

**Alaska Commission on Aging
Quarterly Business Meeting
Alaska Commission on Aging
Quarterly Meeting
December 4, 2007
Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Building
Anchorage, Alaska
(Approved – February 12, 2008)**

Tuesday, December 4, 2007

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Sharon Howerton-Clark called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM. (Banarsi Lal, chair, was detained at a meeting with the Trust.)

ROLL CALL

Members in attendance: Patricia Branson, Sharon Howerton-Clark, Tara Jollie, Banarsi Lal, Iver Malutin, Paula Pawlowski, Edward Zastrow. A quorum was present. Members not in attendance: Frank Appel, Lillian Boen-Kasnick, Betty Keegan and Rod Moline. DHSS representatives in attendance: Bill Hogan and Rebecca Hilgendorf. ACoA staff in attendance: Denise Daniello, MaryAnn VandeCastle, Leslie Bullock and Sherice Ridges.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion to approve agenda passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES (August 29 – August 31, 2008)

Minor changes to the minutes were suggested, such as page 3-4 for the Heritage Heights (not House). Motion: to approve the minutes as amended; motion passed unanimously.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Banarsi Lal reported that he thought that the State Plan implementation meeting had worked out quite well. We also received good feedback from the Legislative Audit. The state plan implementation meeting was a tremendous morale booster. Banarsi attributed part of ACoA's success to the White House Conference on Aging forums efforts. He stated that people have started to feel that ACoA cares about our senior issues. Banarsi hopes that we can get the Department's support.

Denise Daniello stated that we do have the support from the Department and they are concerned about senior issues. Representative Doll is sponsoring the Sunset Legislation. The Department supports the sunset legislation.

VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT

Sharon Howerton-Clark reported that she attended the Advocacy Summit and the Trust Board Meeting in September 2007 and monthly Senior Advocacy Coalition (SAC) meetings. Sharon suggests that all Commissioners attend Board Meetings.

Sharon attended a providers meeting at Homer Senior Center. They discussed Network of Care. Other findings were that there was a shortage of Assisted Living Homes in Homer; they have wait lists. Sharon met with Gary Stevens and Paul Seaton regarding legislature issues for this session.

Sharon visited Old Harbor August 31, 2007 through September 1, 2007. While Sharon was in Old Harbor she visited the Old Harbor Senior Center and they had a great dessert potluck for her. Sharon met about 35 people who don't want to leave the village to die in Anchorage. Sharon went halibut fishing to help stock the Senior Center for the winter. There are new clinics in Old Harbor.

ACOA COMMITTEE & REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Members of the Executive Committee include Banarsi, Frank, Sharon, Betty, and Denise. Pat also participated in the December Executive Committee meeting to present her recommendations for restructuring the business meeting format. Frank Appel also submitted written suggestions. One idea was the Coffee Chat, an informal gathering with seniors, caregivers, providers and others held at a Senior Center, which was held as part of the December meeting. The Executive Committee asked the chair and E.D. to pull together recommendations from this Committee and present them to the full Commission at the upcoming meeting for discussion.

Denise informed the Executive Committee that the Trust (at its November 1st meeting) granted each board an additional \$100.0 to be spent in FY 08, FY09, or split between both years. The Trust also requested each board to submit its recommendations for allocating up to \$3.1 million that was not spent by grantees. The Executive Committee suggested the Planning Committee to work with staff to develop both sets of recommendations. It was decided that the Planning Committee and staff should wait for the release of the Governor's Budget (12/11/07) before submitting recommendations to the Trust concerning the re-appropriation of the \$3.1 million the "Coffee Chat" held at the Anchorage Senior Center on December 3, 2007.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Denise Daniello discussed the State Plan implementation meeting that was held November 7, 2007 held in Anchorage. AARP's Ann Secrest moderated that meeting. The Committee decided to invite additional agencies beyond those who helped with developing the State Plan. The Committee discussed the Alaska Health Care Strategies Planning Council (HCSPC), which requested that recommendations be sent to them. Karen Rhodes a member of the Council said senior issues were not being addressed, so our implementation meeting decided we should send our recommendations to them. Members at the Implementation meeting identified 6 recommendations for submission to

the HCSPC. Denise prepared a memo describing the group's recommendations and submitted it to Commissioner Jackson.

Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education

Banarsi Lal, ACoA's liaison to this board, reported that the Governor's Council Executive Director Millie Ryan had been out of the country. The Pioneer Home Advisory Board had a chance to visit three homes. It is good to see how well the residents are cared for. Palmer Veterans Home was fabulous. The Governor's Council had a one day meeting in Anchorage. Governor's Council would like to push the autism issue in the Legislature. The Governor's Council is very supportive of the Alaska Commission on Aging long term care supports initiative and the senior crisis response project. We can really learn from the Governor's Council on how they solicit input from all stakeholder groups. The Governor's Council's advocacy efforts are absolutely marvelous.

Pioneer Home Advisory Report: By ACoA Commission member Edward Zastrow.

The Pioneer Home Advisory Board completed their 2007 tour of the Alaska Pioneer Homes in Fairbanks, Palmer and Anchorage. The Board met with the administrators and conducted a public hearing where family, staff and community members had an opportunity to share their opinions and offer suggestions. Most comments were positive.

Executive Summary recommendations from the Pioneer Home Advisory Board:

- 1) The Board requests the Governor's support of capital requests that are in the Department of Health & Social Services FY09 budget concerning deferred maintenance needs in all six Pioneer Homes.
- 2) The Board encourages the legislature to support funding for the Zero Lift Program.
- 3) The Board requests that the Governor review the consolidation of the Human Resource, Information Technology, and Travel functions to determine how to make these functions operate more efficiently.

ACoA Executive Director's Report (Summary from the written report)

Planning activities

The Alaska State Plan for Senior Services FY2008-FY2011 – The first State Plan Implementation meeting was held on November 7th in Anchorage. More than 30 agencies participated for the full day session. The purpose of the meeting was to bring agencies who offer senior services together to network, build on each other's programs and services, and to determine how they fit into the State Plan. senior population, more agencies are now working on projects that address the needs of older Alaskans. The State Plan can provide a guide for those efforts.

Health Body/ Healthy Brain Campaign – Ongoing implementation efforts include posters and book marks; development of an ADRD (Alzheimer's disease and related dementia) survey to assess the public's knowledge regarding risk factors and ADRD; including a

question in the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (telephone survey) to assess public knowledge, and developing a standardized curriculum with Public Health for public health nurses to present short talks at senior centers and public health centers about the significance of lifestyle choice and risk of ADRD. ACoA made a presentation to the Legislative Health Caucus that is co-chaired by Representative Cisna and Senator Olson. We passed out bookmarks, posters, survey and additional information from latest research.

Senior Crisis Intervention Services Project -

ACoA, in coordination with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, is advocating for funding to support a Crisis Intervention Services Project targeting older adults and persons with developmental disabilities who suffer from serious behavioral health conditions who are challenged to find appropriate long-term care placement options and are at risk of becoming homeless due to a shortage of assisted living facilities and nursing homes that are adequately licensed and staffed to care for this underserved population. This project is supported by the Trust and has been included in their GF/MH recommendations.

Advocacy

Interim Advocacy Work –We refined our advocacy strategies for ACoA's legislative and budget recommendations that include the FACES Campaign (\$1.5 million operating budget increment and a \$2 million capital fund increment submitted by Senior and Disabilities Services to the Department of Health & Social Services), Crisis Response project for developmentally disabled persons and seniors including \$500.00 for seniors, This project was submitted by Behavioral Health for a total of \$1.250.00 to DHSS), Senior Outreach Assessment and Referral project (SOAR was submitted by Behavioral Health to DHSS as a \$300.00 increment), and ACoA's sunset legislation (requested extension, per ACoA's legislative audit, to June 30, 2016) and proposed revisions affecting ACoA's statutes. Currently, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is deliberating budget requests submitted by the Department and has asked DHSS to prioritize its 120 requests for funding.

ACoA Sunset Legislation & Proposed Statute Revisions – Representative Andrea Doll has offered to sponsor ACoA's sunset legislation (extending ACoA's termination date to June 30, 2016) and the proposed statute changes recommended by the Division of Legislative Audit to transfer grant authority from ACoA to Senior and Disabilities Services and to assign authority for administering policy regarding federal programs under the Older Americans Act and State programs related to older Alaskans to DHSS.

