

**Alaska Commission on Aging
BP Energy Center, Anchorage, Alaska
December 11 & 12, 2013
Approved Meeting Minutes**

Meeting called to order at 8:45 AM.

Roll Call: Commissioners present: Mary Shields, chair, Edna Devries, Sandra Doyle, Rolf Numme, Duane Mayes, Marie Darlin, Paula Pawlowski, Anna Frank, and Rachel Greenberg.

Commissioners absent: Banarsi Lal and Eleanor Dementi.

Staff Present: Denise Daniello, Jon Erickson, Lesley Thompson, Sherice Cole

ACTION: Adoption of the Agenda

Sandra Doyle moved to approve the meeting agenda, Rachel Greenberg seconded. Meeting agenda was approved.

ACTION: Approval of Minutes

Rachel Greenberg moved to approve the minutes of September 16 – 19, 2013, Marie Darlin seconded. Minutes approved with no objections.

A “Safety Moment”

BP Energy Building staff member provided an overview of building safety.

ACoA Chair Report, Mary Shields

Mary Shields stated that she has been busy with the Executive Committee working with the By-laws Committee on By-laws revisions.

ACoA Vice-Chair Report, Edna Devries

Edna Devries stated she has been concentrating on the two major senior centers in the Mat-Su Valley by discussing with the executive directors how services could be improved for seniors. Edna said she hopes, as a Commission member, to promote more opportunities for seniors. She further related that she recently attended the City Hall meeting in Palmer and noted that 10% of the comments were about senior issues.

ACoA Executive Director Report, Denise Daniello

Denise Daniello reported she organizes her Director’s Report to follow ACoA’s core services of planning, advocacy, education, and interagency collaboration. Denise welcomed the new Commission members and noted that the ACoA will be even more effective in advocacy by having a full complement of members. Denise talked about the Governor’s Budget recent release and stated that the 2015 Governor’s Budget was proposed based on a declining trend in oil prices. Denise talked about the

upcoming legislative session, stating that this is the second year of a two year session and that many members of the leadership from last session will continue. Denise mentioned sequestration and the impacts on funding services for seniors and other discretionary programs. For FY2014, Senior and Disabilities Services were able to absorb most of the losses to federal funding by cutting back on their administrative budget. Congress passed a budget but we are waiting to see how the funding will be allocated to each one of the twelve federal departments.

ACoA has two budget recommendations and five policy recommendations that are outlined in the Director's report that will form the base for the Commission's legislative advocacy priorities. As we go into session, ACoA will write position papers for the Commission's legislative priorities, which will be acted upon by ACoA's Legislative Advocacy and Executive Committees. There are two budget recommendations. The first budget priority is an increment for the National Family Caregiver Support Grant Program in the amount of \$325,000 to build supports for Alaska's family caregivers. The second budget priority is an increase in the amount of \$545,000 for the Nutrition, Transportation and Support services (NTS).

ACoA endorses five policy recommendations; 1) access to affordable senior housing, 2) improve supports for people with Alzheimer's disease & related dementia, 3) promotion and development of the Aging and Disability Resource Centers, 4) advocate for reauthorization of the Senior Benefits program; and 5) to continue our advocacy for Elder Protection. Further, Representative Shelley Hughes is proposing new legislation to reform the state's Power of Attorney Statute. ACoA will review the bill and possibly provide support.

Last month, the Governor announced his decision to refuse Medicaid expansion for Alaska. Commissioner Streur will report to us tomorrow and will be able to expand on this.

Denise talked about Federal programs, such as the Older American's Act, which has been up for re-authorization since 2011. The Commission submitted a letter of support for this re-authorization.

ACoA received an invitation to join with the National Alzheimer's Association. ACoA is working on a state plan for the ADRD population and is promoting implementation strategies with the National Alzheimer's Disease Association's plan. This is a great opportunity for us to partner with other states to move ADRD advocacy forward at the National level.

ACoA decided to do a survey of the 122 participants of the Alaska Senior Housing Summit that was conducted in December 2012. Of the surveys returned, 35% reported making new senior housing contacts as a result of the Summit and 40% noted that their agencies were planning new projects for senior housing. This survey shows that communities are paying attention to the need for senior housing. This year, the Commission will be hosting the "Power of Aging in Alaska Symposium" on May 1st

that will focus on the challenges of aging in Alaska with respect to long-term supports, housing, health care access, and elder protection.

