americans Month in Alaska is "Blaze a Trail" to focus on how seniors are leading and inspiring others. The Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission held its annual Older Americans Month in Alaska event on Wednesday, May 4 at the Anchorage Senior Center. The key note speaker was former State Senator Bettye Davis. Welcome remarks were provided by Anchorage Mayor Ethan Berkowitz. Alaska's Congressional delegation also provided comments. The Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Recognition Day celebration is planned for Thursday, May 12 at the Carlson Center from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Both events will honor senior volunteers, provide entertainment, and serve a delicious meal.

In addition, the Commission is honoring and celebrating Alaskan Centenarians, people who are 100 years old or older this year, as part of the Older Americans Month in Alaska activities during the month of May. A few years

ago, the Department of Health and Social Services and ACoA co-sponsored a special tribute to Alaska centenarians by publicly recognizing 20 of the 62 Centenarians identified during OAM festivities. This year, we plan to again celebrate Alaskan centenarians with the Governor's Office. So far, we have received consent from 23 Centenarians.

Passage of Reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, S. 192: For fifty years, the Older Americans Act has supported the efforts of America's older people to age with honor, dignity and independence with the provision of critical services such as senior meals, transportation, homemaker services, elder safety, and health promotion activities. This important legislation seeks to modernize the Older Americans Act by placing more emphasis on person-centeredness, allowing states more flexibility in the manner in which they provide services, promoting efforts to ensure elder safety, and other provisions that include increased federal funding for Older American Act services. The last reauthorization occurred in 2006 and expired in 2011. The Commission sent thank you letters to Alaska's delegation for supporting reauthorization of the Older Americans Act. We will also send a letter to President Obama for signing this important legislation. A copy of our letter is attached.

ACoA Commissioners Marie Darlin & David Blacketer, Co-Chairs: State Plan Steering Committee Report

Marie reported that the Committee had several meetings since the State Plan was approved to revise the funding formula. The Funding Formula Task Force, comprised of several members of the State Plan Steering Committee, had met specifically to look at this issue. The Task Force approved the revised funding formula as presented for the State Plan for Senior Services, FY2016-FY2019.

Lesley reported that Lisa Morley had just sent a final copy of the funding formula spreadsheet that included demographics from each of the Department's nine regions and the respective funding allocation. Since this report has just been sent out, we were not able to talk specifically about the final draft.

Denise revised the narrative in the funding formula narrative to contain the new information and drafted a letter to the Administration on Community Living describing the need for the revision. Lisa provided the new spreadsheet with all of the changes. The proposed formula was submitted to the Department of Health and Social Services and is under internal review. Pending approval, the formula will be implemented on July 1, 2016. Two public comment sessions have been scheduled for May 19 (webinar) and May 24, 2016 (teleconference).

ACoA Commissioner Marie Darlin, Legislative Advocacy Committee Chair

Marie expressed her satisfaction with the legislative teleconferences meetings. She noted the great discussion and information shared.

Marie noted that the Legislature is still in session. Currently, SB 91, Criminal Justice Reform, is being deliberated by the House Finance Committee. She also noted that every amendment to the bill is being scrutinized. Marie reviewed the progress made on other legislation that was being tracked and supported by the Commission.

- **Powers of Attorney, HB 8 (Reps Hughes, Gruenberg):** HB 8 modernizes Alaska's power of attorney statute by providing greater protection against financial exploitation and promoting better alignment across state lines to reduce problems that may develop when the Principal and Agent live in different states. Further, HB 8 proposes improvements to the power of attorney form that require the Principal to carefully consider and initial each power being transferred to one or more agents. **Status: HB 8 passed the Legislature and awaits transmittal to the Governor.**
- **Designated Caregivers for Patients, SB 72 (Senator Giessel):** This legislation aims to improve health outcomes for hospital discharged patients by asking patients to designate a caregiver who will voluntarily

provide aftercare and for hospitals to provide aftercare training to the designated caregiver in order to reduce hospital readmission, promote speedy patient recovery, and lessen the risk of possible injury to patients and caregivers. **Status: SB 72 passed the Legislature and awaits transmittal to the Governor.**

