



Alaska Health and Disability Program Newsletter

Fall/Winter 2014

Tobacco Survey Highlights

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Alaskans with disabilities are more likely to smoke cigarettes than those without disabilities (29.1% compared to 17.7%) (2012). Additionally, 5.6% of Alaskan adults with disabilities use smokeless tobacco (CDC, 2012). Approximately 20% of all deaths in Alaska are attributable to tobacco use, making tobacco the single most

preventable cause of death in Alaska (Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, 2012).

In fall 2014, the Alaska Health and Disability Program (AHDP)

asked leaders of agencies that provide services for Alaskans with disabilities to participate in a confidential survey about tobacco. The survey included general agency demographic questions, queries around attitudes toward tobacco, policy status, and the communication and information resources agencies prefer to utilize to communicate tobacco-related messages. In addition, it included questions about motivators and barriers related to tobacco policies.



79.6% of respondents report their agency has either a policy that prohibits tobacco use indoors only or both indoors and outdoors.

Convenience sampling over a four-week period resulted in 51 survey responses. Results indicate that 98.0% respondents believe tobacco is harmful to the user's health. All of the respondents believe that secondhand smoke is harmful to others. Only 12.2% of respondents report that customers the agency works with, or around, use tobacco in the same room or space as agency staff. Most believe disability agencies have a responsibility to help employees and customers to quit tobacco use. Most (79.6%) respondents report their agency has a policy that prohibits tobacco use, either indoors only or indoors and outdoors.

The most cited benefits to tobacco-free policies include better health and increased productivity. Most respondents whose agency has a tobacco-free policy denied any policy-related problems or barriers. Those that did identify a problem or barrier cite problems with policy enforcement. These results will inform the development and dissemination of resources as well as other activities to reduce tobacco use among Alaskans with disabilities. A full report will soon be available on the [AHDP website](#).



Program Manager, Amanda Cooper, and Project Coordinator, Lanny Mommsen, in Barrow, Alaska during an August 2014 CDC site visit.

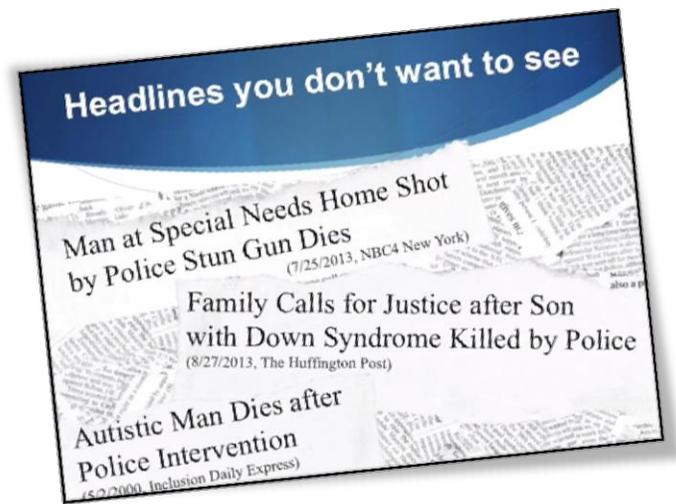
Dental Care Outside A Dentist Office

In 2008, legislation passed in Alaska (A.S. 08.32.115) authorizing non-traditional dental hygienist practice. Under collaborative agreements, experienced dental hygienists may practice without a dentist on site in settings outside the dental office, and in placing dental restorations. This model offers the potential to provide preventive dental services and screening for unmet needs in schools, long-term care settings and/or through home visits with children, adolescents and adults with disabilities. This dental hygienist practice model is not yet being utilized because a dentist, oral health agency, or professional organization champion is needed. This champion will assist the Alaska Dental Action Coalition to design the program and supervise the start-up for these specialized dental hygienists. If you would like to be this champion, or have suggestions for who would be willing to be the champion for this important project, please contact [Amanda Cooper](#).



Communication Tips for First Responders

The Alaska Health and Disability Program (AHDP), in partnership with UAA Center for Human Development Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental and related Disabilities (LEND) program and others created and piloted a brief training for first responders.



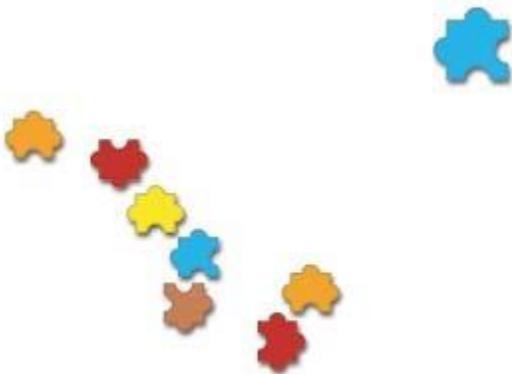
Based on a literature review by a LEND Fellow and key informant interviews, the planning committee, including the LEND Program, Making Anywhere Possible, and Anchorage Police Department (APD) Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) selected communication with adults with hidden disabilities such as autism spectrum disorder, fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and traumatic brain injury as the topic.