Denise was asked by the Mat-Su Health Foundation to make a presentation to Mat-Su senior groups about the role of senior advisory commissions (as compared to area agencies on aging) by providing an overview of the existing commissions and their history. Denise thanked Banarsi Lal and Marie Darlin for providing her with historical information about the development of the Fairbanks North Star Borough Senior Advisory Commission and the Juneau Commission on Aging, respectively. This information was helpful for her presentation to the MatSu Health Foundation.

Denise talked about the Commission's Annual Report and the information it will contain. The Executive Committee provides oversight of the development of this report and recommended that the report include quotes from each of the Commission members to go along with their photos. The Committee developed three questions that Commissioners may respond to in developing their quotes. Denise asked Commissioners to submit their quotes by December 15th.

Mary and Denise made a presentation to the Trust at their November meeting that summarized the findings from the Commission's rural outreach visits to the Copper Center/Glennallen region and the lessons learned from these visits for future advocacy and planning efforts.

Introductions & Activity, ACoA Commissioners introduced themselves.

Mary Shields introduced Anna Frank as she was officially appointed to the Commission on Friday December 6, 2013. Anna Frank is originally from Minto, a community in the Interior, and she wanted to join the Commission after being a caregiver for her husband for a number of years. She stated that Minto does not have many advocates for their elders and she sees a great need for services to rural Elders. Anna serves as a Native missionary and archdeacon for the Episcopal Diocese of Alaska. She is also a member of the Denakkanaaga Board and National Indian Committee on Aging. Anna received the Alaska Federation of Native Elder of the Year Award and the President's Award for Public Service.

Paula Pawlowski, who served in a public member seat, now holds the DCCED designated seat on the ACoA. Paula is employed as the Executive Director for Serve Alaska under the Department of Commerce, Community Economic Development (DCCED). Paula noted that RuralCap has a program for foster grandparents and they have AmeriCorps Vista workers. AmeriCorps workers serve two years and after two years you receive an education award of \$5,000. Paula lives in Anchorage.

Duane Mayes, Director of the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, serves in the designated seat for the Department of Health and Social Services. Duane is originally from Wisconsin and his first job out of high school was working in a nursing home. Duane has served on the Commission since 2010. He is a resident of Anchorage.

Sandi Doyle, serves in the public member seat, and has been on the Commission for almost three years. Sandi lives in Fairbanks and moved to Alaska in 1965. She volunteers for the Church and has been a hospice volunteer since 1986. Sandi owns Caring Bridges, an assisted living home, in Fairbanks since 2000.

New ACoA Commissioner Rolf Numme, serves in a public member seat, is a lead instructor at Charter College in Wasilla. In May 2013, Rolf completed his PhD in Education. His dissertation focus is on aging and re-careering as an older adult. Rolf found himself wanting to be an advocate for seniors and felt a need to help make the aging process better for people. He stated we need to prepare people for aging at all ages.

New Commissioner Rachel Greenberg, serves in the provider seat, graduated high school in Juneau and received her Bachelors' degree from the University of Fairbanks. Rachel started working for the Mat/Su Palmer Senior Center in 1993 and is currently the deputy director. Rachel is also Vice Chair for AgeNet, the statewide senior provider coalition.

New Commissioner Edna DeVries serves in the public member seat and resides in Palmer. Edna has extensive public service experience. She is a former state senator and currently serves on the Palmer City Council. She is also an instructor in business for Charter College. Previously, Edna was the bookkeeper for the Palmer Senior Center when the organization was located at the Colony Inn. Edna is knowledgeable about senior issues. She served as a family caregiver for her parents and also her mother-in-law.

Mary Shields has a strong background in human resources and the business community. Mary moved to Alaska in Kenai in 1972 and then to Anchorage in 1976. Mary was employed as the General Manager for Northwest Technical Services until her recent retirement. She also has a distinguished record in public service serving on various boards and councils in Alaska holding officer and board member positions. Mary is the past (and first woman president) for the Alaska Support Industry Alliance and served as the Lt. Governor for the Alaska/Yukon South Division of the Pacific Northwest Kiwanis. Mary said we need to engage the business community in senior issues as their labor force approaches retirement age.

