

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING
Quarterly Board Meeting Held by
Teleconference and Videoconference on September 15, 2016
Approved December 7, 2016

Call to order: Meeting was called to order by Chair, David Blacketer, at 9:30 a.m.

Roll Call: ACoA Commissioners present: David Blacketer, ACoA Chair, Marie Darlin, ACoA Vice-Chair, Mary Shields, Rachel Greenberg, Paula Pawlowski, Bob Sivertsen, Gordon Glaser, Banarsi Lal, and Linda Combs. Duane Mayes attended later in the afternoon.

Not present: Anna Frank

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

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

ACTION: Adoption of the February May 5, 2016 meeting minutes. Motion was made by Mary, second by Gordon, to approve the minutes as written. Motion approved.

Ethics Disclosures – Mary Shields and Gordon Glaser stated that they serve on the Anchorage Senior Activity Advisory Committee Board, David Blacketer serves on the board of the Kodiak Senior Citizens. Rachel reported that she is the executive director of the Mat-Su Senior Services.

Lesley Thompson reviewed the house keeping rules and technology needs of the group.

ACoA Chair Report, David Blacketer

David welcomed two new commissioners, Banarsi Lal and Linda Combs from Fairbanks and Wasilla, respectively. He thanked outgoing Commissioners Edna Devries and Eleanor Dementi for all of their work with the Commission. He also said a huge thank you for the past leadership of Mary Shields as Chair.

He announced that the Older Americans Act was passed by Congress in April, 2016. ACoA's most significant legislative accomplishment this past legislative session was passage of SB24 that provided an 8-year extension of the Alaska Commission on Aging.

ACoA Vice- Chair Report, Marie Darlin

Marie stated that due to the Governor's request for travel reductions, the ACoA will have only one face-to-face meeting annually. She noted that we need to orient ourselves to this new way of holding meetings by videoconference and teleconference due to the travel restriction and to make an extra effort to ensure that seniors are aware of these meetings and can participate. She expressed approval for having group teleconference sites at senior centers to increase senior access to the Commission's meetings.

Executive Director's Report, Denise Daniello

Denise also welcomed the new Commissioners Banarsi and Linda and recognized Banarsi's former service as an ACoA Commissioner who brings extensive knowledge and experience of issues affecting seniors and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities through his service on the board of the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education representing the Commission.

Denise reviewed her executive director's report recapping the Commission's work related to planning, advocacy, and participation in several workgroups related to implementation of SB 74 and Medicaid Reform efforts.

**State Plan Steering Committee, Update from the Funding Formula Task Force:
David Blacketer & Marie Darlin, Co-Chairs**

Marie reported that the State Plan Steering Committee Funding Formula Task Force held several meetings to finalize its work to revise the State Plan's funding formula. Following public comment held in May, the Committee approved the proposed changes and is waiting for final approval from the Administration on Community Living. Senior and Disabilities Services moved forward with implementing the revised funding formula so that providers would have access to funding to provide services for seniors.

Legislative Advocacy Report – Marie Darlin, Chair

Marie noted the approval of SB 24 providing the Commission's 8-year extension as a major accomplishment this past session. The Governor also signed bills that the Commission supported including SB 74 (Medicaid Health Care Reform), HB 8 (Power of Attorney bill), and SB 72 (Designated Caregivers bill). Marie also noted the budget successes that were approved by the Legislature including continued funding for Senior Grant programs, partially restored funding for Senior Benefits, \$3.5 million for AHFC's Senior Citizen Housing Development Fund (which was zeroed out last session), among other budget accomplishments.

Commissioners discussed the upcoming sunset date for Senior Benefits in FY2018 on June 30, 2018 and the need to secure a legislator champion to propose legislation to reauthorize the program next session recognizing that it will be a heavy lift in one year to accomplish as this program is funded 100% with General Funds.

