

**Alaska Commission on Aging
Quarterly Business Meeting
Meeting Minutes
Anchorage Senior Activity Center
April 30th & May 1st, 2009
Approved**

Roll Call: Commission members present: Sharon Howerton-Clark (Chair), Frank Appel, Patricia Branson, Barbara McNeil, Betty Keegan, Rebecca Hilgendorf, Eleanor Dementi, Nita Madsen, Iver Malutin, and Banarsi Lal. Commission members not present: Vice-Chair Paula Pawlowski. Paula Pawlowski was present later that morning. ACoA staff present: Denise Daniello, MaryAnn VandeCastle, Lesley Thompson and Sherice Ridges.

Safety Moment: Banarsi went over some safety issues for the room.

Adoption of Agenda: Motion to approve agenda passed unanimously.

Approval of Meeting Minutes for Feb.10th & Feb12th, 2009: Approved.

ACoA Chair Report, Sharon Howerton-Clark

Sharon attended all of the ACoA legislative teleconferences. She met with Rep. Paul Seaton the day before ACoA's meeting.

Sharon stated that Rep. Cathy Munoz had stated that she was going to introduce the bill to repeal the defined contribution retirement plans for public employees.

Denise Daniello added that Rep. Cathy Munoz will be working with Rep. Jon Harris's office to obtain an independent analysis of the Tier IV retirement plans.

Sharon said that ACoA has had a good year this year and thanked the staff.

Betty said the staff just keeps getting better and better.

Sharon talked about the state plan funding formula changes. The additional money put in the budget will sustain the regions that would have experienced cuts in FY 2010.

Most of the cuts that would have happened were due to population shifts.

Pat said for Kodiak, they would have lost \$88,000.00 from the funding cuts.

Sharon said the Medicaid Adult Dental bill passed. The bills that didn't pass this last session are still on the table for the next session. Legislators all feel that 90 days is not

enough time for the legislative session.

Sharon said the legislature has agreed to the bills that they have passed and now it is up to the Governor.

Public Comment:

Marianne Mills, President of AgeNet:

Marianne Mills said that she is working with the Dept. of Health & Social Services, Senior & Disabilities Services to change the regulations for chore and respite care. She is also trying to get rid of artificial caps for weekly services. Senior Family caregivers want to be able to work, but they can't leave the senior home alone. They need additional respite services. Marianne said that this could be done quite easily. Marianne asked for ACoA's help with advocacy on this. She is also working on encouraging the Dept. of Health & Social Services to develop next year's funding formula solution.

Marianne is requesting a plan to be developed for not cutting money via the funding formula. The senior population is growing in every region.

Denise thanked Marianne on behalf of the Commission for her work.

Nancy Hendrickson, Frontier Medical:

Nancy stated that she would like assistance for mobility issues that are hindering seniors on Medicare. Medicare rules are designed around the lower 48 with paved roads. Medicare only covers wheel chairs in the home but those types of wheel chairs won't work on gravel and on hills.

Medicare won't pay for a good chair. Nancy asked the Dept. of Health & Social Services Senior & Disabilities Services to work with the Division of Health Care Services to help with mobility issues.

She has a background in Medicaid. A wheel chair is just one small problem. Medicare and Medicaid have different goals for seniors. There are other issues. Medicare tends to home bound people, whereas Medicaid wants them outside in the community.

Denise thanked her for calling and introduced Rebecca Hilgendorf (ACoA Commission Member and Director of Senior & Disabilities Services).

Rebecca said that the State wants seniors to be mobile in the community.

Rebecca recommended that Nancy talk with Judith Bendersky of Senior & Disabilities Services. Judith is an expert on Medicare. Rebecca said that she would brainstorm and come up with some recommendations, and then they would work with Health Care

Services

Pat Branson said that it is good for ACoA to be kept aware of how this solution is moving along.

Nancy asked Rebecca if there was a plan to relook at the funding.

Rebecca said that there is a process for changing prices paid to vendors. Rebecca said that she would take this back to the staff. Rebecca said that she could email Nancy regarding the other items of concern to vendors.

Jamie Fischer in Soldotna: Jamie stated that there is a need for greater involvement of the medical community to encourage clients to utilize the facilities of the senior center. Services make for a happier senior with a better outlook and fewer demands on doctors. Jamie said that it makes sense to involve doctors to a greater extent. This might lessen the burden on Medicare. Making personal contact with the medical system might remind them of the benefits senior centers can have on senior's health.

Pat Branson said that all providers agree regarding the need to contact the medical community. Pat said that people can call or email Pat to find out what they do in Kodiak.