Mary Shields invited others in the room to introduce themselves. ACoA Staff Lesley Thompson introduced Ella Craig. Ella was one of the founders of the University of Alaska, Alaska Geriatric Center. She has been in Alaska since 1953 and has had the privilege of seeing senior agencies develop over the years. Ella has been involved in the social programs. Denise said Ella is the first social worker in the State of Alaska who made sure that children received a polio vaccination. Ella flew from village to village to make sure children were vaccinated. Ella served on the Commission for some years in the seat designated for the Pioneer Home Advisory Board Chair. Lesley said Ella has a University scholarship named after her for social work. Ella is 94 years young.

Denise became interested in senior issues because her parents had her late in life. She was a caregiver for both of her parents along with her sister. Denise's dad had Alzheimer's disease and her mother had vascular dementia. Denise was the Executive Director for the North Star Council on Aging in Fairbanks.

She also was the program manager for the University of Alaska Geriatric Center in Fairbanks and taught classes in aging and developed a specialization in gerontology for the undergraduate social work program at UAF. Denise has a master's degree in Anthropology and baccalaureate degrees in sociology and anthropology.

Overview of Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA)

Power Point Presentation: Denise Daniello with ACoA Committee Chairs

Executive Committee, Mary Shields; Legislative Advocacy Committee, Marie Darlin;

Planning Committee, Denise Daniello (for Banarsi Lal); Bylaws Committee, Marie Darlin;

Ad Hoc Conference Committee, Sandi Doyle. This presentation was a general overview of the Commission, services provided, history of accomplishments, and issues of concern.

Introduction to Medicaid and Medicare and Alaska's Waiver Programs

Jon Sherwood, Deputy Director, Division of Senior & Disabilities Services

Jon Sherwood gave an overview of Alaska's Medicaid and Waiver Programs.

Medicaid is the primary payer of long-term care services. Medicaid is authorized by Title 19 of the Social Security Act. Medicaid is administered by each state with federal oversight. Federal oversight is provided by Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Medicaid provides a 50% reimbursement to Alaska for services provided to Medicaid eligible persons. Some states have a larger percentage of federal match. Tribal Federal Health Agencies that provide care to tribal members of American Indian and Alaska Native ancestry are reimbursed at a rate of 100% by Medicaid. Medicaid members are generally low-income and vulnerable and fall into a category of aged, blindness, disabled and terminally ill. Further categories of coverage under Medicaid include children and pregnant women. For those who income-qualify, they may be covered by Denali KidCare. Also, there is a special category for women that have been diagnosed with breast and uterine cancers in a program under the Center of Disease Control. Men who are single, low-income and between the ages of 21 and 64 often fall into the Medicaid "donut hole" and are not usually covered by Medicaid unless they are also blind or disabled.

Introduction to Medicare

Jeanne Larson, Medicare Office, Lead Counselor & Trainer

Jeanne Larson and Judith Bendersky presented a power point on the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP). SHIP is located in every state. Their office is under the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services. Jeanne is a health program associate while Judith is the Health Program Manager. Judith designs pamphlets and flyers to help get information to Alaska seniors. Jeanne is the subject matter expert and as such does her presentations on Medicare for AARP and in Webinars. In the spirit of the SHIP program they recruit and train volunteers of Medicare and provide all types of information assistance to clients.

U.S. Administration on Community Living /Administration on Aging

Terry Duffin, Region X Program Operations Manager (by teleconference)

Terry Duffin gave an overview of the U.S. Administration on Community Living, the Administration on Aging, and programs for seniors funded by the Older Americans Act. As determined by Congress, Older American Act funds fund a variety of programs and services for older Alaskans. The Administration on Aging (AOA) is headed by an Assistant Secretary for Aging who reports to Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. A

year and half ago, the U.S. Administration on Community Living was formed that includes the Administration on Aging (for older adults) and represents persons with developmental and physical disabilities. Kathleen Greenlee is the Administrator of the Agency and she serves a dual role as Administrator of the Administration for Community Living as well as the Assistant Secretary for the Administration on Aging. The other major component in Alaska is Title VI which funds tribal programs serving Alaska Native elders. The State of Alaska has 42 of the existing Title VI Grantees. They are currently in the middle of the grant application process (current cycle expires March 21st and the next grant cycle starts April 1st 2014 through March 31st of 2017).

