



# AADD ALASKA

## March 2021

### Amanda Faulkner, AADD President

Springtime in Alaska is signified by light. The daily increase of sunlight represents an end of the dark, cold, winter months. Alaskans celebrate spring as a refreshing beginning. This analogy can also be applied to the past year. COVID-19 challenged the world to rapidly adjust to a harsh and unknown climate. Disability providers battled fear and fatigue to protect our essential workforce and a vulnerable population. Together YOU stood strong and did a commendable job!!

COVID fatigue is real but AADD witnessed provider organizations pushing past the fatigue throughout this health emergency, leading employees, families, guardians, and recipients through a global pandemic. Regulatory changes that typically would take months to implement were adopted within weeks, necessary PPE was secured, and resources were shared daily. The urgency also sparked innovation and technology supports emerged; from readily available hardware and training to distance delivered support services. The kindness and willingness to support each other throughout this health crisis was witnessed time and time again by AADD Board members.

This month, AADD wanted to say “thank you” to the agencies and essential frontline workers in our communities for their dedication, flexibility, and hard work over these unprecedented months. With the support of established partnerships, provider organizations were able to ensure that 2,004 people with IDD waiver services remained protected. Thank you.

As the post COVID dawn is upon us, AADD is focused on the innovations that emerged out of this health emergency and embracing COVID as a change catalyst to move the Shared Vision forward. We stood together during an emergency and we will stand together until the Shared Vision is a reality in Alaska because truly, we ARE stronger together.

### SDS UPDATE

Heather Chord, IDD Unit Manager, shared the numbers:

- ⇒ 838 on the DRR (waitlist)
- ⇒ 33 IDD waivers drawn
- ⇒ 512 ISW's offered
- ⇒ 76 ISW waivers draw
- ⇒ 2034 IDD waivers total

Appendix K—Alaska’s application to extend Appendix K for 6 months beyond the Public Health Emergency was approved. The federal Emergency will likely be extended beyond the April 15th. But the soonest Appendix K would expire with the extension is October 15th.

Vaccines— SDS is working on updating post vaccination visitation guidelines to align with CDC guidance. As guidelines this falls on the providers to implement consistent policies.

Family Habilitation—SDS is planning to redefine and shape Family Habilitation with input from providers in April and May.

Companion Services—SDS agrees they would be beneficial but are currently on the backburner with the pandemic.

Harmony— Care Coordinator can expect an E-Alert notifying them that all initial and renewal plans must be entered in Harmony starting July 1. Completing the training on Harmony is highly recommended.

SDS clarified that plans are to be submitted no sooner than 45 BUSINESS days from the due date.

## Full Lives Conference

20th Annual Full Lives Conference for Direct Service Professionals & Care Coordinators; *Resilience Through Change*, is going virtual **April 12-16!**

The easy-to-use virtual conference platform allows attendees to connect with peers, speakers, and exhibitors, all while providing education on today's most relevant topics! This year's Keynote presenters feature Karen Gaffney, John Raffaele and V.J. Smith along with an exceptional line-up of breakout sessions available for all conference attendees.

Don't miss the chance to participate in this once-a-year opportunity. To view the full agenda and to register for the conference visit <https://www.aktclms.org/Training/Class/104037> Registration is \$100 and closes on April 11.

Questions, contact [meganmoodyak@gmail.com](mailto:meganmoodyak@gmail.com)

## American Rescue Act (ARP)

The American Rescue Plan was signed by the President on March 11, 2021. It is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus package with several items of particular interest:

Home and Community Based Options—Increased the FMAP (Federal Medicaid Assistance Percentage) for HCBS services by 10% for one year starting April 1, 2021.

Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) - ARP increased business and organization eligibility for the program, now including most 501 (c)(3) nonprofits. Added \$7.25 billion to PPP.

Provider Relief Funds -- An additional \$8.5 billion for rural providers that serve Medicaid and Medicare beneficiaries for COVID-19 related expenses (workforce training, supplies).

Public Health Funding—\$7.5 billion to the CDC for planning, distribution and tracking COVID-19 vaccines.

## AADD Virtual Face2Face

May 4 & 5, 2021

May 4th, 9:00—10:30—Ben Drew, keynote speaker is the founder of Open Future Learning.

May 4th, 1:00—3:00 —Shared Vision—history and future

May 5th, 9:00—10:30 —SDS update

May 5th, 1:00—3:00—Workforce Issues

### CALENDAR

April 8, 2021	AADD monthly meeting
April 12—16, 2021	Full Lives Conference
April 15, 2021	Joint CFO/Compliance at 9:30
April 22, 2021	Hot Topics—to be determined
May 4 & 5, 2021	AADD virtual Face2Face

## Spotlight: DSP Hire

*"We cannot solve our problems using the same thinking we used when we created them."*

This quote from Albert Einstein aptly describes what **dsp|hire** is trying not to do. The goal is to change the way we recruit and support DSPs, not to do the same thing just with different packaging.

Thank you to everyone who has jumped onboard with us so far. We are laying the tracks while driving the train and trying to build as fast as we can. One of the significant shifts is creating a shared marketplace where a jobseeker can "shop" for the best fit for his or her needs.

While the plans are still evolving, here are some of the next steps in the works:

Reach out to jobseekers – this will be ongoing and includes building partnerships with entities that link jobseekers with employers as well as media campaigns and regional outreach activities.

Provide DSP resources – **dsp|hire** will add realistic job previews, frequently asked questions, and information about the Alaska Alliance of Direct Support Professionals to better inform jobseekers about the opportunities DSP work offers.

Enhance search features – Retention is impacted by a DSP finding the right fit. We will continue to enhance the features to finetune this for the jobseeker.

**dsp|hire** seeks to collaborate with employers on the continued development – watch for opportunities to meet with Jake and/or Kim to provide input and share ideas. For more information: [www.dsphere.com](http://www.dsphere.com).

You cannot move mountains if you consider them to be mountains. You must think of them as collections of small stones, which can be moved one at a time and then reassembled. Waldo Japussy

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