Ken Duff, Frontier Community Services:

Ken said that he works for Frontier Community Services and is holding a conference on Alzheimer's and early dementia.

Ken said the conference is free and is on May 26th and May 27th at the Sports Center in Soldotna. All are welcome, especially care providers.

Rebecca asked if it was okay to distribute this information via email alert.

Ken said yes.

Ed Zastrow, former ACoA Commission Member:

Ed said there seems to be a lack of follow through by personal care attendants.

Rebecca asked for clarification.

Ed Zastrow answered there seems to be no follow-up by the agency to ensure that the workers do what they're supposed to.

Rebecca said she thinks that it depends on the employees, and whether they have the proper training and insight. If it is an ongoing concern and there are no results from talking to the supervisors, Senior & Disabilities Services quality assurance unit needs to be notified.

Ed said that Ketchikan is experiencing doctor shortages. With AARP there are major concerns about this. Ed said that in Ketchikan there was a private clinic that shut down and now there are a thousand to fourteen hundred seniors without a primary care doctor. Ed said it hit the front page of the newspaper two days in a row. Ed said that he was one of the seniors without a primary care doctor. Ed said that he finally selected one of the hospital staff. He has to wait two months to see them though. This is becoming a serious situation.

Betty Keegan said she manages a senior apartment complex. She has one traumatic brain injury resident that lives with his father and has a personal care attendant. The personal care attendant takes him for walks and plays games with him.

But with another lady that is a personal care attendant for another resident, Betty sees this lady smoking cigarettes and talking on her cell phone. The better PCA filed a complaint about the one who smokes outside and talks on her cell phone. In response, was that her time was cut in half and the other personal care attendant's time was increased.

Sharon said hopefully the rate reviews will be looked at in the next session. The ADRD waiver bill under Senator Maguire will continue next year. Anchorage, Juneau, Fairbanks, and Kodiak's local aging commissions supported ACoA's priorities and accomplishments.

The state plan implementation process, the Older American month proclamation, and helping find a solution to Dillingham's grant issue after the rural outreach trip, were some of ACoA's recent activities. The Senior Snapshot was a useful tool for advocacy and it will be updated every year.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation - Senior Housing Office Jim McCall

Jim reported on the Alaska Housing weatherization and rebate programs. Jim stated there were 9,386 rebate ratings processed. There were 621 Post Improvement Rebates Paid (completed the program). The average rebate paid was \$5,979.00 per household. The lowest eligible amount is \$4,000.00. The highest eligible amount is \$10,000.00. The energy rebate program has paid out 254 rebates to people that built new homes with 5 star energy ratings at \$7,500.00 each home, totaling approximately \$1.9 million.

As of 4/17/09, there were 7,067 people on the statewide waiting list for the REBATE program. 5,642 were in Anchorage.

There are new income limits in effect now for the weatherization program. More people

will qualify now. There is a big waitlist in Anchorage and Chugiak. There are now up to 120 raters for the program. This program is free and there are no tax consequences to an individual. This program has drawn an unprecedented amount of interest. Alaska Housing is getting 150 to 200 calls a day and it is a year later. The energy raters spend about two hours in the home and then go back to crunch the numbers, so it is about four hours of time spent on each home.

Jim thinks that they will see an onslaught of demand for contractors throughout the summer months. People can apply any time of the year and can monitor their progress on the wait list. Generally the list is moving quickly. There is hardly anyone on the Fairbank's wait list.

Iver Malutin asked if the federal government has a similar program. Iver said that the Alaska Commission on Aging saw so many houses that needed work. Iver asked why the numbers were so small in the villages.

Jim said that they trained fifteen regional housing authorities. This creates an infrastructure to get the word out about this weatherization program. The raters go into the villages and do four to five houses at once.

Iver said that he hoped AHFC could get to every remote community that is still in dire need.

Jim said that Alaska Housing Finance Corporation requested \$7.5 million and got \$4.5 million in funds for the senior citizen housing development fund. This rolls the program back to FY08 budget levels. Jim said that we'll survive; the money is leveraged with a lot of other pots of money.

Jim thanked ACoA for its letter to the Denali Commission. They told Alaska Housing Finance Corporation that they have \$4 million to work with and money was awarded accordingly. After they met in March, they reduced the money to \$1.35 million. A lot of money went to the clinics design phase where as many senior housing projects are shovel ready. Alaska Housing Finance Corporation then has to step back from the notice of intent to award, and relook at the scoring. Ketchikan should be okay. One project will likely not happen but others were able to get the money from the other Alaska Housing pots of money. Next year, AHFC probably won't put up a dollar amount until all funding is clear. There was no appeals process but ACoA's letter was important.