Region 10 incorporates Alaska, Oregon, Idaho, and Washington and supports seventy-six Tribes. Terry said Region 10 has had a wonderful relationship with the Alaska Commission on Aging. Terry is in his 39th year with the Region 10 Administration on Aging. The function of the Administration on Aging (AOA) is to focus on the most vulnerable elderly who may not be receiving support from other services and focus on those with the greatest social and economic need and the elderly and rural elderly which is most of Alaska. Terry encourages the Commission to follow the sequestration closely. Terry thanked the work that Duane and his staff are doing. Terry said the Administration on Aging commends Denise and the Commissioners for all of their work. Every state receives funds depending on the number of people age 60 and over. Alaska is a minimum-funded state so it receives one half of one percent of the total funding appropriated for Older American Act programs (OAA). One of the projects the Administration is working on is increasing the number of the Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers (ADRCs) in the region.

Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (SDS), Division Overview

Duane Mayes, Director of Senior & Disabilities Services (2:30-3:00 p.m.)

Director Mayes went over the organization chart and staffing for SDS. Long-term services and home care services are very important to Alaska's seniors. Lisa Morley oversees \$35 million in senior grants. These grants involve Title III, VI and VII. Senior grants take up \$13 to \$14 million and the remainder goes toward developmental disability service grants. Two other SDS units are "Provider Certification" and the "Compliance Unit" that provide PCA certification. Providers must be recertified every two years. The Compliance Unit conducts random checks to verify validity of providers at assisted living facilities. They also triage with their Adult Protective Services and Quality Assurance Unit, Duane explained.

Kate Burke oversees the research analysis unit that involves training and research, data maintenance, statistics analysis, and is closely working with their automated service plan team. The waiver for Children with Complex Medical Conditions (CCMC) has a client list of a little over 200 children. An adult with Physical and Mental Disability waiver is new on the waiver list and has less than 200 clients. Nursing home costs average about \$110,000 a year so home and community based services are much less expensive. The beauty of what the Commission does is to keep the services being funded. In the future automated service plans are expected make a great deal of difference in waiver service. They have implemented tele-health which will do distance health assessments. It is challenging to do

reassessments in rural Alaska and the use of video conferencing equipment can help (10% of assessments are rural Alaska).

Alaska's Aging and Disabilities Resource Centers (ADRCs)

Duane reported for Lisa Morley, SDS Senior Grants Manager.

Duane hopes that the advocacy at the national level and with the help of this Commission will be able to lower the effect of sequestration. When people are referred to Senior and Disabilities Services by care coordinators, half of the people referred do not qualify for the waivers. The Aging and Disability Resource Centers are using a new pre-screening tool developed for the ADRC pilot project being conducted by the Kenai Peninsula Independent Living Center. If the tool states they need to be assessed for a waiver, more than likely they will qualify. The other piece built the ADRC pilot project is information and referral for persons who need behavior health services. ACoA and the partner boards advocated successfully for capital funding for this project three years ago and now SDS is implementing the pilot project. If this project is successful, then the model will be shared with other ADRCs around the state.

Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education

Teresa Holt, Executive Director

Director Holt reported that state law establishes a Special Education Service Agency (SESA). Their job is to work with rural school districts or any school districts that have a low-incidence-disability, such as being deaf, blind or behavior issues. The Governor's Council includes members representing SESA and the Special Education Advisory Council. Their board is also a Trust Beneficiary board. The Council meets three times a year for three days and they are a very active working board. As a Developmental Disabilities Board they are required to work on eight different areas.