ACoA Budget

ACoA is on track with budget funds. ACoA has funded quite a few airline tickets with the Department's mileage and saved travel dollars.

Network of Care Presentation

Alaska State Independent Living Council (SILC) – Elly Sanchez reported in Patrick Reinhart's place.

SILC has devised a community based website for access to long term care information for seniors, providers, caregivers, etc. This is a comprehensive database of services. This website will empower Alaskans; it will give people legislative access (can reach legislators with only 5 clicks).

Department of Health & Social Services Report

Bill Hogan, Deputy Commissioner, reported: Discussed the Department of Health & Social Services Organizational Chart. The chart was finalized in October of 2007 for the next three years.

Recognition of Office of Faith Based Initiatives can help provide more social services. There was a federal RFP (request for proposal for federal funding) for Compassionate care grants.

The department has been very busy preparing the FY 09 DHSS budget for the last several months. A preliminary budget was submitted to Office of Management and Budget in September. Several areas of the budget include money for Senior Benefits; some increase in Medicaid, based on enrollment growth, and a place-holder for potential Medicaid rate increases. The Governor's Budget may be out after December 10th, by law by December 15th.

Bill Hogan encouraged everyone to take the online survey for the Governor's Budget. The Health Care Strategies Planning Council appreciated ACoA's senior recommendations. Health Care Strategies Planning Council needs to submit a plan to the Governor by January 1st. Then the Governor must decide what to do. The Dept. of Health & Social Services is committed to developing a plan for long term care. The Department has received a number of reports but none have given enough information on how the State should proceed. Jon Sherwood is leading this effort.

A draft RFP is going out to other stakeholders for feedback. The intent is a plan with a 3-year action plan. Principles are 1) enhance or increase supports in the home, 2) sustainability, 3) coordination with tribal organizations, 4) transparent accountable reimbursement strategies, 5) culturally appropriate, 6) outcomes that are measurable.

The role of the Pioneer Homes going forward may include dementia waiver, and may include strategies for getting more federal funding into the Pioneer Homes. Bill Hogan had a chance to look at the Sitka AK Pioneer Home. It was enlightening for those who saw it, and they were able to see the home's struggles. Now there is more appreciation for the Pioneer Home's challenges. Adults that are of the ages 21 to 64 who are not Medicaid eligible can possibly get a waiver.

Long term care is becoming a predominant issue. The Trust might create a long term care focus group. The legislator directive is to look at Medicaid sustainability; they will try to craft an RFP that looks at the whole system, perhaps highlighting Medicaid. The rates for Medicaid are being looked at. Providers are having trouble making ends meet. Rates have been stagnant for 8 to 10 years. Rod Moline is taking the lead to look at rates across the personal care attendant behavioral health, nursing homes and hospitals, etc. Meyers and Stauffer received the contract to perform this study. The Meyers and Stauffer report is due by the end of December and will contain the rates and the methodologies on how rates are calculated and the factors considered such as geographic differential, acuity, and agency size. Will have recognition of the size of the provider organization, activities, severity of the problems of the client and services they need. The Department will then determine how to proceed using this data. This rate change will more likely be an incremental increase over the next 3 years. We need to review rates on a regular basis every 2 years. The Department understands that the providers are under pressure and will take steps to remedy the situation.

Commission Member Patricia Branson stated that there have been no rate increases for senior service grant providers for 10 years. Providers still only get \$62.50 a day for adult day care; this does not come close to the actual costs of providers. Bills first hopes is that the place-holder stays in the Governors budget; if not, ACoA should advocate for this or, if inadequate funding, ACoA should advocate for more funding.

Tara Jollie – How did the rates languish for so many years?

Bill Hogan – Some rates are in statute to be recalculated regularly, others are in regulation required to be looked at on some regular interval. There was a freeze in FY03 and FY04 that was due to a budget shortfall. Some hard decisions had to be made.

Senior & Disabilities Services – Rebecca Hildendorf

In the early days developmental disabilities and older Alaskan waivers were handled separately by different divisions. We did the best we knew how in starting a waiver program which included closure of Harborview – large ICFMR.

