



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.

March 24, 2020

Dear Governor Dunleavy:

The Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities (AADD) is the voice of almost 50 providers supporting individuals that experience developmental disabilities. We want to express our gratitude for the frontline leadership you have offered Alaskans. Today we are writing with an urgent request.

Disability service providers have delivered essential services in Alaska for decades, building a structure of support for people who experience disabilities to live as independently as possible in the community. AADD wants to ensure that people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and the providers on which they rely, are prioritized in funding packages tied to COVID-19 and are designated as essential health care service workers.

Please implement the three no-cost, high-impact actions listed below. These three actions can be a significant support for workforce that was in crisis long before the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Issue an executive order designating direct support professionals as "essential workers." Currently, home health aides and personal care attendants are considered essential, but direct support professionals (DSPs)- who fulfill the same roles are not. Administrative managers, supervisors and other positions provide essential support for DSP's work and should also be deemed essential.
2. Encourage displaced workers to consider applying for jobs as Direct Support Professionals.
3. Publicly recognize the important work direct support professionals do in the community.

We appreciate you recognizing the importance of implementing these actions in Alaska in support of one of Alaska's most vulnerable populations. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lizette Stiehr
AADD, Executive Director

Michael Bailey
AADD, President

CC: Commissioner Adam Crum, DHSS
Director John Lee, SDS