The Council's priorities are as follows:

- 1) Make sure they have a statewide advocacy program with waivers.
- 2) Services for people with disabilities.
- 3) Housing partnering with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.
- 4) Transportation work is being done with the Alaska Mobility Coalition.
- 5) The employment goal is to double the number of people with developmental disabilities in the community who are employed.
- 6) Early Intervention services for infants and toddlers.
- 7) Education
- 8) Health

Denise noted that a big concern for the developmentally disabled community is the aging of their family caregivers. Theresa also noted that the Council worked to secure an additional \$1.5 million for the infant learning program. They need to make sure they were serving children in Office of Children Services (OCS) custody. A lot of these children live with their grandparents. The Council has a five-year grant to help people with disabilities to ensure that are able to get preventative health screenings and that

providers offer those screenings. Another Council project is emergency preparedness for people with developmental disabilities and vulnerable populations such as Alzheimer's disease and Dementia. They do the Alaska safety plan for people that have been physically or sexually abused. The Council has partnered with the ACoA on the Missing Older Adults Silver Alert Bill and with support for the Complex Behavior Collaborative that provides intensive resources to providers and family caregivers of people with challenging behaviors who pose danger to themselves and others. The Council is working on the "Employment First Program" to promote employment opportunities for all people with an intellectual disability.

**Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB)/Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse (ABADA)
Pat Sidmore, Planner II for Executive Director Kate Burkhart (by teleconference)**

Pat began his report by mentioning his previous employment as a planner for ACoA long ago.

The AMHB and ABADA boards work and support each other, yet maintain their separate identities. They recently supported general local efforts on resolutions regarding alcohol. Kate Burkhart, Executive Director, works for three different boards which include the Suicide Prevention Council along with AMHB and ABADA. Teri Tibbet is the Trust/Board advocacy coordinator and is especially active during legislative session. She started a group on Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders.

Commissioners' Closing Thoughts

Sandra noted that we needed more time to hear Duane's plan for improving care coordination for seniors.

Sandi said it sometimes takes months to process the funding for services and then they don't meet the criteria for the waivers. Duane said the division is working on care coordination to make the process go quicker.

Anna Frank said the meeting has been interesting and informative and her message to the Native population will be to get involved.

Marie said she made a few notes that our May conference will be on the "power of aging." We need to think about the power that aging people have and the fact that they don't use it. Their history and volunteer hours are not just the money but they give time to the community.

Rolf said he wants to see the faces and names behind the information we received from the surveys. He is impressed by the passion here and because of that we are going to be able to do a lot of great things. He would like to see us focus on preventative measures and look at the intergenerational contact. We need to do outreach to our communities and get the message out.

Rachel said she is learning a lot and appreciates being on the Commission and is excited to move forward and be a part of positive change.

Edna said after today you realize how much she does not know and she thought the training that Denise and the staff put together is great.

**ACoA Meeting
December 12, 2013**

**Office of Long-Term Care Ombudsman,
Diana Weber Long-term Care Ombudsman**

Diana reported on the Office of the Long-term Care Ombudsman which is an elder protection and elder advocacy agency that investigates complaints made by or on behalf of seniors residing in nursing and assisted living homes. State law also authorizes the Ombudsman to investigate complaints from seniors in private residences relating to their long term care or housing. Their goal is to protect the health, safety, rights and welfare of seniors and to solve problems to their satisfaction wherever possible. The state and federal law gives her office access to facilities and to seniors, so long as they want to talk with us. Besides investigating complaints, the Ombudsmen Office makes unannounced visits to homes statewide to monitor conditions and hear what the seniors need help with. The Ombudsman's Office is funded by the federal Older Americans Act grant and by state general funds. Eighty percent of the seniors her office serves are Trust Beneficiaries (meaning they have Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, behavioral health or mental health conditions). Seventy-five percent of the complaints they investigate are forwarded to them from Adult Protective Services as reports of harm. The Ombudsman's office staff calls Adult Protective Services if they are needed. Ninety-two percent of the cases relate to problems in assisted living facilities. The Ombudsman's Office has six staff and about 20 volunteers to cover 18 nursing homes and over 600 assisted living homes statewide. Diana provided examples to Commission members of cases reported to their office.

Diana talked about sequestration and how those cuts affect their office. Diana talked about new legislation to be introduced by Representative Shelly Hughes to reform the Power of Attorney Act in Alaska to increase protection for seniors against financial exploitation. The legislation will incorporate provisions from the Uniform Power of Attorney Act into Alaska law to strengthen protections for seniors who leave the state for health care services, recreation or other reason. The Long-Term Care Ombudsman's Office will forward recommendations to Legislative Legal to support drafting of a bill.