The providers at that time told the administrators how much it cost. A lot of different costs were negotiated for the same service. There was no rhyme or reason for the negotiated rates. When the funds got tight the rate freeze was an effort to get a handle on what things cost and make it equitable. The cost of care of some individuals was reported to be \$300,000. We don't always have the capacity to stay in our homes.

Commission member Patricia Branson – The cost for in home care is much less.

Rebecca- The two systems grew up differently in different cultures. The rates will help to improve the parity between services.

Commission Member Iver Malutin – Thanks for this approach so we can move forward, we're on the right track. It's all about the money. Some people chose to move away from the hospital to be in the village and get fewer services. New direction looks

exciting. ACoA's role will change if all of these things are implemented. Growth of the senior population in the next 15 years is helping with focus on this effort.

Rebecca- Assessment contractors did not renew and there have been no new applicants as of the end of October 2007. Since then, they have recruited 17.5 assessors to do three waivers and a PCA program. They're applying lessons learned from the past. Rebecca receives complaint phone calls, which is information she can use to improve the program. Rebecca invites us to share with her how the assessment experience can be improved, while being accurate and complete. The care coordinator pilot project was very successful and is no longer a pilot project.

AARP – Pat Luby reported:

Much of AARP's agenda will depend on how nervous the legislature is about the 90-day session. Many legislators are saying they won't take anything new on. They're nervous, they want to focus on the bills they already have. This could play in our favor because of upcoming elections. We thank them for Senior Benefits, but emphasize that cash assistance without services is not enough. It's an educational process. SB 160 – French's bill will probably get at least two Senate hearings Le Doux is co-sponsoring in the House. We are trying to learn from Massachusetts. Left, right, and middle are all pushing for doing something about health care.

AARP is working with SEIU, National business round table now the National Federation on businesses on the "Divided we fail" Project. The latter opposed the Clinton plan in early 90's but now is coming around. 20% of 60 to 64 year olds have no health insurance. It's tough for that age group, especially those with pre-existing health conditions. Medicaid adult dental benefit will need renewal. On the Federal side – Congress is stymied on some appropriations. We may end up with continuing resolutions. Congress is slated to reduce Medicare reimbursement as of Jan. 2008.

Pat is working with Rita Hatch of OPAC on Medicare research. Juneau is now joining Anchorage, Fairbanks with physician rejection at age 65. Many people are now talking of leaving Alaska at retirement. We finally turned the corner on keeping retirees here and now there's a new problem with access to health care. Senator Murkowski is very interested. Other states are now feeling the problem. It will be hard to get the legislature's attention – we don't do oil and gas.

Commission member Paula Pawlowski- Military retirees cannot access the military base hospital as much as thought. Many pay for Tri-Care for life, but have to go through Medicare first. Now they are paying for care they can't receive if they can't find a Medical doctor.

Commission member Pat Branson- It's the entire state tier 1 people too – it's everybody.

Meals on Wheels Association Disaster Preparedness Project

Susan Faith

In mid-summer 2007, the Meals on Wheels Association of America (MOWAA) began work on a project to design and deliver emergency-disaster preparedness training nationwide for agencies that deliver meals to homebound seniors. This project, titled “Emergency H.E.L.P.”(Homebound Elderly Lifeline Project), is funded by a grant from the Homeland Security Department and is slated for distribution in mid-2008. As the curriculum develops, additional participation from local agencies will be sought so that there is input from prospective users of the project. The goal is to have training for preparedness for agencies of all sizes nationwide. Implementation of preparedness programs will rely on collaboration between providers and the existing resources in their respective communities. Effective preparedness has to have buy-in from provider agencies, their clients and government agencies. The Alaska Commission on Aging works through its state plan to promote and support this effort and to promote participation by the prospective partner agencies with which it is connected.

The Trust – Jeff Jessee

The Trust is looking forward to an exciting legislative session. So far feedback from OMB is optimistic regarding some of our pieces making it into the budget. The Housing Summit is on Monday December 10, 2007. Nancy Burke with The Trust is gearing up for the kick-off for the legislative session. We anticipate the governor or the legislators will introduce a bill for a housing trust, with funding. They hope to bring everyone together, review needs, and organize for advocating for legislation. Jeff Jessee gives thanks to Chair Banarsi Lal for serving on the Trustee nomination Committee. It was the best pool of candidates to choose from - “A lot of keepers.”