Frank Appel questioned if ACoA's letter included the shovel- ready rationale.

Sharon and Denise said that the letter did include the shovel-ready argument.

Iver asked if ACoA could help get the one project that was on hold going.

Jim said that the pots of money are now tapped out for this year. Developers will have to go back to the drawing board for next year's funding.

The projects that are now open are Raven's View, Cooper Landing, Willow and Meadow Lakes. There are six units in Cooper Landing, with stunning views.

Department of Health & Social Services

Bill Hogan, Commissioner

People at the federal level are using the term 2009 H1N1 virus rather than "Swine Flu."

There have been a lot of questions about the flu.

There are no confirmed cases in Alaska. Bill thinks the anxiety is that it is considered a pandemic and it is almost certain that there will be cases in Alaska.

Bill said that we are in good shape due to the state planning for avian flu. Dr. Jay Butler is doing a teleconference today with the school systems. Bill said that maybe Dr. Jay Butler could do a similar teleconference with senior centers. Bill said that he would work with Denise Daniello to set up a time. Bill advised people to wash their hands and sneeze into their sleeve or elbow. If you feel sick, go to your health care professional if you have one.

Frank Appel suggested trying to obtain as much media coverage as possible. The coverage wouldn't reach all seniors via the senior centers.

Bill said that there a daily press briefing and interviews.

Iver said that there are a lot of people coming in for the fishing season. It bothers him that so many people are coming into Kodiak.

Pat Branson said that the planning team is on top of it in Kodiak.

Denise asked if there was a one page flyer about the flu that ACoA could pass on to homebound folks. Training needs to be done with home delivered meal drivers.

Bill said that our public health folks say that it is a matter of time before this virus reaches Alaska. We are trying to manage the anxiety. 35,000 people die every year from the flu.

Rebecca said that Senior and Disabilities Services are sending a flyer out to agencies that they can print and distribute.

Bill said that the budget was passed by the legislature. He is almost certain that the state has extra money to hire additional staff in the Pioneer Homes.

The cost of care was bumped up by about 5%. There was \$1.2 million general fund, \$2.7 million total, for providers in lieu of SB 32. This goes to HCBS providers. There was \$9 million for heating assistance, for this fiscal year, and \$5 million was put in for next year. LIHEAP covers people up to 150% of the poverty level. AKHAP covers up to 175% of the poverty level. The \$5 million is for AKHAP. There is \$610,000 to offset reductions to senior grants due to the funding formula change. This was through Rep. Herron's efforts. \$250,000 was put in to continue Anchorage's Project Access, which is a group of volunteer providers serving people with no way to pay. The Governor must approve all of these budget items. The budget was transmitted to the Governor this past Monday. The Governor has until the end of the 3rd week in May to sign off on the budget.

Under the economic stimulus package, \$485,000 is available for senior nutrition programs through ARRA. Bill said his understanding is that the Governor will accept this money. There are extraordinary reporting requirements with a lot of federal scrutiny. We need to track these funds separately.

Denise said that ACoA has participated in teleconferences regarding the use of these funds. ACoA encourages that the funding formula be used to distribute these funds. Money must be obligated by Sept. 2010.

Pat asked clarification on whether the stimulus funds would supplant the state funds.

Bill said that the stimulus funds can't and won't, supplant any of the state funds for these programs.

Bill said that senate bill 32 by Senator Ellis would build into statute a regular review of rates, starting with HCBS providers. Bill said that he has worked actively with Ellis to ensure lower paperwork burden on providers. This still has to go through House Finance next session. Bill said that he has a meeting with provider groups at the end of May to strategize about the next steps. Bill said that he is cautiously optimistic. There may be an expectation that the rates will be raised annually, which may not occur.

The Department is still tweaking the Myers and Stauffer rate methodology. Bill said the Adult Dental Bill passed and there is no sunset!

Bill said that the Mary Conrad Center is still trying to find a new owner. The State discovered that there are some significant financial issues. This needs to be cleared up so they can find potential buyers. The quality of care is no longer an issue. The Center recently passed the CMS review. There were vendors that were unpaid, and cash flow problems. The staff was concerned that they might not make payroll. Bill said he thinks that this occurred after Providence, while Raindance was in charge. Although Providence may have realized this was going to be an issue.