Marie also noted that SB 1, the no smoking in public places legislation, was not passed this session. This is an AARP legislative advocacy priority and one that the Commission should continue to support.

Linda noted that due to budget reductions, there are significant impacts at the local level that is impacting public safety by reducing funding for police officers and other public services.

Pioneer Home Advisory Board Report (PHAB): Vickie Wilson, Director of the Pioneer Homes, and Bob Sivertsen, PHAB Chair

During the 2016 legislative session, the legislature requested that the Department of Health and Social Services, Finance and Management Services to issue a request for letters of interest to examine privatization of pharmacy services for the Pioneer Homes. The Department received two letters of interest from proposers who did not meet the minimum requirements.

The Alaska Pioneer Homes are holding applications for Level 3 care to ensure that the Homes are able to provide quality care with their reduced staff levels as a result of budget cuts. Vickie noted that every Pioneer Home will need to a certain number of beds open due to these cuts. Vickie also noted that a total of 35 positions over the past 2 years have been cut. In total, the Pioneer Homes are supported with 600 employees.

Vickie commented on the status of the \$100 annual fee to stay on the waitlist that was discussed during session. This annual fee will require a regulation change. The current waitlist has 574 seniors on it. She estimated that 75% of the seniors on the waitlist require Level 3, the highest level of care.

ACTION ITEM: Approval of ACoA Standing Committee Assignments, FY17-FY18

The ACoA Standing Committee Assignments, FY17-FY18 were provided in the board packet.

A motion was made by Mary, second by Rachel to approve the ACoA Standing Committee Assignment, FY17-FY18 list. Motion approved.

ACTION ITEM: ACoA FY17-18 Proposed Board Meeting Dates- Commissioners reviewed and took action on the ACoA board meeting dates as described below:

- Winter Meeting, Wednesday, December 7, 2017 (Teleconference and Videoconference);
- Legislative Advocacy and Rural Outreach Combination Face-to-Face Meeting, February 6-10, 2017. The board meeting and legislative visits are scheduled to happen in Juneau with rural outreach to Southeast communities. This combination meeting is proposed to maximize travel funds.
- Spring Meeting, Wednesday, May 3, 2017 (Teleconference-Videoconference), May is Older Americans Month in Alaska.

ACoA Proposed Board Meeting Dates. Motion was made by Rachel, second by Marie to approve Proposed Board Meeting Dates. Motion approved.

Representative Cathy Muñoz, FY2016 Legislative Review and Looking Ahead to FY2017

Representative Muñoz stated that her office did not receive as many retiree long-term care health insurance complaints this year as compared to last year.

Representative Muñoz offered to help the Commission with legislation that would benefit seniors. Representative Muñoz would specifically like to help with the reauthorization of the Senior Benefits program. The Commissioners were very pleased with that offer as Senior Benefits is a priority for low-income seniors.

Regarding the overall issue of the budget, Rep Muñoz noted that the legislature tried to develop a state fiscal plan but the issues were too political and very difficult to solve this session. We only have one year of savings in the constitutional savings account so we need to work hard and fast on this issue.

Mary mentioned that many people know that the Permanent Fund Dividend (PFD) must be restructured as the program was put into place for a time such as this.

Marie commented that a majority of working people are willing to pay an income tax. When it came up during session it was mentioned that in the past, Alaskans paid an income tax which was removed under the Hammond administration.

Public Comment

Randy Chapman, Public Policy Director with the National Alzheimer's Association wanted the Commission to know that there is new national data on the cognitive impairment module. She also expressed her appreciation of the partnership with the Commission on issues related to Alzheimer's disease and related dementia.

David Levy, Anchorage Muni Senior and Emergency Outreach Coordinator, updated the Commission about the new contract that the Anchorage Aging and Disabilities Resource Center (ADRC) has with AHFC and Chugiak Manor. As an ADRC, they will provide information and referral services for Chugiak Manor residents. The Anchorage ADRC is also working with the Municipal Power and Light to help people who need help with their utility bills.