A facilitated video presentation format allows for easy, broad implementation. Officers from the APD and people from the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education served as actors. Created with assistance from Assistive Technology of Alaska, an 8-minute scenario-based video aims to improve communication with people who experience certain disabilities, safety for officers

and individuals in the community, and aims to increase potential for more efficient calls and conflict resolution.

In May, the group piloted the training for six APD shifts, which included approximately 200 patrol officers, detectives, public information staff, chaplains, and commanders. Each presentation included an APD CIT officer and a partner agency representative who introduced the project and answered questions. Most of the 187 evaluations received indicated officers were satisfied or very satisfied with the training, and reported an increase in knowledge because of the training. Evaluation feedback about additional disability-related training topics suggests training about communication issues with the deaf community is highly desired. Partners are currently exploring additional training options, including utilizing existing materials and or different formats to continue the project.

The [video](#) is available for use by any first responder agency. There are also laminated tip sheets for first responders available upon request. A brief [evaluation survey](#) will help track the project's reach.



Spotlight on Kris Green



On October 24th, the Alaska Health and Disability Program (AHDP) said a bittersweet goodbye to a valued member of the AHDP Steering Committee. Kris Green, B.S. H.ed, MAT, MS has been the Autism, Specialty Clinic, & Parent Services Manager within the Division of Public Health Section of Women's, Children's, and Family Health for six years.

Kris is an original member of the grass roots ad hoc committee created in 2011 to address health promotion for Alaskans with disabilities. She championed, and helped write, Alaska's application to formally create the Alaska Health and Disability Program and obtain funding through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. She has continued to provide tireless and valued support to the program.

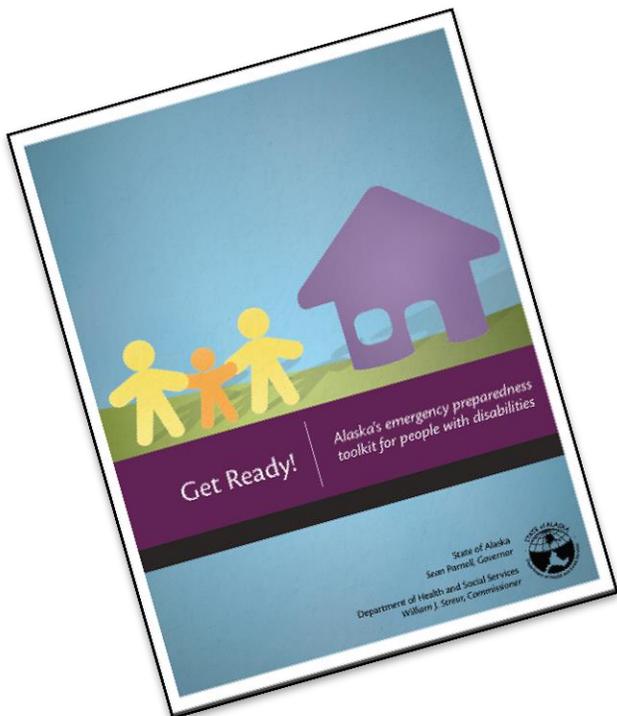
Kris is moving on to an exciting role with the Providence Palliative Transitional Care Program. She will build a new educational project for medical staff, community providers, and the public promoting advanced directives. We know we will continue to cross paths in our work, and we thank her for her extensive contributions to improving the health of Alaskans with disabilities.

Emergency Preparedness

Needs Assessment

Alaskans experiencing disabilities comprise about 24.0% of Alaska's population, but little is known about how prepared they are for emergencies. As Alaska approached the 50th anniversary of the '64 earthquake, the Alaska Health and Disability Program (AHDP) sought to establish Alaska-specific baseline data on preparedness levels and identify approaches for developing and disseminating emergency planning resources.

AHDP conducted a survey using a convenience sample of adults in Alaska with any disability, or adult caregivers of any Alaskan with any disability. There were a variety of questions related to their perception of vulnerability to a disaster, their level of preparedness, and their motivations and preferences related to preparedness. Most felt vulnerable to a natural disaster or emergency. However, few had a written plan for what they would do in case of emergency. The full report is available on the [AHDP website](#).



SAFETY KEPT IN PLACE KIT



Any Alaskan with a disability can request a free Skip Kit from AHDP. Contact [AHDP](#) to request one.

Get Ready! Toolkit

AHDP created the Get Ready! Toolkit to help Alaskans with disabilities prepare for an emergency. The toolkit is for those who experience a disability, their families, those who provide care for people with disabilities, and others who are interested in ways to help people with disabilities plan for emergencies. The toolkit is available in accessible

formats, includes larger font and plain language, and is Alaska-specific. It offers a strengths-based approach that promotes the belief that everyone can participate in emergency preparedness.