Division of Senior & Disabilities Services
Rebecca Hilgendorf, Director - report attached.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Jeff Jessee, CEO and Nancy Burke, Program Officer

Jeff stated that he appreciates Rebecca Hilgendorf with SDS helping with the cooperative traumatic brain injury system that The Trust is trying to encourage.

He is working with Jill Hodges on this. They are trying to work with three different systems of care and looking to see how they can increase collaboration among the three systems. Jill is doing a great job at this project. She is making some real strides.

Alaska is too small of a state to have 3 parallel systems of care (tribal, VA, and DOD). They are trying to push cooperation. Dr. Doolittle gave Jeff two to three months to put something together. VA and DOD were hard to bring to the table. Decisions are made far from Alaska. Congressional staff encouraged him to try this. Jill will call anybody and ask them anything.

The Juneau Support building construction (on Trust Land) didn't pass. The bill died in Senate Finance. Jeff is unsure what Senator Stedman's problem was. Jeff said that he is open to looking at it again next year. Maybe agencies can get an extension on their leases.

Jeff said that Kevin Jardell is a lobbyist for the current Dept. of Labor landlord and may have killed the bill. Jeff said Kevin Jardell was paid \$55,000. This may be a conflict of interest. This bill dying may have cost the Trust billions of dollars.

They received the same amount of money for the Housing Trust in 2010 as in FY09. This is not too bad for this environment. Jeff said that we actually did well. They were \$1.7 to \$2 million short for FY2010. The Trustees will have to make decisions at the May meeting. The Trust has an income reserve. Jeff said that he is not recommending any cuts. The Trust is extremely resilient. The Trust is doing better than Rasmussen and other foundations. The Trust deposits cash at the start of the fiscal year. Rasmussen instead counts on money they earn to pay as they go. If revenue doesn't come in they've got a problem. The Denali Commission receives a federal funding appropriation that is not invested in markets.

Executive Director Report, Denise Daniello – Report attached

Visits to Senior Provider Agencies

Meeting called to order by Chair Sharon Clark 4:10 pm

Report by Bob Dreyer, Long Term Care Ombudsman
Report attached

UA Geriatric Education Center
Dr. Rosellen Rosch, UAA and Michelle Holloway, UAA Center for Human Development

HRSA came up with a new process for applying for a third year of funds. The program was defunded in 2006. Now the program was changed from a five-year to a three year cycle. There is a non-continuing renewal application. They are hoping to hear by early June regarding the funding for next year. The program is funded under Title VII of the Public Service Act. They are cautiously optimistic regarding the coming year, but they may not be able to do as much training.

They designed a one-year non-credit elective for the first year medical students. Eight of the twenty first year students took the class. This was created by an inter-disciplinary team. Seniors like Ella Craig talk about their experiences with medical care here in Alaska. There is a need to be able to appropriately and accurately evaluate the students' trainings.

The students' knowledge impacts how it is changing their practice. Michelle is the training coordinator. She works with the training the trainer series. Michelle will gather data to show that what they do, does help. There are four tracks for this year's Best Practices conference which will be held June 4th and 5th. There is quality improvement, patient and resident safety, medication management and behavioral health. There is going to be a national speaker for each track. Bill Herman will be one of their presenters.

Iver Malutin asked what the University of Alaska Anchorage is doing about suicide prevention.

Denise said that IMPACT program focuses on depression and gets at the reason for senior suicide. Denise suggested that they approach James Gallanos of the Division of Behavioral Health for the conference on this topic.

Iver said that villages around Kodiak have very little older suicide. Maybe the villages should be studied.

Michelle said they want to begin using tele-health for senior mental illness treatment and videoconferencing for getting the information out.

Paula said that there needs to be statewide broadband.

Rosellen said that Nevada is completely wired for telehealth now.

Iver said that there should be an elder advocate in each village who could help get the information out. In Kodiak, every elder is going to get all of the fish they need for a year. Iver doesn't think that sending information to a tribe would necessarily get the information out to the right people. So there is a need for elder advocates. There is one in each village on Kodiak Island.

Recess – meeting to reconvene Thursday, May 1st at 1:15 PM

May 1, 2009 – Meeting called to order at 1:15 PM

Legislative Advocacy Report, Pat Branson & Denise Daniello

Pat reported that the legislative teleconferences were very successful. Staff did a great job with all of the legislative materials. Pat gave thanks to the advocacy committee staff and noted that there was good participation.

Denise thanked everyone who participated and thanked Pat Branson for chairing the committee and acknowledged Sharon Howerton-Clark's help. Pat also thanked Sharon. Denise thanked Lesley for putting together the legislative material. Lesley tracked 49 bills. There were 640 total bills for the legislative session. 64 bills passed as well as 23 resolutions.