David also thanked the ACoA for all their good work.

John Metler informed the Commission of his work with a senior who is disabled. He stated that Medicare is failing these seniors. He also noted that many providers refuse Medicare and Medicaid due to low reimbursement rates. In the case of the disabled senior, he noted, neither insurance will pay for an insulin pump and his client needs one.

U.S. Administration on Community Living (ACL)

Shelly Zylstra, Aging Services Program Specialist

Shelly has been working with the Tribes on the local level for many years and has really enjoyed the experience. She is now looking forward to doing some things on the federal level. If she can be of any assistance to the Commission she is very willing to help.

Shelly noted that the Older American's Act was re-authorized April, 2016, however, there are some changes. She provided examples of some of the changes.

- The ADRCs continue to be in the mix. They have been working very well for seniors and good for people with disabilities.
- Some changes for health prevention that now adds funding for oral health services to assist seniors.
- A new focus on people who survived the holocaust. Their needs are specialized and special consideration must be provided.
- The ACL is working on putting together a booklet to identify how community long-term support services are paid.
- Significant changes for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program that will require states to comply with these changes.
- The mental health section of the Older American's Act has also been updated to address the misuse of substances in addition to the high suicide rate of seniors and prevention efforts. The Older American's Act is also looking at the types of medications that are being used and misused as well as theft of prescriptions by family members. Suicide is a huge issue. Highest rate of suicide is men over the age of 85.
- Caregiver programs report many older adults are becoming caregivers. Due to the senior population growth, there is an increased need for caregiver programs and supports.

Shelly noted a concern about future funding for senior programs and possible reductions for the State Health Insurance Program (SHIP) and for senior vocational training programs (like the Mature Alaskans Seeking Skills Training (MASST) program.

Rachel noted her concern for the lack of health care providers who can't afford to take too many seniors insured by Medicare. Shelly observed that this was once a Medicaid issue but is now affecting Medicare beneficiaries.

Assisted Living Association of Alaska

Theresa Brisky, President

Theresa prepared her presentation based on Denise's questions that were given to her before the meeting.

The mission of her organization is to create a unified voice for those served in assisted living homes, to increase the quality of assisted living by developing standards of care, to provide opportunities for continuing education, to advocate on behalf of residents and providers as is necessary, and to create a proactive and positive relationship with our legislators and with the State of Alaska that will be to the benefit of the populations that we serve.

The industry is moving towards "person centered care" of which Theresa likes and supports this direction.

Currently, there are total of 652 licensed assistive living homes in Alaska that include 3,877 licensed beds. There are 420 facilities that have a total of 2,075 beds for seniors around the state. In total, 54% of the assisted living homes in state are designated for seniors.

Teresa also talked about the importance of assistive living homes and how they help family caregivers become family members again.

There are not many data points collected about the specialized needs of dementia care. Oftentimes, this information gets around through word of mouth of facilities that will take people who have specialized needs.

Many providers use the Alzheimer Resource Agency of Alaska (ARA) for training. ARA's Savvy Caregiver is evidence-based training for family caregivers. This year, the Alaska Training Cooperative worked with several stakeholders, including her program and the ACoA, to develop core competencies to improve care in assisted living settings.

Teresa noted that technology could be used to improve care in the assisted living home setting and produce cost savings. She would also like to see more young people interested in wanting to work in senior services.