Executive Director Denise Daniello- Thank you for all of the support you give ACoA and the additional FY08-09 funds.

Nancy Burke – Long term care is lodged in the housing focus group. We are looking at what is working, and what is needed. Intern Alia Wins and Nancy are working on this meeting tomorrow, and ACoA is invited. We will be discussing various long term care models. Kay Branch is participating too.

Bev Tallman – UAA/AK GECC- Project Director for the Trust Training Cooperative workforce initiative.

A couple of years ago, I tried to identify major issues. As a result, the Trust funded a regional training cooperative which did a survey of workers regarding their training needs. We found that many workers have degrees. Managing behaviors was their greatest training need across all beneficiary groups. This is helping provide the foundation for the training co-op. We are trying to match those who want training with those who have the expertise in that area. The training co-op needs to find a training coordinator in Sitka, Fairbanks, and Anchorage. There is a lot of training going on every year. Many people don’t know about this. We are trying to develop an infrastructure to announce these training sessions and facilitate participation. The learning content with the management system is a way to track people who get training and help develop a

credential process for direct care workers. We hope to begin March 1, 2008 and the learning content management system will help trainers to gear their content to fit a standard. We are trying to identify competencies across settings and worker types. We'll support agencies to deliver training that meets the standards. We got funding for a long-term care apprenticeship program that complements the Trust training coop. We are trying to develop a curriculum and training around geriatrics and get academic credits for training, toward occupational endorsement. This would be a certification in Applied Geriatrics, with hands on mentors. Distance delivery is planned. We are working with CNAs in Pioneer Homes first. Other CNAs can enroll and be under an apprenticeship program with other agencies. DOL Workforce Investment System, University, and employers: bringing these three together is what we need to support learning. AK Geriatrics Center was refunded as of Oct 1, 2008. Congress saw the light regarding funding the GEC's nationwide. AK GEC was funded for a 3-year cycle, but funding is still tenuous. GEC concentrates on prevention and health promotion. The program would teach facilities how to teach students to promote health. This is building on their existing resources. They just finished their last training series, which was very popular. They're getting training out to more people.

Public Comment:

Bob Goodman with the Alaska Territorial Guard –

There are 1,750 surviving spouses of Alaska Territorial Guard Members that are entitled to Social Security benefits from the Federal Government; there may be more. They must apply through the Veterans Administration. The benefit payable to surviving spouses is not being applied for. The DMVA is responsible for completing discharges and has not done so. The amount could be up to \$700.00 a month. The administration should recognize the surviving spouses within 3 to 5 months, not 3 to 5 years. The government needs to be aware of this issue and this issue needs to be sponsored.

Chair Banarsi Lal- What do you want us to do?

Bob Goodman- We need a champion, a sponsor. These people are aged in their late 60's up to their 90's. The DMVA has ignored the surviving spouses for four years.

Municipality of Anchorage, Department of Health and Human Services – Ken Takukuwa, Social Services Division Manger, Linda Meyers, Senior Services Coordinator, and Dawnia Clements, Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission Chair

Linda Meyer- Linda is new to her position, which was identified in the Department's strategic plan. She's the staff liaison to the local senior advocate community to help them fulfill their goals and objectives. She'll work with providers to develop a unified plan for serving seniors. They have been looking at the State Plan and how the Municipality can work with ACoA on this. They will identify current service gaps and future needs. There will be 36,000 seniors in Anchorage within the next ten years. The Muni is collaborating partner to a lot of different organizations that are providing services. There is a great need in city government for having one central person who can focus on issues from the perspective of senior needs. The City impacts senior lives in many areas. It

would be good for the City to help link seniors and their families to services. Municipality employees can come with questions too.

Commission member Sharon Howerton-Clark asked Dawnia Clements - 'Is the Chugach View issue resolved?'