Denise said that during the legislative teleconferences, ACoA had nine speakers. During the last month of session, we met every week. We had a speaker at each teleconference meeting and a lot of discussion of the bills. Denise thanked Pat Luby, Marie Darlin and Jim McCall for their contributions.

Sharon said we had more activity than in past years. There was more input.

Lesley said that Cathy Munoz will be a real champion for us. Cathy was at our last teleconference meeting.

Denise said at the teleconferences, a lot of bills came up that we needed to take action on.

Barbara McNeil likes the way the watch list is set up. It is very easy to read.

Executive Committee, Sharon Howerton-Clark & Denise Daniello

Denise reported that the committee meeting minutes and the agenda had been approved. The committee talked about the changes to ACoA's bylaws and discovered under the nominations committee that we don't really have a procedure for the nominations process. This will be discussed.

There was discussion that we might want to include an additional member.

Sharon reported that there had been discussion of having the December meeting in Wasilla instead of Anchorage.

The weather hasn't been too bad in December the last few meetings in Anchorage.

Pioneer Home Advisory Board, Banarsi Lal

Banarsi explained his position and activities on the Pioneer Advisory Board.

The Pioneer Home Board meets monthly on the last Tuesday of every month. The chair decided to not meet in the summer time.

The Board decided to do something different with the help of Sharon and put more effort into advocacy. They are required to submit a letter every year to the Governor about the six pioneer homes. The staff was very helpful at drafting the report. If funds are available they will meet twice a year and one will coincide with the legislative session. They are following some pieces of legislation and the capital budget. Additional positions for staffing were looked at. The Dept. of Health & Social Services Commissioner Bill Hogan was very pleased about the pioneer home staff positions being funded. The Dept has not decided where the other extra positions were going to be implemented.

The board decided to do public hearings. The board put a request in for a 5% increase in the fee for the levels of care.

The Dept was able to justify the 5% increase and this will happen on July 1, 2009. The Dept. had asked for \$6 million in appropriations in general funds for the Pioneer Homes. The money given was mostly for deferred maintenance. The impression Banarsi got was the legislature was sympathetic because the need was there, but the funds were reduced to \$800,000, although \$2 million was requested.

They also followed HB 25, HB 75 and SB 172. There was a lot of discussion and they are busy looking at how they can help these bills.

The health reform commission didn't pass. HB 26 for the Medicaid Adult Dental program passed. HB 50, SB 12 for limiting the mandatory overtime for nurses passed. The Division and the Dept. did not support the bill limiting overtime for nurses. The Department didn't publicly oppose it.

The electronic health information exchange passed. SB 155 (to provide care for people with ADRD, and TBI) didn't pass.

An informal veterans' caucus was formed. Alaska has the highest population of veterans per capita. Banarsi said that it is most exciting to plan for the future needs in the Pioneer Homes. There is going to be a study contracted out to look at the possibility of more homes. There is a need for a psychological care facility for the elderly. The Pioneer Home Board will visit the Pioneer Homes in Anchorage, Fairbanks, and Palmer this fall. They will also visit Ketchikan, Sitka and Juneau during the legislative session in January or February.

Barbara McNeil asked if the Mary Conrad Center was not sold, the center could be used for the psychological care facility.

Banarsi answered that he didn't know.

Denise said that a contractor will look at what makes the most sense. The study opens up options for how to expand the Pioneer Home system. The Pioneer Home system is costly but it is a wonderful system.

Governor's Council on Disabilities/Special Education Report Banarsi Lal

Banarsi reported that the council started a quarterly newsletter. The last issue highlighted the council's accomplishments. The council also established an ad hoc committee last year. Two priorities were funded last year. Three more were sought this year. One was diagnostic clinics for autism spectrum disorders. This is in the Governor's Budget and it stayed in. Second was workforce development was a high capacity building. \$125,000 was received from the Trust and \$125,000 in general funds/MH for early intervention services. The third was for an autism resource center (AARC), \$150,000 in general fund/MH, \$200,000 MHTAAR. HB 187 did not pass; it required insurance to cover autism spectrum disorder. The Governor said that she is interested in addressing the needs of children with special needs.

There is a need for a crisis response for young adults with DD, etc. Patients are sent to Alaska Psychiatric Institute for the short term and then back to the community but that is not treatment. This project would help bring in national experts to train local folks.