- Extension of Alaska Commission on Aging, SB 124 (Senator Stoltze):** This legislation reauthorizes the Commission for 8 years to June 30, 2024, although in a truncated form. Due to the budget deficit, the Commission’s staff will be reduced by 50% over the course of two years with the first cut occurring on July 1, 2016 and the second on July 1, 2017. The Commission received more than 20 letters of support and substantial public testimony in support of SB 124. During floor sessions, legislators commended the good work of the Commission on Aging and ACoA Commissioners. HB 226, sponsored by Representative Mike Hawker, was the companion bill. We thank Senator Stoltze and Representative Hawker for championing these bills in support of the Commission’s extension! We have submitted a request for a bill signing ceremony to be performed during one of the Older Americans Month celebrations in Anchorage (May 4) or Fairbanks (May 12). Senator Stoltz’s office wants dates to be able to sign SB 124. Deadline is June 30, 2016. **Status: SB 124 passed the Legislature and awaits transmittal to the Governor.**
- Disability, ID/License & Training Requirements, HB 77 (Representative Thompson):** Pending passage, HB 77 implements a voluntary identification system for persons with “hidden” disabilities that include Alzheimer’s disease and related dementias, mental illness, hearing loss, and other concealed health conditions in order to inform a public safety officer so that he/she may respond appropriately during an encounter. The bill also includes training for public safety officers how to recognize people with disabilities, appropriate interactions, and resources available. HB 77 has three fiscal notes with \$0 attached. **Status: HB 77 passed out of the House and is waiting in Senate Rules for a floor vote.**
- Omnibus Crime Bill, SB 91 (Senator Coghill):** Pending passage, this legislation will implement sweeping reforms to Alaska’s criminal justice system based on recommendations in a report from the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission aimed to reduce recidivism, keep Alaskans safe, and control state spending. SB 91 also supports investment of savings in behavioral health treatment services to reduce the rate of recidivism and community programs to support re-entry. According to the Commission’s report, Alaska’s prison population grew by 27% in the last decade, nearly three times faster than the resident population, and will necessitate the need for another prison to house an additional 1,416 inmates by 2024. According to the Department of Corrections, geriatric inmates age 60+ comprise less than 5% of the prison population. While older inmates are the least likely to recidivate, the cost for their health care is two to three times higher than younger inmates due to failing health. **Status: SB 91 continues to have hearings in House Finance and remains pending.**

ACoA Commissioner Bob Sivertsen - Alaska Pioneer Homes Advisory Board Chair Report

Bob reported that the Department plans to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to evaluate whether privatization of the Pioneer Homes Pharmacy Department could result in a cost savings while still provide quality services. The RFP may be released later this summer.

Bob reported that the FY2016 operating budget for the Pioneer Homes was reduced by \$1,545,800 which resulted in the elimination of 19 staff positions. He described how these staff cuts were implemented in each of the Homes.

Facility/Program - FY2016	Total Staff Reductions, 19 Positions
Anchorage	4
Juneau	3
Ketchikan	1
Sitka	1

Central office	2
Palmer	3
Fairbanks	3
Pharmacy	2

Bob reported that the Pioneer Homes FY2017 operating budget is slated for a reduction of \$1,408,300 resulting in the loss of 15 additional staff positions. The following table describes how these staff reductions will be implemented in each of the facilities. He noted that as a result of staff cuts, fewer beds will be available due to required staffing-resident ratio requirements.

Facility	FY2017 Staff Reductions– 15 Positions
Anchorage	5
Juneau	1
Ketchikan	2
Sitka	2
Palmer	2
Fairbanks	3

The Alaska Pioneer Homes Advisory Board has concerns about the intent language that was added in the budget regarding charging seniors \$100 annually to hold a place on the waitlist. The Board fears that this policy will result in many people having to drop off the active and inactive waitlists. The budget changed the funding source to increase the waitlist income and decrease general funds by \$532,500. They are also concerned about what will happen to the people who need services but are unable to have their names on the list.

Due to staffing reductions and budget uncertainties, the Pioneer Homes are having problems finding and recruiting qualified staff.

ACoA Chair Mary Shields: Review of ACoA Committee Structure & Responsibilities

Mary reviewed the ACoA Committees and structure that are in place for the Alaska Commission on Aging. These are outlined in our bylaws and policies and procedures. ACoA Chair Elect David Blacketer will work with Commissioners and Denise to appoint Commissioners to ACoA's Committees.

