



AADD ALASKA

December 2020

From the AADD President - Amanda Faulkner

Workforce has been a national challenge for decades but the COVID pandemic presented some unique opportunities to solve this problem in Alaska. Several years ago, I attended an innovation/brainstorming meeting with Kim Champney to “think outside of the box” about this problem. The energy in the room was dynamic once we could push past the challenges and solely focus on creative solutions. A recurring theme revolved around using technology to “match” DSPs with the individuals needing services before being hired by a provider agency. With a national DSP turnover rate of 45% and a replacement cost in Alaska estimated at **\$5 million** in 2018, the upfront investment of finding the right employees is crucial.

Fast forward to 2020, the COVID pandemic has forced the world to think differently and opened additional funding avenues to make innovative changes. Using FEMA and COVID funding through the Cares Act, an app designed to recruit DSPs moved from a side project to a full-time focus. AADD in partnership with Kim Champney and AppCare (Jake Carpenter) shared with the membership the recruitment potential of DSP Hire.

Additionally, AADD is proud to share that with fiscal support from The Anchorage Community Foundation and the Trust, a statewide marketing campaign is being developed by Northwest Strategies in December! This marketing campaign will showcase the essential role of a DSP through a variety of media modalities, including TV, YouTube, Facebook, cable and ESPEN; highlighting the opportunity to work in a customer service-related field. The release of this media blast is perfectly timed as hospitality workers struggle with employment and the DSPhire.com app is ready for release at the end of the month!

AADD is asking providers to enroll in the DSP hire app so your provider profiles are ready to go! Jake, the DSP Hire designer is available for immediate consultation to assist providers with technical questions at jake@appcare.ai.

This solution driven opportunity could not be possible without Kim Champney and her consistent positive energy to improve support services in Alaska. AADD is excited to share with the membership the potential to improve the national turnover rate in Alaska using technology and partnership collaboration. Take advantage of the virtual holiday GIFT!

SDS UPDATE

The Governor’s budget, released last week, contained no cuts to Senior and Disability Services and contained the same funding as last year.

SDS announced that Heather Chord is the new IDD Unit Manager, replacing Caitlin Rogers. Her 7.5 years at SDS and previous work in the field will serve her well in her new job.

Provider Agreements (closed December 9th) will allow for an addition 30% reimbursement for serving recipients with COVID.

CIR (Critical Incident Report) for a staff member diagnosed with COVID is not required but it is recommended.

The vaccine is coming to Alaska. Group Home congregate settings are a part of the Phase 1a or the first distribution. The vaccine is not mandatory.

SDS is working on 4 ECHO’s, with the Center for Human Development for family caregivers next year.

Background Checks remain slow. The Background Check Unit has agreed to attend the January AADD monthly meeting to discuss provisional checks and fingerprinting.

Appendix K remains in effective. Governor Dunleavy has issued a new Emergency Health Disaster from December 16th through January 16, 2021.

one small
positive thought
in the morning
can change your
whole day

LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM

AADD is thrilled to be offering a second Alaskan Leadership Consortium from the University of Delaware that is focused on the IDD field. You voted for this training option in FY20. Last offered in 2015 for a full week, it was widely attended and vividly remembered. This years training:

When: April 2021, 2 mornings (8—12) each week, 8 sessions

Where: Offered digitally (no travel required)

Cost: \$500 per person attending

Participants: Maximum of 40

Watch for applications in January.

We thank the Trust for the funding to make this possible for our Alaskan leaders in the IDD field.

Comments from those attending in 2015:

“This has been a life changing experience; it has given me an empowered view that extends far past my scope of work!”, Kristin Vandagriff, Gov. Council, Executive Director

“It was a thoughtful exploration of self, organization, and State regarding leadership and the future of disability services.” Scott Kubacki, Mat-Su Services, Supported Employ.

“Appreciated the time to reflect and get feedback on important areas of change needed to move the organization and field forward in positive ways that impact people and communities..” Lizette Stiehr, AADD Executive Director

TECHNOLOGY CAPACITY BUILDING

The Arc has successfully planned virtual Friday night dances and art classes. Caryn Brunello, from the Arc, is coordinating with Kim Champney, to host zoom meetings on options for your organization to offer virtual services. Upcoming offerings will include:

1. How to connect with your legislator virtually (Ric Nelson)
2. Remote supports from a participants perspective
3. Impact of remote supports from a guardian or care coordinator prospective (Danny Parish)
4. A day in the life of a DSP on zoom (Renee Bean + others).
5. Each meeting there will be time to share upcoming events i.e. dances, friendship and dating classes etc.
6. What are agencies outside of Alaska doing? (NADSP)

‘Your value does not decrease based on someone’s inability to see your worth.’

unknown

Calendar

January 14, 2021	AADD monthly meeting
January 20/21, 2021	Board Retreat 1:30—4:00
January 21, 2021	Compliance Group & CFO Group combined 10:00—11:00
January 28, 2021	Hot Topics—to be determined

Letter to Members of 32nd Alaska Legislature (excerpts)

Our direct support workforce is on the brink.

The system of support for Alaskans with disabilities is stretched precariously thin. While the current pandemic demonstrates the essential nature of home and community based services for people with disabilities, these services can only be provided if there is a workforce to provide them. As advocates for services to children, adults and elders with disabilities we urge you to protect the direct support workforce that delivers essential care to over 40,000 Alaskans every day.

These daily critical services are primarily funded through Medicaid, with a combination of federal and state funding. Reduced reimbursement rates will worsen an incredibly fragile system. Reductions will result in increased costs to the state because people will be forced into nursing home and hospitals where the cost of care is at least double. Average costs for a Home and Community Based waiver is \$87,718 compared to \$171,904 in a nursing home, \$214,423 in out of state institutions and \$531,312 at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute.

Currently Direct Support Professionals are working in high-risk settings for inadequate compensation, often without healthcare coverage for themselves. And because the funding is primarily Medicaid the rates for services are fixed. Multiple groups (AgeNet, AADD, Peer Power, Key Coalition, AADSP, SILC and Commission on Aging) all signed a letter asking the legislature keep Direct Support Professionals and the economic segment they represent, in mind as you make critical, life-changing decision this session.

All Ways Caring (formerly ResCare) has a new statewide director: Phil Schwarz. He and his wife were born and raised in Alaska. After 26 years living outside Alaska they have moved back home to Eagle River to live closer to his 80 year old father-in-law. Welcome Phil

Your AADD Board

Amanda Faulkner, President

Cindy Hensley, Vice President

Bess Clark, Secretary

Susan Garner, Treasurer

Michael Bailey, Past President

Regional Representatives:

Rick Driscoll, Matt Jones,

Jaime Kassman and Meghan Heim

Staff: Lizette Stiehr, Executive Director