**Adult Protective Services (APS)
Brenda Mahlatini, APS Program Manager**

Brenda's program received more than 5,600 reports of harm last fiscal year. Their office staff has priorities for intakes that come in and anyone can come into the office and file reports. They gather information that is provided to a screener for possible referral. They screen out cases where the person is making poor choices for themselves but is still competent. Then, they set safety provisions for people who are being abused by either removing them from the home or hopefully keeping them in their own homes. They work with guardians and conservators who have responsibility over their finances. We are

working on getting a bill to file for an emergency conservator and get a protective order to stop what is happening, such as money being taken out of accounts.

Adult Protective Services works with the Long term care Ombudsman's Office and the Division of Licensing. Adult Protective Services does have the power to remove people and move them to a safer place. The Administration on Aging (AOA) put out an elder preventative case management grant and their office was one of five to get the grant. ACoA is one of the partners for this project. They need to set people up with services and help them long term. They have been able to utilize the grant from the Administration on Aging they have called the model. The Governor signed a proclamation for Vulnerable Adult Abuse Awareness Month. This year they put together a DVD for rural areas of Alaska so people can train and to make people aware of what to look for. The key to keeping people safe is giving people knowledge.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA or "Trust")

History, Mission, Program Overview & Role Serving Senior Trust Beneficiaries

Jeff Jesse, CEO; Nancy Burke, Senior Program Officer; Paula Easley, Trustee

Jeff Jesse gave the history of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and how the Trust got where it is today. The Trust has 5 Focus Areas: Bring the Kids Home; Disability Justice; Housing and Long-Term Services and Supports; and Workforce Development. Nancy Burke reported. In 2002, the Trust wanted to look into how the money was spent. The Trustees felt that they needed to strategically invest their funding by using a focus area model. The Bring the Kids Home was the first focus area and the others followed. The Trust hired previous Amanda Lofgren as their new Program Officer. She formerly worked as the Long-Term Care Coordinator for Senior and Disabilities Services. Nancy said that the Trust will be partnering with Denise and the Commission to do a State Plan on Persons with Alzheimer's disease. The Trust is now focusing on Employment and Alcohol abuse.

Public Comment: Rosselyn Rosich, UA Professor in Psychology, is excited to hear what the Trust is doing. Roselyn spoke at the University of Anchorage about elder fraud with the FBI. The FBI is concerned how elder fraud has taken off in Alaska. Roslyn attended the Health Symposium in August and thanked the Commission for its work and working with the Trust.

Judy Whittier said she asked about Alaska being mentioned in the AARP publication.

Marie Darlin said every the Alaska AARP submits an article for the publication.

Ray Tengin

Ray said his second wife has Alzheimer's disease and he is disappointed that the homes are not rated. Denise suggested to Ray that he contact the Long term Care Ombudsman's Office and the Aging and Disability Resource Center.

Barbara Jean Tucker said she is disabled and homeless. We need continuity with everyone is working to get things done. Barbara was a caregiver who became sick and used all of her money. Barbara said we need to take better care of each other.

Misty Rail, Executive Director with Assistive Technology of Alaska (ATLA)

Misty thanked the Commission for our planning and advocacy for capital funding to provide assistive technology for persons with sensory impairments such as hearing and vision loss. This project was jointly supported by all four board partners to serve Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Beneficiaries with assistive technology. Her agency is traveling statewide to get this information out.

Albert Ningeulook, previous ACoA Commissioner stated in the meeting minutes he would like to have the section changed where it said he had served just under a year and to please change it to read he served for one year.

Dr. Joan Fischer, Public Health

Dr. Fischer has begun to work on fall prevention in the MatSu and will be collaborating between senior centers and health centers to provide training for people using exercise programs. She is also involved in education for older driver safety.