- Executive Committee – David Blacketer, new ACoA Chair
- Legislative Advocacy Committee – Marie Darlin, Chair
- Planning Committee
- By-Laws Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Outstanding Older Alaskans' Recognition Committee
- Ad Hoc Committee - Ad hoc committees can be as needed for an issue that we plan to do.
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Representative
- Alaska Pioneer Homes – David Blacketer, ACoA Chair
- Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education

David requested that every Commissioner send Mary and Denise an email stating which committees they are interested in serving on. David asked for all Commissioners to at least serve on the Legislative Advocacy Committee so they know the issues/legislation that we are working on throughout the legislative session.

Action Item The following dates were proposed and approved by Commissioners for the FY2017 ACoA board meeting calendar:

September 15, 2016 - Rachel moved to accept this date for video and teleconference board meeting. Gordon provided a second. The motion passed.

December 7th, 2016 – Rachel moved and Marie seconded this date for a video and teleconference board meeting. Motion passed.

February 6 – 10, 2017– Rachel moved and Marie seconded for combining the quarterly Commission meeting, rural outreach and legislative advocacy meeting as a face-to-face meeting. The motion passed.

May 3, 2017 – Rachel moved to have the May board meeting by teleconference and videoconference. The motion was seconded by Gordon. Motion passed.

Public Comments:

Joan Towers described her recovery from a fall that resulted in a broken hip and wrist. She was hospitalized for 5 days. She could not find a place for transitional housing after a stay in the hospital. She required assistive equipment. Ms. Towers received help from the hospital and the Mat-Su Senior Center which helped her to successfully transition back home.

Janet Beeter, President of Mat-Su Senior Services, welcomed everyone to Palmer and presented a comprehensive overview of the services provided by the Mat-Su Senior Services.

Elaine Carpenter, from Soldotna and an employee of Access Alaska, expressed her concern about the lack of transportation services for seniors living in Soldotna who are not on a Medicaid waiver. ACoA Commissioner Rachel Greenberg informed the group that there are funds from the Older Americans Act that funds transportation services for seniors who are not on the waiver and said that she would follow-up with Soldotna senior Services.

Kristine Ingleg talked about the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) and explained how the ADRC works and how it has been able to help seniors find and connect with services in their community.

David Levy, Senior Services Coordinator for the Anchorage Muni, provided an overview of the Older Americans Month event held at the Anchorage Senior Activities Center and thanked people for attending. He noted a new partnership of the Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission with the Anchorage Library for people who are homeless and who come to the library as a community center. The Anchorage ADRC will provide information/referral to those persons. David also talked about the Muni contracting with AHFC to provide case management services for Chugach View and Chugach Manor senior housing. David also mentioned that the Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission meets with the Mat Su Council on Aging on an annual basis to discuss issues of concern to both groups and how they can work together to promote common goals. He also noted that an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) that included both Anchorage and the Mat-Su would provide a viable solution to the decreasing funds from the State for senior services. ACoA Commissioner Gordon Glaser asked David to send more information about the AAA and to consider doing a feasibility study in the future.

Ed Zastrow, Ketchikan, spoke to the importance of the ACoA Legislative Teleconferences to inform public members of legislation and budget items affecting Alaska seniors. He uses the information to inform the local

AARP chapter as well as the Ketchikan Pioneer Home staff and residents. Ed also shares the information with local news media. Ed expressed his appreciation for the good work of the Commission.

Ed Christian, Palmer resident, called attention to the need for someone to collect data information to study if an Area Agency on Aging (AAA) might be a good solution to meet the needs seniors in the Mat-Su. Seniors rely too much on staff and need to look broader in other areas. He personally attends the transportation group that meets at the Mat-Su Senior Center. He expressed concern about transportation problems for Mat-Su seniors to get a ride to Anchorage. He noted the need for a comprehensive study.

Rose Madenren, Wasilla resident, asked for improved screening of Personal Care Assistants (PCAs) and that PCA to refrain from smoking in front of elders. She also would like to see encouragement from staff and others for seniors to use transportation for shopping and to attend fun events in order to be part of the community, and not just for medical appointments. She enjoys riding the bus on Wednesdays as it is free.

Recess for Lunch and Older Americans Month Celebration. Commissioners joined Mat-Su seniors for lunch and to celebrate Older Americans Month in Alaska. They read the Governor's Executive Proclamation, discussed the Alaska Centenarian project, and read the names of Alaskan Centenarians who were honored this year. A Mat-Su Centenarian offered her advice as to how to live a long and happy life.