Dawnia Clements, Chair, Anchorage Senior Advisory Commission: 'It's not totally resolved due to the federal rule requiring mixing of seniors and those with mental disabilities. But people causing the most trouble are no longer there.'

Sharon - 'What changed regarding the federal guidelines? It is not fair for seniors to have to live in that kind of environment.'

Dawnia- 'The law probably won't change but, the housing authority has made some good steps. It takes a long time to get problem people out, but those causing the most trouble are now out.'

Commission Member Pat Branson - 'Regarding advisory commission appointments length, are they three-year designated seats?'

Ken Takakuwa, Muni of Anchorage Parks and Recreation program - 'No, it is up to the Mayor.'

Pat B. - Is Linda's position budgeted for next year? Ken - Yes, it could have been cut but it wasn't. The primary emphasis for last year was securing the Senior Services Coordinator position. We want to move forward but we needed someone dedicated to the agency issues first.

Dept DHSS SDS - Deputy Director Rebecca Hildendorf - I'm being very forward and thinking of Mayor Begich. Linda, would you like to meet ADRC want to meet others in today's audience?

Linda Meyers - Yes, will attend the web-based training demonstration tomorrow on Network of Care.

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, Kay Branch

Kay is working on the Medicaid reform initiative. Funds are a bit slow in coming. Now the work is picking up. The ANTHC hired Deb Erickson to bring all the pieces together. Kay is very impressed; she's been board for 3 ½ weeks so far. They are working on building a committee from all over the State to look at the ideal service array. It is encouraging to get others together and be on the same page. People do want to be at home. We are working on guiding principles. Also looking at facility based care. ANTHC brings people together to think about the bigger picture of tribal health in Alaska. They need to be prepared to handle the migration to the Anchorage area. What would be the ideal facility picture for Anchorage? There will be a presentation to the tribal health directors meeting.

They have requested funds from Rasmussen for a pilot project for three of the biggest risk areas for elderly falls (which are very costly), The hospital stay is an average of 7 days for each elder fall. This pilot would do fall assessments, etc. This pilot project did not get funded; we are still looking for the funds.

ACoA Executive Director Denise Daniello – ACoA is also interested in fall prevention for seniors. Perhaps we can work together to seek funds.

Kay – We are working on coordination of Care between transfer points in any area of health care. We had a meeting in August to look for solutions. We are working with CMS to help tribes with Medicare and Medicaid issues regarding what is possible. We are exploring tribal specific waivers for long term care services. The State is involved in this.

**DHSS Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS) Rural Long Term Care Project
Kjersti Langnes, Rural long term care coordinator**

Kjersti did several community visits. Kjersti traveled to Kodiak to attend the ACoA quarterly board meeting. Kjersti traveled to Juneau to visit ADRCs and to meet with service providers serving Juneau and outlying areas.

Kjersti traveled to Fairbanks and participated in Youth and Elder Conference to publicize Senior and Disabilities Services rural long term care services. Then traveled to Homer to visit ADRC and met with service providers serving Homer and outlying areas.

Common barriers that come up are: reimbursement rates, lack of workforce, the need for training, direct care, Medicaid certification, cultural competence, etc.); there is a lack of environmental modification providers. Plans continue with assisted living projects. She is currently working with E. Aleutian tribes on hospice development. Kjersti is working to develop a transition plan for the ADRC to move it from SILC and AHFC to SDS. She is developing a charter and a transition plan that will include documenting calls regarding needs and transferring information back to Senior and Disabilities Services. Kjersti asked, ‘Are there any questions from the Commission members in any areas of long term care that you would want me to look into?’

Commission member Tara Jollie – ‘Yes, does the ADRC help providers to learn how to bill Medicaid.’

Kjersti – ‘We would walk the person through the billing process and connect them with First Health.’

Tara – ‘So many institutions don’t bill Medicaid enough.’

Kjersti – ‘This makes sure they have the information on what the process looks like.’

Tara – ‘Is there anything on reporting abuse for providers going into the home?’

Kjersti – ‘No, it might be a good idea for them to have a checklist./

Tara – ‘Does training include self-care, in a very high burn out job?’

Kjersti – ‘I will look into that.’

SDS Deputy Director Rebecca Hildendorf – ‘We can include self care in their curriculum. People know they are mandatory reporters.’

