



AADD ALASKA

MAY 2021

From your AADD President, Amanda Faulkner

Advocacy throughout history has represented people who have stood up for issues they have found to be deeply lacking in justice, kindness, and humanity. Margaret Mead once said, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. ® Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” The act of advocacy is not an easy or a small task. Yet, it is our task to undertake as we each hold the reigns of responsibility to continue the great works started with the Disability Rights Movement.

During the month of July, we come together to celebrate one of the many outcomes of advocacy, Disability Pride. Disability Pride is a united disability awareness campaign that started in Boston in 1990 to recognize the signing of Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). We also celebrate and acknowledge the 30 years of focused advocacy and determination it took to get the law in place. Disability advocates like Ed Roberts, Fred Fay and Judy Heumann were recognized leaders in the movement. However, there were thousands of others that came together alongside them to influence change. Between 1960 and 1990 people started to advocate and became the voice of those that did not have the ability to advocate for themselves.

We saw the movement building momentum early on when individual people accepted responsibility to advocate for change. One such person was Rosa Parks. Small issues can seem mundane and often do not get noticed but small barriers can bring clearer understanding to the big picture. In 1955, when Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on her bus there is little doubt, she realized how big an impact her decision would make 50 years later. She decided to act on a barrier in her everyday life that rippled change through our whole nation. There were others that refused to give up their seats before Rosa Parks. Those names are unknown to us. However, it is because of those who sacrificed before her that Rosa was able to act and became “the mother of the civil rights movement”.

Rosa was an advocate, not because she called herself an advocate, because she ACTED. During the month of July, do some research, humbly ask questions, listen with an open heart, inspire, act, and together let's make some ripples!

SDS UPDATE

10% FMAP Increase—SDS obtained a 30 day extension for their plan on the funds. The plan has been developed and submitted to the Governor for approval. See article on next page.

Appendix K extension —SDS continues to anticipate the Public Health Emergency (nationally) will be extended to December 30, 2021. Federally they must notice states 60 days before it ends. Alaska has a 6 month window after the end of the Public Health Emergency. That provides an 8 month window. There will be guidance coming out, as an E-Alert by the end of the month with guidance on the ongoing flexibilities.

Vaccine —There is new congregate settings Guidance coming out around vaccinations and visitations.

The current numbers:

- ⇒ 778 on DRR (waitlist)
- ⇒ 315 need update their DRR
- ⇒ 397 active ISW waiver
- ⇒ 584 on or activating ISW waiver
- ⇒ 2044 IDD waivers

In FY21 there were:

- ⇒ 66 ISW's pulled
- ⇒ 64 IDD waivers pulled

The man who moves a mountain begins by carrying away small stones.
Confucius



AADD Recommendations to SDS on 10% FMAP increase

AADD submitted strong recommendations for the allocation of the approximately 27 million dollars from the 10% FMAP increase available to Alaska. These funds were allocated from the American Rescue Act Plan (ARPA) specifically for HCBS (Home and Community Based Services). The CMS Guidance is clear that the funds cannot supplant (or pay for services already in place) but must support, increase or enhance existing services. The funds may be spent over 2.5 years, from plan approval through March of 2024.

AADD recommendations included:

1. Stabilize the workforce through allocating 50% of the funds to support DSP's.
2. Develop a pilot project for companion services.
3. Provide fiscal support for the non-billable services required to transition individuals from institutional care back into the community.
4. Add hours to the ISW waiver. AADD recommended adding 5 hours per week to the low level of services provided by the ISW waiver.

In addition AADD also submitted a letter of Care Coordination concerns and recommendations including:

1. Grant opportunities for COVID-19 relief
2. Continue to offer remote visit options and extended support plans.
3. Concerns with Harmony—extensive training, not person centered and difficulty entering data
4. Clear communication from SDS
5. Grants for hiring/training care coordinators

SDS has agreed that stakeholders could see the plan as soon as it is submitted to CMS. They hope it moves from the Governor's office to CMS soon. They anticipate it will take 6 to 8 months to implement once approved.

COST OF CARE UPDATE

Regulations assigning providers the responsibility to track and process Cost of Care for individuals go into effect August 1, 2021. SDS is planning a July webinar to address questions and concerns. If questions remain after that webinar they have agreed to an August Hot Topics on the subject.

CALENDAR

July 6, 2021 Care Coordination— 10:30 to 11:30
July 8, 2021 Monthly AADD meeting—11—12
No Compliance Group or CFO meetings
No Hot Topics—Hope you are on vacation
Fall face2face—October 19—20, 2021—BP Center/hybrid

Spotlight: ANCOR DSP for Alaska



Jessi Walton is a DSP with Bright-Springs in Fairbanks. ANCOR selected her as the Alaska's DSP of the year. Jessi has been providing support and care for a non-verbal

Autistic client for nine years, this year, who now resides in a group home. Jessi followed her client back home for a period during the pandemic to jump back in with home healthcare. Jessi recognized her client was communicating using a unique form of sign language, which she'd created herself. Jessi stayed attuned to her client and learned the meaning of the hand cues and they added more words together. She has shared this information with other team members and residents in the house so they can understand what her client is communicating. This has allowed the individual to express her needs more effectively.

Jessi collaborates with the client's care team and communicates effectively to advocate for her client's quality of life. Jessi's leadership on this team has directly shaped the care her client receives.

Jessi supported her client taking her to weekly Taekwondo classes and swimming in a community setting with other individuals and her client's friends, prior to the pandemic. Participation in weekly community activities has improved the client's overall quality of life and has allowed her to socialize and explore meaningful friendships in the community.

Thank you for your amazing advocacy and for each call or email that you sent concerning the funding to pay for 20 additional draws each year for the IDD waiver., above the 50 currently funded. While the House budget had included, the Senate removed it but it was included in the budget that the Governor signed June 24th.

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