Nominations Committee: Presentation of the slate of candidates for ACoA Officers

The following motion was made by the ACoA Nominating Committee. **Rachel moved to nominate David Blacketer for chair and Marie Darlin for Vice-chair. Gordon moved to close nominations, which was seconded by Rachel. The motion was approved unanimously.** David and Marie will assume their respective officer positions on July 1, 2016 for two years.

Sarra Khlifi – Alaska Food Coalition Manager

Sarra noted that senior hunger is growing just like the senior population. Older Alaskans have more chronic health conditions which leave seniors living in poverty with a choice between buying food or medicine.

There are many great food programs helping seniors. The federal food box program serves 1,900 seniors statewide with a monthly food box.

The SNAP program could serve more seniors as there are only 33% of those estimated to be eligible are enrolled in the program. Sarra emphasized the need to help Elders in rural Alaska.

Feeding America is a national food network that is raising awareness about senior hunger. They would like to hear local stories about this issue.

The Alaska Food Coalition would like us to contact State legislators and Alaska's Congressional delegation to inform them of senior hunger in Alaska.

Sarra also noted that the 2018 Farm Bill will be soon reviewed and public comment is needed regarding policy recommendations.

Amanda Lofgren, Program Officer – Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Amanda informed the group of the passing of former Trustee Dr. Doolittle and that he would be greatly missed by Trustees and staff. Dr. Doolittle lived in Fairbanks.

Amanda explained that Trust staff is working on the FY18-19 budget process. The Trust will hold a webinar on May 6 to highlight the Trust's new funding priorities and describe how the funding process will change. The Trust has engaged a group of key stakeholder partners to look at new opportunities of using Trust funding to implement measures for Medicaid Reform (SB 74) and Criminal Justice Reform (SB 91) that will cut across all of the Trust's Focus Areas. This will be a joint project that will affect funding decisions now and into the future. In July, this stakeholder group will meet for two days to examine new funding strategies that encompass the Trust's priorities for Medicaid Reform and Criminal Justice Reform to improve the health and well-being for all of the Trust's beneficiaries. The budget work by the stakeholder group will be completed by the end of July. The FY2018 budget recommendations will be presented to the Trust Planning Committee for review in August and finalized by the Trust board at their September meeting.

The Trust has proposed a "Dementia Care Initiative" to address the needs of beneficiaries who do not meet nursing home level of care now required for Medicaid waiver services. Amanda explained that this initiative would involve looking at changes to the level of care for the 1915(c) waiver that would help people with Alzheimer's become eligible for waiver services. By federal law, the waiver offers people who qualify the option to receive services in a nursing home or through home- and community-based services. Some policymakers are concerned that this initiative could lead to a "woodwork effect" that would increase the number of people who would choose placement in the nursing home over waiver services increasing costs incurred by the State.

The Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) serves people with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ADRD) who have challenging behaviors. API is in the process of transitioning five people from API with dementia back to the community. These individuals have no placement and the Trust is encouraging API to delay their transition until appropriate housing can be found.

The Trust is investing significant funds for implementation of SB 74 (Medicaid reform). The Trust provided money to Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) to purchase a new assessment tool called the "InterRAI" to replace the existing Consumer Assessment Tool (CAT). The InterRAI tool focuses on the consumer's strengths and preferences, as opposed to their weaknesses (like the CAT), and will be a significant improvement over the existing assessment tool. The new InterRAI tool will be particularly useful with the state's implementation of the new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Home and Community Based (HCBS) settings rule that requires person-centered care.

Through the Trust's Housing and Long-Term Supports Focus Area, the Trust will also invest \$400,000 to expand the ADRC Prescreen Project statewide. This pilot project was first implemented on the Kenai Peninsula and proved to be very successful and cost efficient. SDS is working to improve base funding for the ADRCs using Medicaid Administrative charges and passing on these additional funds to the five ADRCs. The ADRC First Pilot Project was developed to improve access and outcomes for individuals seeking long-term services and supports. The process begins when an individual contacts the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center with a need for assistance. The ADRC provides a pre-screening that identifies the person's needs and provides options counseling. The service plan utilizes senior grant funded services as well as Personal Care Assistance and Medicaid waiver services.