Department of Health and Social Services Update: Medicaid Expansion & Reform **Deb Erickson, Project Coordinator**

Deb Erickson stated that the department of health and social services has taken deep cuts and are anticipating around 8 – 10% more cuts. DHSS general fund budget was cut by \$203 Million since FY 15

Examples of program impacts:

Eliminated Alaska Affordable Heating Program

Affects 2,100 households – those between 151%-225% FPL

Senior Benefits Program

Highest income level benefit decreased from \$125 to \$76 monthly

Public Health Nursing cut 20%: eliminated 31 positions

Facility closures/reductions

Ketchikan Regional Youth Facility closed this month

Combined units at McLaughlin Youth Center

Reduced bed counts in Fairbanks Youth Facility detention unit from 20 to 12

Pioneer Homes closed 25 beds due to staffing cuts; rate increased 8.5% in FY 16

Six Public Health Centers closed: Cordova, Ft. Yukon, Galena, Haines, Seward, Wrangell

Fairbanks Bureau of Vital Statistics office closed

Anticipate additional reductions in coming year

Educate legislature about value of Medicaid "optional" services, such as Rx and PCA

Educate legislature about importance of "discretionary" grants

Medicaid Expansion Update - In first 12 months (Sept 2015 – Aug 2016)

- 21,497 Alaskans enrolled in Medicaid expansion
- 10,137 between 45 – 64 years of age
- \$205 million in federal spending for Medicaid claims

Medicaid Redesign

Behavioral Health Reform – The legislature wants a better more comprehensive behavioral health system. The department will partner with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and will look at the 1115 Waiver to redesign behavioral health services and looking at removal of grant requirements to be a Medicaid provider.

There are 6 Waiver Development Teams within the department which include: Policy; Cost; Benefit Design; Quality; Data and Writing.

Eligibility Verification System; Work & Social Supports

Computerized income, asset and identity verification system

Third party vendor; Savings must exceed cost

Annual savings must exceed the cost of implementing the system
Referrals to community and social support services

Tribal Claiming Policy

New Federal Policy: Allows state to claim 100% federal reimbursement under certain circumstances
\$32M in savings for FY17

Fraud & Abuse Prevention

Alaska Medicaid False Claim & Reporting Act

Primary Care Case Management

Temporary program to serve as a bridge to system-wide primary care case management.

- Expand the Alaska Medicaid Coordinated Care Initiative (AMCCI)
- Allow Coordinated Care Demonstration Projects and behavioral health system reform to develop and test new models of primary care case management.
 - then transition Medicaid recipients to appropriate program

Privatization Studies

Contracts were awarded to:

(Public Consulting Group) to conduct the API privatization feasibility study

Goble Associates to conduct the DJJ privatization feasibility study.

- PCG

- Carter

RFP for the Pioneer Homes pharmacy privatization study was released on two different occasions. Both times the offeror was deemed non-responsive. More information will be coming soon on the Department's next steps.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority – Steve Williams, Katie Baldwin Johnson and Teresa Holt

Katie talked about the 5 focus areas of the Trust that include:

- Housing and Long-term Services & Supports
- Beneficiary Employment and Engagement
- Disability Justice
- Workforce Development
- Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment

They have been working on their next budget for fiscal years 2018 & 2019. These budgets were just approved by the Trustees. Needed to approach the budget differently made through the lens with Medicaid and Criminal Justice reform and reinvestment. The Trust has committed quite a bit of resources for Medicaid reform. Trust staff went through each project to see which strategies to decide what to do with each project.

The Trust gathered people together over the Cross systems needs of all beneficiaries. Also looked at all of the strategies and opportunities that might be available for both Medicaid and Criminal Justice reform. They want to ensure that all beneficiaries are included in the planning strategies.

The Trust is moving forward with Medicaid reform and the providing funding over the next 3 years for Medicaid reform. What do we need to do differently to make an impact for all beneficiaries?

Steve Williams SB 91 Criminal Justice Reform

The Trust has been involved in criminal justice related issues affecting beneficiaries since 2005. It has been very targeted and impacted small numbers of beneficiaries.

Steve reviewed the basics of SB91 and some of the impacts that will be made in the upcoming months and years. Steve also answered questions of the impacts of this bill and there will probably be more changes during the upcoming legislative session.