The toolkit is in use around Alaska, and is the primary preparedness tool for the Municipality of Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and the City of Fairbanks. A webinar is in production to assist Alaskans with using the toolkit. The [full toolkit](#) is available online along with [individual checklists and planning tools](#). Printed versions are available upon [request](#).

Emergency Preparedness for All Video

Emergency Preparedness for All is a 10-minute video aimed at assisting people with disabilities and their families in preparing for a disaster. The video is signed in American Sign Language (ASL), captioned (optional), and voiced in order to be the most accessible possible. This video is the result of a partnership with the AHDP, Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, Access Alaska, Assistive Technology of Alaska, Municipality of Anchorage, Red Cross of Alaska, and the Bridges Navigator Program. Made possible by grants from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the Alaska Division of Public Health. The Emergency Preparedness for All video can be viewed [online](#).

Follow-up Survey

There is currently a follow-up to 2013 survey by AHDP to see if there have been any changes since AHDP started teaching people about preparedness. This [survey](#) is for Alaskan adults with any disability, or adult family members who provide care for Alaskans with any disability. To thank respondents for their input, they have a chance to enter in a drawing for one of four \$25 gift cards to Fred Meyer. **Survey ends December 15, 2014.** For more information, or to request alternate survey formats, call or text Marcy Rein, Technical Assistance Consultant for the Alaska Health and Disability Program, at (907) 717-9338 or [email](#).

Adaptive Physical Activity Project

The Alaska Health and Disability Program Adapted Physical Activity Project has created professional development workshops to give school staff throughout Alaska the skills and knowledge to implement strategies to include students with disabilities in physical activity programs.



Since October 2013, six regional workshops, reaching 183 staff in 35 schools, pre-K through 12th grade, were held in Kenai, Bethel, Valdez, Fairbanks, Juneau, and Bristol Bay. Each workshop includes one day of professional development, one graded graduate level credit through University of Alaska Anchorage PACE, modified equipment, and additional consultation with an Adapted Physical Activity Consultant.



These workshops have created programs for approximately 500 students with disabilities. Each of these programs uses differential instruction, inclusive strategies, peer buddies, enhanced communication and collaboration, and modified equipment.

Partner Highlight: UAA Center for Human Development

Access to Healthcare

The University of Alaska Anchorage (UAA) Center for Human Development (CHD) has received a Special Hope Grant aimed at increasing the knowledge of healthcare providers about the needs of adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Additionally, the grant is working to increase access to health promotion information for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

Using the results of the Alaska Health and Disability Program needs assessment, CHD is working to identify needed training topics and develop training materials. LEND Fellows will then use existing materials and new materials to create a resource toolkit for healthcare providers. They will identify a group of family practice and obstetric and gynecological providers to provide feedback on those materials. A brief training video for health care providers on communicating with people with intellectual and developmental disabilities will be a focus project for a LEND Fellow.

LEND Fellows will also identify health promotion materials for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. CHD with AHDP and other partners will ensure that plain language health promotion materials are included in health program distributions, and on web pages. LEND Fellows will also create a draft of health system navigation materials for non-tribal health systems to help adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families access health services. Future health fairs will include a disability-focused health promotion table with plain language health materials.

Friendships and Dating

The UAA CHD Friendships and Dating Program teaches Alaskans 16 years and older with intellectual and related developmental disabilities how to develop and maintain health relationships and prevent interpersonal violence. Community agency staff receives 2-days of training from CHD to implement the 10-week program. The training includes detailed curriculum materials. Travel funds are available to attend face-to-face training in addition to distance delivered training. Agencies are able to provide the Friendships and Dating Program in Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Kenai/Soldotna, Ketchikan, Kodiak, Mat-Su Valley, and Valdez.

Each participant learns about:

- Feelings
- Types of relationships
- Personal boundaries
- Communication
- Meeting people
- First impressions
- Planning social activities
- Dating process
- Personal safety
- Sexual health
- Gender differences
- Conflict resolution
- Maintaining relationships

Care providers also have the opportunity to learn about these concepts. One session each week introduces a topic. A second weekly session focuses on applying new skills in community settings.

The next available train-the-trainer session will be distance delivered January 14-15, 2015. To sign up, or find out more information, visit the CHD [website](#).

Around Town

Where we have been

AHDP has presented at many conferences and group meetings around Alaska, including

- Alaska Health Summit
- Full Lives Conference
- Alaska Health Literacy Symposium
- Alaska Patient Safety Conference
- All Alaska Pediatric Symposium
- Alaska Child Maltreatment Conference

Where we will be

AHDP continues to share great projects and resources all over Alaska. Look for us at upcoming conferences such as the Alaska Health Summit in Anchorage, January 27-29.

If there are conferences or meetings where you think we should share our resources, let us know!

For More Information

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Improving health across the lifespan for Alaskans
experiencing disabilities.

Alaska Health and Disability Program Mission