



AADD ALASKA

November 2021

From your AADD Vice President, Cindy Hensley

Thanksgiving Day is just around the corner, and it means different things to different people. For some it's a time of reflection and gratitude, a time of gathering with friends and family, and a time of feasting on the bounty of life - and FOOD! For others, it may bring with it a sense of trepidation going into the long winter months and the frenetic Holiday Season. Wherever you land on the spectrum of this day, we want to take a moment to remind you that YOU matter and we are Grateful for YOU!

In March 2020, we were thrown into the deep end without life jackets and many of us with minimal swimming skills. We got fast tracked on technology just to stay afloat. I don't know about you, but I can barely remember life before ZOOM. We used to have meetings in person, with snacks? It seems almost like another lifetime. And then the workforce shortages kept getting SHORTER. What was happening? Swimming out of the deep end became less of the goal as many of us simply aimed to stay afloat. And today, as we continue trying to support our DSP's, giving them MORE money in hopes they will just "work one more shift". Giving them praise for ALL they do, trying to arrange for them to have a couple of days' vacation to spend with friends and family, trying to simply MANAGE it all...many of us are simply running on empty. And just to completely empty our tanks....CMS and OSHA ETS...vaccine Mandate. The deep end just got deeper, and someone turned on the wave machine!

STOP. BREATHE. REALLY...JUST BREATHE. We want you to hear this. YOU MATTER. We appreciate YOU! Yes...YOU...the one reading this newsletter. YOU the CEO, YOU the CFO, YOU the ED, YOU the Care Coordinator, YOU the COO, YOU the Compliance Officer, YOU the Administrator, YOU the Supervisor, YOU the LEADER!! We are grateful beyond the words on this page for YOU! We value, need, respect, honor, and support YOU and not just Thanksgiving Day, but EVERYDAY.

Our invitation for you today as you're planning what to bring to the table for Thanksgiving is to first and foremost remember to bring yourself. Yes... yourself, to the table of SELF CARE. What? Self "who" you might ask? Yes...Self Care. We MUST care for ourselves, it's imperative. So, this day, as you're reading this newsletter, make a plan. Schedule time for you, put yourself on the calendar, even if it's only 5 minutes to begin with- to step away from the desk, do it...NOW. Because YOU Matter. And in case no one has told you lately, we at AADD appreciate YOU. We can't say it enough. And if you need a reminder, cut out this section of the newsletter and put it on your computer.

YOU Matter and we are Grateful for YOU! Blessings Abound!

SDS Update

- ◆ SDS is drafting a revision to their CMS plan on the 10% FMAP increase. This plan will include the workforce career ladder but also provide direct support for providers. It will replace the pilot project moving individuals from institutions to community placements. The revision will be presented to the Commissioner the week of November 15th. They plan to present the revised plan to stakeholders the last week in November and submit to CMS in early December.
- ◆ SDS has delayed the implementation of the requirement that all support plans, with a start date of 1/1/22 and beyond, that include Employment services must utilize the full Support Plan. If services remain the same, the short form may be used. (E-Alert Nov. 4th)
- ◆ SDS has requested that the Employment regulation requiring staff certification be delayed until the end of the Public Health Emergency, currently in place until January 18, 2022 with further possible extensions.
- ◆ SDS is able to track those drawn for a waiver and have a care coordinator, however there remains a need to track those who are unable to find a Care Coordinator.
- ◆ Providers should fill out a CIR (Critical Incident Report) if they are unable to staff an individual.
- ◆ SDS researched Crisis Standards of Care for HCBS services. They have not been developed in other states. SDS is willing to explore this further with stakeholders.

Numbers:

- ◆ 708 individuals on the Registry
- ◆ 2,048 individuals on or offered a spot on the I/DD waiver
- ◆ 578 individuals on or offered a spot on the ISW waiver
- ◆ 328 of whom are active on the ISW
- ◆ 35 people drawn - IDD waiver (FY22)
- ◆ 66 people drawn for the ISW (FY22)

National Core Indicators FY22 Kicks Off

The National Core Indicators are standard measures used across states to assess the outcomes of services provided to individuals and families. Alaska is implementing three NCI surveys this year:

- The Adult-Family Survey is a mail survey sent to households with an adult who receives Medicaid waiver services living in the home.
- The Child-Family Survey is a mail survey sent to households with a child who receives Medicaid waiver services living in the home.

Initially families will receive a postcard that offers an online option for completing the survey. Families who do not respond online will receive a hard copy in the mail.

SDS is also implementing the NCI Staff Stability Survey. In early 2022, providers will receive an email link to this online survey which collects data on the DSP workforce. DD providers completed this survey in 2018 so this is an opportunity to document changes that have occurred in the workforce over the past three years.

Please support participation in this important effort.

Plans are underway to share information collected during last year's In-Person Survey.

For more information, contact Kim Champney at kim@champneyconsulting.com.

BUILD BACK BETTER ACT - PASSED BY THE HOUSE

The House of Representatives passed the Infrastructure bill titled Build Back Better Act. It contains the following for Home and Community-Based Services:

- \$150 billion over 10 years for home and community-based services (HCBS) to eliminate waiting lists for services and bolster pay for direct care workers
- Making the Money Follows the Person program permanent to help people with disabilities who want to leave congregate care and transition to live in their own home and community with supportive services.

Next the bill will go to the Senate where negotiations continue over what will be included in their version of the bill.

No one is useless in this world... who lightens the burden of it for any one else.

Charles Dickens from "Our Mutual Friend"

CALENDAR

December 2, 2021 - Hot Topics—COVID—11 to 12

December 7, 2021 - Care Coordination Group 10:30—11:30

December 9, 2021 - Monthly AADD meeting—11 to 12

December 25, 2021 CHRISTMAS

December 18 - January 3rd—Lizette on leave traveling

VACCINE UPDATE

VACCINE MANDATES UPDATE

OSHA Emergency Temporary Standard: (ETS) Lawsuits have stayed the Standard that requires all organizations with 100 or more employees to either document vaccination or weekly testing. The Fifth Circuit granted a motion to stay that order. OSHA currently is suspending all implementation or enforcement efforts on the order "until further court order."

CMS Interim Final Rule requires that workers in most Health Care settings must be vaccinated by January 4th. The Rule specifically exempts HCBS services. It does include Behavioral Health services. Currently 22 states are involved in lawsuits challenging the Rule.

REBASE THE RATES FOR HCBS

AADD has written a white paper on the Case for Rate Rebase for Home and Community Based Services. It documents that with no rate adjustments for 11 years, the rate setting methodology has failed to adjust reimbursement in alignment with the real costs of doing business in Alaska over the last decade. The paper is posted on our website at: <http://www.aaddalaska.org/the-case-for-rate-re-base-home-and-community-based-services/>

AADD plans further action on this.

Be thankful for what you have; you'll end up having more. If you concentrate on what you don't have, you will never, ever have enough.

Oprah Winfrey

CARE COORDINATION STUDY Update

A Grant has been submitted to Mental Health Trust to fund a study of Care Coordination which will include caseloads, duties, hours and rates for three different years. Adkinson and Champney Consulting are collaborating on the study that will include a statistician. A survey, focus groups and individual interviews will inform the report which is due June 2022.

Formal approval is imminent.

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