Division of Senior and Disabilities Services

Duane Mayes, Director

A result of the passage of SB74, the department hired a contractor to explore the Medicaid 1915(k & i) options. To be approved for 1915(k) you must meet institutional level of care. The contractor that was hired looked at what 4 other states are doing. Because of the information that they learned, the department will move forward with the 1915(k) option but feel the 1915(i) won't work. SDS will start using the 1915(k) option July, 2017 and it will bring in additional 6% in federal funding.

SDS will start using a new assessment tool as it is very unpopular. The new tool will have a menu of services and cognitive behavior will be within the tool. The goal will be to have both the 1915(k) and new assessment tool will be rolled out together in July, 2017.

Have a working group collectively looking at piloting the new assessment tool.

SDS needs to take \$26 million out of the budget. Look at what will be reduced to meet the budget.

Duane is really encouraging the Alaska Commission on Aging to help with funding during legislative session.

Elder Protection - Teresa Holt, Office of Long-term Care Ombudsman

Teresa really appreciates the open practice of SDS, it's been very helpful. Teresa started with a short story of how they were able to make a difference.

Teresa has been talking to Jeff Jessee to work on a large initiative to encourage and help people in Assisted Living Homes vote. Developed two different brochures to help people with information on how to vote if you are living in an assisted living centers.

The new changes to the Long-Term Care Ombudsman must do in order to be in compliance with the old Statutes. Will need to re-write their policies and procedures in order to be in compliance with the federal changes for this federal year. Will start working on the changes later in the first session and then finish up with the next session.

Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Senior Housing Program Officer

Jim McCall,

Jim sent his Housing report out before the meeting. He reviewed the report during the meeting and offered to send it to anyone else that might be interested.

There will be a new senior housing project with 49 housing units in Juneau near the valley in Safeway. The complex will have 4 studio apartments which will rent for \$734 per month.

No facility receives 100% of grant funding. Projects need to find several funding sources. There will be \$2.7 million in loans in this complex. Rasmuson Foundation also provided funding for this project.

The senior housing fair had a great turnout this year. They co-sponsor this fair with Providence. During the fair many people expressed their fear/concern about the Alaska Pioneer Homes.

Paula reported that there are two opportunities for funding. The first one is the AmeriCorps grants one is the formula grant and the other is for people to write grants and her Commissioners make the decisions. This year one of the competitive grantees chosen will be the Salvation Army in Anchorage. They will be using the funding for a planning grant to help write a bigger grant for seniors and disaster services.

The University was awarded funding to volunteers to receive education award grants only.

They offered an AmeriCorps academy that started out with 42 participants. They will repeat this training again at the first of the year.

There will be a Tribal grant where the rules are very different than the two other funding streams.

She also explained several other programs that are for seniors the RSVP and Senior Companion program.

Advocacy Partner Reports

Marianne Mills, AgeNET Chair

Marianne report that AgeNet is state-wide made up of providers from all over the state. Recruiting new members and would like to have a provider in every legislative district.

The members and advocates should be meeting with their legislators. Tell them how important their support of the senior programs so seniors can continue to age in place.

Marianne reported that there has been a change in the Medicaid regulation regarding PCA services. The department wants public comment on this issue.

Legislative Priorities are to promote solutions to the Alaska fiscal crisis and to support efforts to replace general funds with Medicaid funds to provide vital senior services.

Work with different state divisions to streamline access to medical services for home-and community based Medicaid waiver beneficiaries.

Advocate for home and community based services for older Alaskans to help them remain at home by educating elected officials on cost savings and beneficial outcomes for older Alaskans.

Promote quality services for older Alaskans.

Marie Darlin, AARP

Marie reported that AARP will be having a leadership meeting and will be planning for the next year and will have a candidate forum on aging issues.

Commissioner Closing Comments

Commissioners said that they thought the meeting went well and they are looking forward to the February meeting where they can meet face to face.

Meeting adjourned at 4:45 p.m.