



AADD ALASKA

February/March — 2020

To facilitate a united provider voice for best practices, advocacy, partnerships and networking.

CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As this newsletter was being prepared in February 2020, the introduction of the real threat of COVID-19 became increasingly evident to the USA, including Alaska, compounding many “Access is Key” issues. We have all been trying to process and respond to the rapid evolution of this disease in our own State.

* Stay tuned to the local news channels for your community restrictions.

* Continue to follow guidance posted on the State of Alaska COVID-19 website at coronavirus.alaska.gov. More guidance will be distributed through the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services’ (SDS) email. If you are not yet a member of SDS E-Alerts, please sign up here: <http://list.state.ak.us/mailman/listinfo/sds-e-news>.

* Check the following websites for current facts and guidance:

State of Alaska Department of Public Health <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dph/Pages/default.aspx>

United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention <https://www.cdc.gov/>

World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/>

* Check the AADD website www.aaddalaska.org

“Latest News” tabs for resources related to disabilities, and hot topic materials.

* Mark your calendars for AADD teleconferences on:

Thursday, March 26, 11am

Thursday, April 9, 11am

Tuesday, April 20, 1 pm

These are trying and unique times and your resilience, unity and heart for your work are outstanding. Bless you all as you seek to keep yourselves and others safe!

SDS UPDATE

SDS Director, John Lee joined us at the Unity Dinner in Juneau. John and Lynne Keilman-Cruz presented at the AADD monthly meetings.

- SDS does not anticipate any budget reductions nor increases.
- A Key Campaign platform was to increase the IDD waiver draws to 100. John Lee clarified that the last 1915(c) waiver amendment, approved by CMS, limits SDS to 50 draws of the IDD waiver per year. They do not have approval to fill slots vacated by attrition. Increasing the draw would require a new amendment to CMS.
- The Family Habilitation Survey results will be available in March.
- Companion Services have not been presented to the legislature this year and would need to be budget neutral.
- The SDS Deputy Director position closed February 14th. Interviews occurred in early March but hiring freezes will delay filling.
- SDS plans to offer the Living Well Program Manager position to an individual in the near future.

Maggie Winston, of the Shared Vision leadership, has just been hired as the SDS ‘s Alaska Living Well Health program Manager. Maureen Harwood will be her supervisor. Hurrah!

33rd KEY CAMPAIGN

Access is Key



Alaska's 33rd KEY CAMPAIGN was scheduled in collaboration with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education.

It was well attended!

Key hosted a Rally on the steps of the Capitol. Senator Peter Micciche in the center with Key President, Dennis Haas. On the previous day, Commissioner Crum spent an hour listening to real life stories from Key Campaigners. The Unity Dinner included a fun auction. On Friday, powerful stories were shared with the administration. Corey Gilmore, Shared Vision leadership, began and ended his presentation by asking if people in the room had met their goal in the last 15 minutes! Key Campaigners attended the HSS Budget Committee. And most importantly legislative visits took place all day. Thanks to all who attended or supported these advocates.

Medicaid in Alaska in FY 19

- 250,629 total population served through Medicaid (6% adults and 1% children with disabilities.)
- General fund dollars spend on Medicaid have reduced
FY15 GF was 724,850 FY 19 GF was 677,118
- Expanded Medicaid resulted in increased numbers served but the amount spent on each one has reduced from ASHNHA (Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association)

Health TIE Challenge

Health TIE (Testbed for Innovative Enterprises) is partnering with UAF's Center ICE (Innovation, Commercialization and Enterprise) on a Health Tech Challenge competition. They are looking for Wicked Problems for entrepreneurs to tackle. Do you ever wonder: "This would work so much better if only there was a way to _____?" More details and application contact Kim Champney at kim@champneyconsulting.com

Calendar

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| March, 2020 | Disability Awareness Month |
| March 12, 2020 | AADD monthly meeting |
| March 19, 2020 | Compliance Group - 8:30—9:30 am |
| March 19, 2020 | CFO Group— 10—11 am |
| March 26. 2020 | Hot Topics—to be determined |

Rep Payee Crisis

Dave Fleurant of Disability Law Center facilitated a teleconference with staff from the SSA Regional Office in Seattle on February 13th. While the meeting seemed to be the productive gathering with SSA since this crisis began, it amounted to "too little, too late". Questions that were submitted to SSA prior to the meeting and the end, SSA had a list of issues that they were going to research and get back to us.

One of those issues was the cap on fees that organizational representative payees can charge, presently set at \$44.00 per month per beneficiary. And there is a regulation that reads as follows: *(7) An authorized organization can collect a fee for providing representative payee services from another source if the total amount of the fee collected from both the beneficiary and the other source does not exceed the amount authorized by us.*

Some of the underlying conditions remain, including the non-profit status of a representative payee. All for-profit representative payees have been given notice to cease charging fees since the meeting. This will put most out of business within the next 30-60 days, and only 3 new non-profits are known to be forming.

Some key things to consider:

- Make sure recipients have filed their PFD applications by March 31, 2020
- Guardianship includes conservator duties so contact guardians (including OPA) to assure they will pick up those duties
- Individuals who are their own guardian should contact APS for assistance with conservatorship assignment, and contact the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority

Leaders think and talk about the solutions. Following think and talk about the problems.

Brian Tracy

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