Amanda also noted that the Housing and Long-Term Supports Focus Area has reserved \$150,000 in its budget for a small group to visit agencies that serve people with dementia using assistive technology, smart home technology, and other innovative service models. Learning about best practices to better serve Trust Beneficiaries with cognitive impairments will help to inform policy decisions for vulnerable Alaskans.

Jim McCall, Senior Housing Program Officer, Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC)

Jim reported that two new senior housing developments have been approved by AHFC and will be built early next year. Vista Rose, located in Wasilla, will have 42 units of independent senior housing. The other senior housing development is in Seward. This project will offer five units of independent senior housing. A total of 47 new independent senior housing units will be built at a projected cost of \$111,000 per unit.

Jim also updated the Commission regarding capital budget items related to AHFC and noted that the remainder of the funding from the energy rebate program will be used for the weatherization program.

Jim also announced that Mark Romick is the new acting Deputy Executive Director for AHFC.

ACoA Commissioner Paula Pawlowski, Executive Director of Serve Alaska

Paula provided an overview about the mission of Serve Alaska which is to engage Alaskans of all ages and backgrounds in community-based service, volunteerism, and participation in the National AmeriCorps Program. Paula explained that volunteerism is critical to Serve Alaska which is why she assists with the First Lady's Volunteer Awards. This special award ceremony happens each year during the month of April. This year, the First Lady's Awards recognized 13 people, ages 13 to 80, from around the state. Paula remarked that the ceremony was held at the Governor's Mansion with standing room only.

Serve Alaska has federal funding in the amount of \$637,000 to help agencies with planning or program grants. They will be announcing these grants in the near future. Paula noted that Alaskan nonprofit organizations may apply for AmeriCorps grants within the State. Paula has been reaching out to Alaskan non-profits encouraging them to apply for AmeriCorps funding. She will conduct a three-day training on how to apply for AmeriCorps funding. Tribes can also apply for AmeriCorps funding.

Paula noted that Wendy Spencer, Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), will be coming to Alaska. Anchorage has been recognized as the "City of National Service."

Paula has 11 board members of whom five have completed national service. Before she retires, Paula wants to ensure that all Alaskans with the desire have an opportunity to serve as AmeriCorps members. They can earn educational scholarship money as well as Pell grant funding. AmeriCorps members also help with emergency preparedness. AmeriCorps volunteers are required to have background checks. This policy helps to ensure the safety of vulnerable Alaskans who are served by AmeriCorps volunteers. The Foster Grandparents Program, the RSVP Program, and Senior Companion all receive federal money from this program.

Teresa Holt, Long Term Care Ombudsman, Elder Protection Report

Teresa presented two heartfelt stories about seniors who, after being hospitalized and discharged from the hospital, do not have access to supportive housing to assist them in their recovery. Without appropriate supports, newly discharged seniors are at risk for injury and readmission. The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman is working with hospitals to find supportive services and appropriate housing for vulnerable seniors following their discharge.

Teresa commented on the importance of the new Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS) Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) Settings Rule on person-centered care. The Office of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman will be involved in the implementation of this new rule to protect seniors living in assisted living homes. She provided the example of a man who desired hot chocolate in the morning but awoke at different times. In the past, the cook at an assisted living home would not have to accommodate his request or allow him to go in the kitchen to make it himself. This practice of denial is no longer allowed under the new HCBS settings rule. Teresa also noted other changes that allow the consumer to have food at any time; choice of their roommate and decorations of living space; the right to lock a door; access to an array of appropriate services; etc.

Teresa also noted implementation of Conflict Free Coordination and the challenges with losing 100 care coordinators who were employed by provider agencies offering Medicaid services. Conflict free coordination is now required in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Juneau, and Mat-Su along with other communities. Communities that have only one service provider can apply for an exemption from Senior and Disabilities Services.

Sheila Shinn, Director of the Alaska Geriatrics Interdisciplinary Leadership Development Program (AK GILD), University of Alaska Anchorage

Sheila reported that the UAA will lose the gerontology minor program due to funding reductions and low student participation. However, the University in partnership with the Southcentral Foundation, has launched the new Alaska Geriatrics Interdisciplinary Leadership Development Program (AK GILD) that is based on the Nuka System of Care developed by the Southcentral Foundation. The purpose of the AK GILD is to build the geriatric workforce by educating faculty and community members in geriatrics. This project is the outcome of a three-year federal Health and Resource Services Administration (HRSA) Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (GWEP) grant. The GWEP grant supports the development of a health care workforce in order to improve health outcomes for older adults by integrating geriatrics with primary care, maximizing patient and family engagement, and transforming the healthcare system. The AK GILD has two tracks for faculty and leadership. Each track has specific learning objectives, coursework, externships, and targeted participants. The Leadership Track has 10 participant slots. Participants who complete this program will receive a University of Alaska Workforce Credential in Geriatrics.

