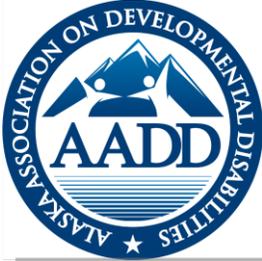


AADD
ALASKA ASSOCIATION ON
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES
P.O. Box 241742
Anchorage, Alaska 99524



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

May 22, 2020

Dear AADD members,

Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD)
Re-Opening Responsibly Plan – May/June 2020

As the State of Alaska moves more quickly through phases 3 & 4 of re-opening than anticipated, the Senior and Developmental Disabilities communities with civil rights, liberties and vision remain a defined as a “vulnerable population”. We remain subject to more stringent Federal and State restrictions remaining in place, yet:

“Alaskans share a vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.”

With 40% of the State of Alaska population within the Municipality of Anchorage, we are also paying attention to the “Roadmap to Reopening plan” Phase 3 Maintenance which is expected to start next week.

Facing the challenge of emerging responsibly requires effort to:

- Balance the dignity of risk vs. recklessness
- Consider safety in the context of social & shared responsibility of impact
- Promote providers as partners not policers
- Honor person-centered planning while upholding health mandates and adapting to evidence-based recommendations
- Assure mitigations plans are mutually agreed upon

Within the broader definition of “vulnerable population”, varying degrees of safety or risk exist that offer more flexibility to reconnect with family and an expanded “social bubble” from which individualized plans can be developed to re-establish a meaningful life.

To emerge responsibly requires a careful stepping stone approach. As a first step, AADD has developed a guide for assessing varying safety levels. The “COVID-19 emergence for SDS services” grid addresses age, underlying health conditions, residential settings, and community settings for individual planning. This has been provided to SDS who has established two teams to address residential and non-residential options. Alignment on strategy between AADD and SDS is planned for early next week, including adaptations or amendments to Appendix K conditions.

We are also examining other tools being implemented in other States that assure a team process evaluating both risks and benefits to the person of increased flexibility and socialization. We understand the urgency families feel in wanting to reconnect with their loved ones after extended “hunker down” periods, and the limitations of “one-size-fits-all” policies. For example, other situational risk factors include the risk level of other occupants in the residence, willingness to adhere to social distancing and face coverings, methods of transportation, risks associated with restarting supported employment settings, and availability of PPE for staff and recipients would also need to be considered.

A next step would be support teams, including the recipient would consider all these factors and develop a mitigation plan for mutual approval with the provider, and demonstrated understanding of the shared responsibility for corrective action, if transmission and infection occurs. AADD and SDS will provide additional recommendations on a variety of scenarios that would provide guidance on how to assess safety levels, examples of residential and community settings and their dynamics reflected on the grid, options to consider to mitigate risk for all stakeholders involved and support providers who responsibly apply these recommendations.

Thank you for your patience as we seek to expedite the development of these tools. We are aiming to have more discussion with you at the Hot Topics meeting on Thursday, May 28th.

Stay safe and remember we are all making sacrifices based on a vested interest in keeping this serious health threat from disproportionately affecting vulnerable Alaskans in the manner seen in the lower 48 states.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Bailey". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

Michael Bailey
AADD President