ACoA Executive Director Denise Daniello – ‘There is an increasing number of elders in rural communities whose families have moved to urban areas. These elders may move to the urban areas and be institutionalized unnecessarily. It would be good to do a gap analysis at a regional level to see what resources we have, and what is needed; then go to Denali, Rasmussen, etc. to get funds for infrastructure and capacity development. Urban areas are not set up for this influx and people don’t want to relocate anyway. Relocating would put them through the same relocation they experienced as children.’

Commission member Pat Branson – ‘I agree with the idea of regional gap analysis. Be aware that for a lot of people, there are no family members there, or there are none that want to step in. I hope the Division realizes this.’

Senator Bettye Davis

The Commission always does a fantastic job. I myself have always been involved in social work as a nurse, school board member in health and social services. I am pleased to be the Chair of Health Education and Social Services. I was previously always in the minority. This session, there is coalition of 9 Democrats and 6 republicans. This has been one of the best years. I hope with this session they can do more for seniors and children. The legislature often tries to pit the seniors against the children. I am willing to address any issues you have. The State Plan is wonderful and I hope you will be able to implement it. I am pleased that more and more seniors are staying in Alaska now.

Seniors are working, volunteering. Not everyone is sick.

What can the legislature do for you?

Commission Member Pat Branson – One of the most important programs is the FACES Campaign, more grant funds for senior services, a cost effective way to keep seniors out of nursing homes. It is vital to keep seniors at home. Adult day respite for family caregivers.

ACoA Executive Director Denise Daniello-

Senior grants are an important part of the funding mix. The state emphasis has been on Medicaid. Grants are more flexible and can serve the 80% of seniors who are not Medicaid eligible. Senior crisis intervention project funding request was submitted to the Department to provide services for seniors with behavioral health conditions who are challenged to find long term care placement. There only 10 facilities, 125 beds total for this group of people. And the SOAR project which is designed to offer behavioral health for seniors. Seniors often don’t go to community mental health centers.

ACoA has a Sunset date of 6/30/08. Legislative audit recommended an 8 year extension to 2016. No formal complaints have been filed against us.

Senator Bettye Davis – Usually when someone introduces a bill in the House and the Senate the legislature will be very supportive.

Commission member and Chair Banarsi Lal – We look forward to your support this session and will ask for your help with bills we need pushed through.

Senator Betty Davis – That works both ways, this should be a good year; every one has been there at least one year. Let us know in advance so they can set up a joint House/Senate meeting to review your issues at the same time. I would like to present your budget requests to Senate Finance.

Update on Medicaid Sustainability Project, Jerry Fuller

Bill Hogan apparently talked about this project earlier. The Lewin Study is showing a quadrupled budget due to an aging population and medical inflation. \$2 million was given to the Dept. for studies on how to implement the Pacific Health Policy Group recommendations. Some money will go to tribes that are not in position to provide all the services needed, but getting contractors to say what it will take for them to develop sustainability. For pharmacy we are trying to come up with more efficient dispensing fees and adjust for small rural pharmacies so federal level changes don't put them out of business. We have received requests about PCA services. Senior and Disabilities Services have already implemented some of these goals, which have helped lower costs. We need to find smarter ways to deliver services, not just cut them off. The developmental disabilities wait list is starting to reduce. Contractors will look at other opportunities to reduce it.

We are looking at the long term care system and we have a possible different service array with what the state can provide to family caregivers, before a person falls into waiver services. We are looking into what we can do with the technologies that are now becoming available.

Requests for private care in home can be different from those for large facilities like pioneer homes. We are trying to design a service array that meets our needs.

State of Alaska – Long term care Ombudsman

Robert Dryer

See report in meeting binder

AgeNet Report, Jodi Irvine, AgeNet chair

Jodi Irvine could not make the meeting – Commission member Patricia Branson gave report

AgeNet meets monthly. There is a growing membership. They are working on Legislature priorities. FACES is AgeNet's #1 advocacy priority. AgeNet met with Meyers and Stauffer regarding Medicaid rates and wrote a letter regarding their methodology.

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 PM

ACoA Meeting Minutes

December 4, 2007

Prepared by S. Ridges