In summary, the goals for the Alaska GILD program are to:

1. Advance knowledge and skills in addressing the needs of older adults and caregivers at the individual, community, and population levels.
2. Promote innovative practice models to enhance cultural competency, partnership among disciplines, and patient-centered care.
3. Use interdisciplinary training opportunities to build leaders in evidence-based interventions to care for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementia (ADRD).

Jim McCall, Chair for Mat-Su Council on Aging

Jim reviewed the history and make-up of the board of the new Mat-Su Council on Aging. Currently, the board has two vacancies. Jim serves as the Chair and Rachel Greenberg is the Vice-Chair. Karl Garber, Executive Director for the Alzheimer's Resource Agency, also serves on the board.

Jim stated the vision of the Mat-Su Council on Aging that *All Mat-Su Seniors are happy, healthy, have access to an array of needed supports and services and are able to live as independently as possible.* Jim noted that the Council works to promote quality of life for seniors in the Mat-Su by fostering a network of community partnerships and serving as a resource for advocacy and representation on issues affecting seniors living in the Mat-Su Borough.

Representing the views of the Mat-Su Council on Aging, Jim provided the following remarks regarding the proposed funding formula revisions of the State Plan for Senior Services:

1. Request disclosure of the actual revised funding amounts based on the new funding formula.
2. Task Force should be asked to review the changes before the revised funding formula is finalized.
3. Request clarification on the 5.34% statewide allocation amount for statewide services that include the Senior Voice. How was this percentage determined?
4. Request for more information on the process of deciding how the State GF funds are distributed to providers.
5. Appreciates the increased weights for the frail and poverty factors in the funding formula.
6. Does not agree with the new designation of the Mat-Su as "urban" because the region includes many communities with small populations that would classify the region as rural. Recommend applying the urban definition for Palmer and Wasilla and applying the rural definition for the other smaller communities in the region.

7. Agrees with re-classifying the Mat-Su as Region V(a) from the Kenai/Valdez/Cordova areas as Region V(b) as these communities are similar and distinct from the Mat-Su.

Jim said that the Mat-Su Council on Aging will submit written public comments on these recommendations.

Deb Etheridge, Deputy Director, and Lisa Morley, Senior Grants Manager for the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS)

Deb reviewed the progress regarding the Department's work to evaluate whether or not to move forward with the Medicaid 1915 (i/k) State Plan options. SDS, with assistance from the Trust, have contracted with HMA and Associates to conduct this feasibility study and if warranted, to prepare an application to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid for the 1915 (i/k) Medicaid State Plan options. The 1915 (i/k) options were specifically identified in SB 74 for Medicaid Reform. The 1915k option is an important tool that will allow the state to refinance Personal Care Assistance (PCA) Services and receive an additional 6% federal match. The 1915(i) option will target certain populations, such as persons with ADRD who do not meet current level of care requirements under the 1915 (c), and is a tool for refinancing Adult Day and Senior In-Home grant funded services that serve persons with dementia who do not qualify for the waiver. Other target populations include persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities, traumatic brain injury, and those with mental health/behavioral health needs. The plan is to provide each targeted population with its own array of appropriate services to meet the needs of its members.

The Community Development Council (CDC), an advisory group of public members representing each target population, is mandated by CMS for states that apply for the 1915 (i/k) options. The CDC has been meeting monthly since 2015. There are 11 members in total. Banarsi Lal, Ken Helander, Pat Branson, and Mary Schaffer represent the senior community on the Council.

ACoA Commissioner Rachel Greenberg noted the importance of reserving some of the grant funds for people who would not qualify for the 1915(i) and need services as less than 200 seniors with ADRD will transfer to the 1915(i) based on estimates provided by SDS as noted in SB 74.