The rural transition project would help kids transition to the adult world after finishing high school. There is \$150,000 in the Governor's budget.

There was a coordinated transportation request for \$800,000 in general fund, and \$300,000 MHTAAR. This was approved.

Workforce Development, Frank Appel, Barbara McNeil & Denise Daniello

Frank talked about the communication of the subcommittee. The providers were

concerned that they weren't getting enough information on the Trust's workforce development activities. Frank suggested developing a web page. Frank said that there is not enough funding. The Trust's website will soon have links regarding recruitment, education, etc. The web links are under development. People want brochures, handouts, etc. But there are so many interests and groups to cover. Frank recommended having an open folder where they can insert information for different target audiences such as students, providers, employees etc.

Barbara and Denise talked about the committee wanting to offer certification for a universal worker that could provide care for any of the beneficiary populations. The University is doing a lot of things, but it is difficult for agencies to send people in to benefit. ACoA is considering video conferences to expand distance learning, etc.

Denise said that a workforce conference is planned for Anchorage on Sept. 21st and 22nd. This conference will bring together stake holders to talk about work force development issues. There will be a national speaker to discuss the best practices for workforce training. This has worked in other states.

Barbara McNeil said that she is working on a poster and advertising.

Paula Pawlowski said that she is trying to combine the University with the high schools to emphasize this career pathway. Paula said that the new State education plan does not address career technical education.

Betty Keegan stated that the CNA program is offered in high school in Wrangell and Ketchikan. You can join the fire department at age 16.

Pat Branson said that Kodiak has an RN program. 75% to 80% work in the local Providence Hospital. Rep. Ledoux has been a proponent of technical education in the past.

Betty said that Ketchikan had the first RN class graduate two years ago. Some went to the Pioneer Home and others went to the Ketchikan Hospital.

Pat said that this is the way to go, train them locally and keep them there.

Betty said its back to the old hospital based nurse training programs.

Barbara said that pharmacists are also hard to recruit.

Planning Committee Report, Frank Appel & Denise Daniello

Frank stated that the planning committee has not met since the last ACoA Business meeting due to ACoA's advocacy efforts focus. Frank said that the committee will need to begin preparing for the next state plan for senior services.

Denise said we need about a year to plan. Then time to write and submit it early for review. The next plan will cover FY 2012 to 2016. 23 agencies are participating in the current plan's implementation.

Frank said with the last plan we started a year and a half before the deadline. We should start sometime next spring.

By-Laws Committee, Paula Pawlowski & Denise Daniello

Paula reported that ACoA has some holes in its by-laws. We need more committee members.

Paula requested that the members on the members be listed at the back of the meeting binder. The members are: Betty Keegan, Iver Malutin, Sharon Howerton-Clark, and Nita Madsen also volunteered.

Paula requested the draft to be done before the next meeting.

Nominating Committee Recommendations for ACoA Officers

Pat Branson

The motion passed unanimously to keep Sharon Howerton-Clark as ACoA's Chair and Paula Pawlowski as ACoA's Vice-Chair for FY 2010.

Discussion of site visits to the Mary Conrad Center, Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska, Chugiak-Eagle River Senior Center and the Anchorage Pioneer Home.

Iver Malutin commented that the Mary Conrad Center visit was an eye opener. He was pleased with what the State is doing. Residents say that they're happy and that no improvements are needed.

Eleanor Dementi said that this was her first visit to a senior center. This was a good idea to have these site visits. Cantwell doesn't have a senior center. It gives seniors a place to go. Eleanor said that it would be nice if the state kept the Mary Conrad Center rather than privatized it. Eleanor said that she is skeptical that they will find a good person to run it.

Nita Madsen said that there was little time to absorb all that they have to share.

Betty Keegan said that she likes the privatization. The State puts a lot of resources into the Pioneer Homes and is amazed at the number of staff that is staying on at the Mary Conrad Center. She enjoys every visit that we get to go out into the community.

Denise said that she was impressed by the Chugiak/Eagle River Center's campus. Denise said that aging in place was evident. There were 44 units of Alaska Housing

independent living housing and 20 HUD and 21 assisted living units. There was also an adult day center and a senior center. There were a variety of activities. They learned a new philosophy called gentle care. This makes sure people with dementia age with dignity. It helps the seniors try to understand their past to know the reasons for their behavior and it helps the workers redirect them to something meaningful.

Paula said that it was good to see the Mary Conrad Center in person. She was so impressed with the Pioneer Homes' dedication, the concern is genuine. Paula said she appreciates that system. The group at this site visit could not walk through the home due to a flu bug afflicting the residents in the area we were able to congregate, you could tell how much work needed to be done.