Division of Public Assistance

Senior Benefits, Heating Assistance, & Other Assistance Programs for Older Alaskans

Ron Kreher, Director of Public Assistance

Ron Kreher reported on his division. Elders are covered under their Temporary Assistance Program and it is about 25% of their case load. He also serves families with dependent children under the age of 18. The food stamp program serves many Alaskans and impacts our state economy. Public Assistance also administers the Supplemental Food Program and Farmers Market Program that are small but augment the nutritional needs of recipients. The combined programs can provide benefit to seniors. Roughly 8,000 of 18,000 participants in the adult public assistance program are over the age of 60. The senior benefit program serves roughly 11,000 recipients a month. We encourage Adult Public Assistance recipients to apply for Senior Benefits. Heating assistance is a critical program for seniors and about a quarter of the households they serve are in the LIHEAP heating program. Ron stated that many of the programs they administer are driven by state statute. The Food Stamp Program and Women Infant Children (WIC) are all federal mandates.

Denise said one of our legislative advocacy priorities this session is to advocate for reauthorization of the Senior Benefits Program.

Ron said the Senior Benefits Program sunsets in June 2015 and that in the next session the program will be up for discussion. In 2009 the program had less than 10,000 recipients and as of October of 2013 they had a little over 11,000.

Supplemental Security Programs which drives the Adult Public Assistance Program recipients who are often times recipients of disability services. Often times the projections are a little high but there is uncertainty. \$1.4 million is the projected shortfall for Senior Benefits Program based on population. The amount that has been assigned for the Senior Benefits Program is a little over \$21 million for the year, and that will probably carry through 2015.

Ron said it doesn't hurt to advocate for Senior Benefits Program because this program serves one of Alaska's most vulnerable populations. ACoA needs to make sure that the legislature knows this program is sun-setting and it is critical to get them thinking about seniors in their communities.

Anchorage Senior Activities Center
Gordon Glaser, Board President

Gordon talked about the Anchorage Senior Activities Center and the services provided. Gordon gave the Commission and audience members a tour of the senior center. Gordon said the focus is to keep seniors active and not in need of being institutionalized. The Center offers programs such as yoga, Thai Chi, dance classes, art classes, Zumba, and other classes. They do health referrals and do congregative dining. Cathy Lee, Director for the Anchorage Senior Activities Center, said the gift shop raises money for senior activities.

AgeNet, Coalition of State Senior Service Providers
Marianne Mills, Chair (by teleconference)

Marianne described AgeNet's organization and structure. AgeNet has a vision of all services needed by seniors to be available in every community. To make services available at home and in senior centers will help prevent institutional care and prevent falls. AgeNet was involved in the legislative effort that added a provider seat for the Alaska Commission on Aging.

AgeNet has been an advocate for seniors for the last 20 years. Senior service providers employ over 6,000 Alaskans and partners with ACoA to develop an array of services for Alaskans. Every year AgeNet does a legislative fly-in with ACoA and has a history of flying in to schedule meetings right before the Commission's legislative visits to help collaborate efforts. AgeNet worked with the Trust, ACoA to pass the Adult Medicaid Dental Bill and worked with getting more money for the Senior Outreach, Assessment, and Referral Project (SOAR). AgeNet has been involved in the State Plan for Senior Services efforts. They helped add \$300,000 into the budget for the Senior In-Home Services and advocated with ACoA for the \$1 million increase for all senior service grant-funded programs in FY2008. In addition, AgeNet has partnered with the Commission to increase reimbursement rates for the Home and Community Based waivers and advocated for \$200,000 for the Adult Day Program in the budget.

AgeNet's priorities for this year mirror those of the Commission and include a \$325,000 increase for the National Family Caregiver Support Grant and a \$545,000 increase for Nutrition, Transportation, & Support services. AgeNet is also supporting expansion of the Aging and Disability Resource Centers to make services more available. Another priority is to make waiver services available for Alaskans with Alzheimer's disease and other dementia who don't qualify for Medicaid waivers to keep them at home longer, postponing the need for institutional care.

Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Elders Committee (ANTHC)

Kay Branch, Elder Program Coordinator

Kay reported that she has been reporting to the Commission for the last 20 years. She does elder care planning and works with the Long Term Care Committee and the Alaska Native Health Care Advisory Committee. The Committee acts as an advisory committee to report to the ANTHC Board. The Elders Committee is concerned about suicide in their communities and the need for facilities for all ages. They have an epidemiology section and a cancer section. They have an injury prevention program. Their top priority is fall prevention. They are planning a Tribal Health Fall Prevention Summit on February 12th when they will bring in clinical directors, medical and injury prevention personnel and look at medication management.