Deb also reviewed the new CMS HCBS Settings Rule and noted that the Pioneer Homes must be in compliance with this federal rule. SDS will ask providers to do a self-assessment to determine if they are in compliance. To date, only Tennessee has been approved by CMS to be in compliance with the Settings Rule.

Lisa Morley, SDS Senior Grants Manager

SDS will be taking on grant administrative responsibilities for the Early Infant Intervention Program (\$11 million federal program) in addition to the Centers for Independent Living from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. At this time, SDS is waiting to see the budget for the Centers for Independent Living program.

Lisa provided an update regarding the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC). The ADRC First Pilot Project for intake and screening is specifically designed to look at each individual holistically in order to assist them in navigating the service delivery system so they are able to make informed choices about their care. The results are on the SDS website. The pilot has proved to save the state money in the amount of \$4.4 million. The pilot will be expanded from the Kenai Independent Living Center statewide through the other four ADRCs.

Advocacy Reports

Ken Helander, AARP Advocacy Director

Ken Helander talked about the fact that passage of SB 1 (Regulation of Smoking) does not appear promising as it ran into some opposition during the end of session. Ken also reported that the federal government will now start

regulating e-cigarettes. Stores will not to sell e-cigarettes to people under 18 as they are seen as a gateway to tobacco use.

Ken also noted that passage of SB 72, the Designated Caregiver bill, looks promising based on his conversations with Senator Giessel.

Ken also noted that the AARP national organization, in collaboration with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, is working to increase the number of nurses as part of the "Culture of Health Action Framework" for the purpose of creating healthy communities.

Ken also talked about the needs of LGBT seniors and the work of SAGE, the organization representing LGBT interest. AARP Alaska is working to establish an Alaska SAGE chapter. He asked for 30 minutes on the February meeting agenda to talk about issues affecting seniors who are LGBT.

Ken closed by noting a new collaboration with Special Olympics. AARP wants to bring attention to the aging population of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the second Special Olympics Summit.

Marianne Mills, AgeNET Chair

AgeNET is concerned about changes resulting from the new HCBS Settings Rule and Conflict-free Coordination on providers. Providers are being asked to do more with no additional funding.

AgeNet will conduct their annual meeting on June 10 in the AARP conference room.

Commissioners Closing Comments

Paula expressed that we should look at our Policies and Procedures before we do an end of session final report.

Gordon replied in stating that we should pursue all possible opportunities to inform the Legislature about our concerns.

Mary approved of the idea of a legislative wrap-up report that could be shared with candidates running for office this year.

Marie expressed concern about the proposed \$100 annual fee to add your name to the Pioneer Home waiting list. She agrees with Bob that 500 people might not pay the new fee to remain on the waitlist. She said that the Legislature should re-consider this policy. Marie also believes that the Commission should offer another option for legislators to consider.

Denise stated that the Governor can reduce funding but cannot add funding back into the budget without legislative approval. The cut to the 3rd level of Senior Benefits came from his proposed budget. Denise suggested that the Commission draft a letter of concern or letter of information describing how reductions to senior programs affect seniors and can cost more money down the road by increasing the need for higher cost care.

David would like to ensure that funding for Senior Benefits be maintained in FY2018. Other Commissioners agreed.

Paula recommends that we could do an end of session report from the ACoA Legislative Committee. This report would focus on the actual bills and budget items that were passed or not passed and provide the impacts of these decisions on seniors. Paula cautioned that we check the Commission's Policies and Procedures before we do this to figure out the process. Paula noted that the Commission sends them letters of support for specific bills and budget items during session but when was the last time we did a wrap-up?

Gordon likes the idea as well. He would like the Commission to pursue all opportunities to inform legislators about the needs of seniors. A legislative report is a good strategy to pursue.

Mary also expressed her approval for the idea of a legislative report and providing this report to the Governor and Lieutenant Governor. Commissioners can provide the document to candidates who are running for office. People who are running should know what happened to the Senior Benefits program last session.

ACTION: Gordon moved that the Legislative Committee draft a legislative wrap-up report addressed to the Governor to inform him of the impacts of budget reductions to seniors with specific attention to those made to the Senior Benefits program, Medicaid Adult Dental, and the new \$100 fee proposed for those on the waitlist for the Pioneer Homes. Paula seconded the motion. Motion was approved.

Rachel thanked all present for attending the ACoA meeting at the Mat-Su Senior Center.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. as called by Gordon and seconded by Rachel.