The visit to the Alzheimer's Resource Agency was eye opening.

Pat Branson said that as a provider, it is a learning experience to see other facilities. The Mary Conrad Center is only 20 years old but falling apart internally. That can happen, it is sad to see though. Pat also visited the Chugiak/Eagle River Center.

Pat said that she will be sending a book and DVD on new models for senior centers.

Barbara said the same to all of the above. It was very informative. She would like to see the visits extended.

Frank agreed on extending the time on the visits. Frank said that only three staff members left after the previous ownership at the Mary Conrad Center. Frank said that it was astounding after what they went through.

Frank also visited the Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska. He said that the center provides extensive services statewide. The services are chore, respite, caregiver support groups, care coordination, Healthy Body Healthy Brain Campaign, and many other programs. There was a 58% increase in the number of contacts this past year.

Banarsi said that the Alzheimer's Resource Center, he was unable to visit but was familiar with their work. The center in Fairbanks is a one person operation. Banarsi said that the Mary Conrad Center, he was not there long enough to see much. Banarsi was glad to see they put together a patients' rights hand book.

Betty said that the patients' bill of rights is federally mandated. Betty also visited the Chugiak/Eagle River Senior Center; everything revolves around the senior center. Betty said that there was a lot of staff but the place was not very inviting. Betty said that she encountered some people that were not happy with the housing.

Anchorage Senior Activity Center

Cathy Lee, Executive Director

Cathy is the new director of the Anchorage Senior Activity Center. Cathy has been in

her position for two months. Cathy said that she started as caseworker and had a variety of clients. She then was a DOD contractor in project management. In 2007 she crossed back over to the service/non-profit world. Cathy said that she is trying to blend both here. Cathy teaches computer classes to seniors. It is her passion to enrich the lives of seniors and she wants to network with other groups. Cathy said that she is flexible and open minded and has a will to learn.

AARP – Pat Luby, Director of Advocacy & Marie Darlin, AARP Capital City Taskforce

The Health Care Commission has been meeting at the Frontier Building discussing various senior health issues.

Pat talked about PERS/TRS. Pat said the Governor has not decided on this bill yet. Hawker did not favor changes at this time. We will see how the different tiers play out. The under- funding is getting deeper and deeper due to no pay-in by current workers. Tier one retirees are letting the State pick up their insurance for 10 years. Senator Stedman said it will pass over his dead body! The state may develop a hybrid plan and let someone choose whether to be a career public employee.

Pat said that he hopes that Rep. Hawker will help resolve this issue. There was a house bill stuck in committee long term without enough votes. We need Rep. Kurt Olson, Rep. Coghill, Rep. Chenault, and Rep. Neuman. Pat said that he hoped that the stock market decline might convince them that people need something they can count on. Next year is an election year. There are young police, teachers, and troopers saying that they can't afford to stay here. Parents are telling kids to teach elsewhere, not here.

Pat went over the minimum wage increase. Pat said the minimum wage got bumped up by fifty cents. The minimum wage is higher in Oregon and Washington than in Alaska now. People on minimum wage can't afford an apartment. It's not just the kids, often the only jobs that older returning workers can get are the minimum wage jobs. Medicaid Adult Dental was reauthorized. Senator Hoffman became a true believer when one of his constituents considered suicide due to no teeth. 7,600 participated in a 14 month period. 1,800 were older Alaskans.

Pat spoke about the Suicide Council. Pat said the Council was re-authorized thanks to Sam Trivett's personal story about his son and nephew. The council hasn't been doing a good job but is needed to address this widespread problem.

WWAMI medical students spend 3 years in Alaska, only one year in Washington. The medical students travel around the state on assignments. They are not that far away from doing a medical school up here.

Betty Keegan said that they get 5 to 7 WWAMI students a year in Wrangell for weeks at a time.

Pat said that health care is one field where people are not losing their jobs. Dr. Tom Nyswander tells kids if they practice medicine in Alaska, they won't have to pay any loans back. There is a battle with the University health budget. One of the senators wanted to zero this out. Fifty percent of the request was funded. SB 139 for loan forgiveness is for various health professions. There used to be something like this years ago.

Betty Keegan said that the hospital foundation in Wrangell is trying to support two local students.

Pat talked about the Energy Assistance program. Pat stated that the Governor has accepted most of the stimulus money, but this is the only category of money that she is not accepting. We need weatherization of schools, clinics, etc., especially in rural Alaska. The money could be used for that rather than individual utility bills. Pat said that he will be visiting with the Governor's staff on this. Larry Persily on Rep. Mike Hawker's staff is the resident expert on the stimulus, he wears a lot of different hats, and has many areas of expertise.