Kay works in the part of ANTHC that is called consortium business support services. Kay is working on patients traveling with oxygen, as of last October Alaska Airlines has stopped allowing people to fly with oxygen and has made people fly with a portable concentrator and Medicare wouldn't pay for this. Another issue is chronic pain and medication management. They have hired a pain doctor that specializes in pain. There is a problem with elders that have to go into nursing homes that they have to be sent as far away as Petersburg because of availability. All tribal clinics have tele-medicine available. They are working on utilizing this more, so people won't have to travel as much.

AARP Ken Helander, Advocacy Director & Ken Ostercamp, AARP Alaska Director

Ken Ostercamp reported there are 91,000 AARP members in Alaska, which is the seventh highest rate of membership in the country. AARP Foundation offers a program for driver safety course that targets older drivers. AARP services are for profit and they sell products and are responsible for relationships that put money back into their mission. The money is from membership fees and royalties. They have a certain amount of funding to have volunteers do work in communities. AARP has community councils in Juneau, Fairbanks, Mat-Su Valley and is looking at opening one in Ketchikan. AARP assigns a single person as a Community Coordinator about priorities for their community. It helps get money into the communities for new nursing homes, health fairs and fraud prevention. AARP also helps fund Medicare Clinics and travel for Jeanne Larson, Health Program Associate for the Medicare Office of Senior and Disability Services with the State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services. The goal is to bring the community concerns to the national level and bring the national level concerns to the community.

Ken Helander reported he has now been with AARP for a year and has learned a lot about issues and policies in Alaska. Ken said he is in a unique position working as an advocate for the senior community on behalf of AARP. Ken said he is impressed with the AARP Public Policy Institute which does research on senior issues, health disparity and in-depth studies of healthcare. AARP partners with organizations to help with services and partners with the Alaska Commission on Aging on advocacy issues and other projects. AARP provides testimony and letters of support during legislative session. Social Security and

Medicare are two primary issues that people are concerned about and AARP is involved. AARP has been helping people understand how the Affordable Care Act works.

AARP will be working with the Ombudsman's Office and Representative Hughes updating the Power of Attorney Law.

**Department of Health and Social Services
Commissioner Bill Streur**

Commissioner Streur offered information about the new Governor's budget. The budget detail for FY14 was \$6.9 billion in general funds and for FY15 there is \$5.6 billion in general funds with no federal offset. The Governor is pulling back on costs in certain areas to boost revenues. Medicaid expansion is off the table at this time. Commissioner Streur has been tasked by the Governor to identify where the Medicaid gaps are in coverage. The Governor and Commissioner Streur are concerned about the cost of the Medicaid expansion. Fifty cents on the dollar goes to non-tribal health care. A majority of Medicaid clients live in the bush and Medicaid expansion would only pay fifty cents on the dollar for transportation thus putting a financial burden on the State to pick up the other 50%.

Commissioner Streur said there are two challenges Medicaid faces. First, Alaska must identify the gaps in coverage and how to fix them. Secondly, the Governor has tasked the Commissioner to form a Medicaid Reform Advisory Group. This group will consist of five people plus the Commissioner, one from the House one from the Senate and three members at large. The group will have a year to figure out how we can modify Medicaid and what that will cost. When the Governor releases this information he wants to have a solid study to present. Commissioner Streur said he would love to expand health care in Alaska but it needs to be rationale and it has to be a solution we can all live with. We need to be able to understand both sides and understand how to expand those services. We have to work together and the Commission has to be at the table with them. Streur said he has no new increments in the budget and there are no additional services in any area except for \$25 million in Medicaid entitlement money but we do have a \$50 million of discretionary authority. Commissioner Streur said we need to get increasing revenue for Medicare. The Department needs to review how we spend money because there are going to be increasing scrutiny on waivers and personal care assistant (PCA) services. The question is, are we paying for true services or are we paying for fraudulent service. In the last 90 days there were 59 new indictments of Medicaid fraud and if they can get more investigators it could help offset the Silver Tsunami.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 p.m.