Pat talked about the Permanent Fund Dividend stability. This issue was revisited. This year the dividend will be about \$1400. Next year it may be less than \$100. If the dividend was given in December, the 2010 dividend might be \$1000. Wohlforth, Frasca, and Commonwealth North are behind this effort. PFD checks are an eighth of Alaska's economy. The loss of the dividend would be a big blow to our economy. Now is the time to try to accomplish this. Heather Flynn says we need income tax and state sales tax or access to the PFD to run the state. She said that we have to look at the special benefits to seniors.

Betty Keegan stated that she refuses to take senior discounts because she can afford things better than her kids and grandkids can.

Sharon Howerton-Clark stated that we knew this was coming but we refused to plan for it. Sharon said that it would be a beneficial partnership to have the Trust, ACoA, RPEA, etc. working together and would make it easier for elected officials to decide to support these issues.

(See attached report for additional details)

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Elders Program Kay Branch, Coordinator

Kay said that the May issue of Indian Health Services Provider magazine will have elder articles. Kay said that she would email Denise.

Kay said that she participates in the CMS group on tribal issues. There is a lack of long term care in Indian country, in the lower 48 and here. The Cherokee Nation developed the first tribal PACE program, long term care for those over age 55. Indian Health Services gives small grants to plan for long term care services in Indian country. There are four in Alaska, Kodiak, Chugachmiut, Qutekcak Tribe, and BBHC. Kay said that she would keep ACoA posted on a conference in May 2010 in Phoenix. Long term care was never part of the Indian Health Services package but people see it as an obligation. Kay said that she is working with the American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging, and non-profit.

Regarding the Medicaid reform initiative, they are trying to figure out ways tribal health organizations could provide long term care services and save the State money by getting Medicaid reimbursement. They are working on a memorandum of agreement. They are going to implement a pilot project short-term that will give funding for care for reimbursements from Medicaid that don't cover the full bills.

They are pursuing universal worker training. This will be similar to community health aides. Next year the health aides' annual conference will focus on elder care and development of a public entity waiver.

Kay said that a lot of these ideas came out of the HCBS Strategies report. There were three facilities requests this year. The requests were from Bethel, Kotzebue and Anchorage. They found out that assisted living doesn't pencil out even in Anchorage. Instead, they are looking at a 100 unit skilled nursing with the Green House model ten units of ten. The location is uncertain.

They would need 3 to 4 acres. Some parcels near the medical center have been identified.

Kay talked about suicide prevention. Kay said there is a Tlingit woman from Southeast whose son committed suicide 2 days before her husband died of cancer. This is her passion. She now has an AA degree and is interested in rural issues. She is now doing suicide prevention work full time.

Betty Keegan said that there is a "healing heart" service in Southeast.

Kay said the service needs to be different for each area with input from that area.

Denise asked about the signs of suicide.

Kay answered, giving their things away, saying things like "nice knowing you". Kay said she couldn't list them all.

Denise asked about senior fall prevention.

Kay answered Indian Health Services is going to have a work group. Kay suggested that ACoA talk to the injury prevention manager. The manager would be more in touch with these programs.

Frank Appel asked what a capitated service was.

Kay answered; it is x amount of money to provide all services needed per person per month at a flat rate. For a nursing Home level of care for people who live in the community, the PACE program gets about \$3500 for all of the care they need. Kay said that it is managed care. If a person goes into a nursing home, that amount must pay for that too. Kay said that there is a rumor that Providence hospital is looking into PACE. PACE is for dual eligibles under Medicaid or Medicare that are 55 and older.

Iver said that we should get Barbara Frank on our next ACoA meeting's agenda. In Kotzebue, suicide is a big issue.

Kay said that there is an elder committee member that lives in Kotzebue, May Schaeffer. She could participate as well. Kay said she had dinner with Dan Karman in Nome Recently, he sends his greetings. Dan Karman was a former ACoA Commissioner.

Denise asked if the Maniilaq capital funds were included for nursing home.

Kay answered that no, none of the capital requests were funded.
(2 Reports attached)

Commission members' closing comments:

The next ACoA business meeting will be in Kotzebue on August 3rd through the 5th.

The ACoA Commission decided to have the winter business meeting in Wasilla at Lake Lucille.

Pat Luby with AARP said that we could meet at their AARP offices as a backup.

