

AADD ALASKA

April 2022

Summary of ARPA (10% FMAP) Projects

Initiative #1: Reimbursements to Providers To Cover costs Associated with Re-recruiting and Retraining Direct Service Professionals (DSP's)

Alaska's home and community-based waiver services (HCBS) providers have experienced unprecedented staff shortages during the pandemic. This initiative would allow providers to be reimbursed for the following types of payments to DSPs that have been incurred the past few years:

- Bonus pay for DSPs
- Recruitment, retention, and referral bonuses
- Hazard bonuses for staff working through the pandemic
- Overtime pay as the result of staffing constraints due to COVID
- Paid leave for COVID needs (vaccination, sickness, quarantine, etc.)
- Shift differential payment related to the pandemic
- Vaccine incentives paid to DSPs

Costs associated with mitigating the pandemic, such as personal protective equipment will also be eligible for reimbursement. SDS may also approve other incentives related to addressing pandemic related issues if they are not duplicative of what is included in current rate methodologies or covered under another provision included in Alaska's approved Appendix K.

SDS will assign an allocation that each provider may draw down to cover costs outlined above. The allocation will be based on the portion of total HCBS claims made in the year April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022. Relevant HCBS claims would include all waiver services that rely on DSPs funded under 1915(c).

SDS is developing a system for providers to submit their expenditures by type and track funds that are remaining. Providers will be allowed to carry over funds, however the total amount cannot exceed the allocation for the year.

Initiative #2 DSP Training/Professional Development

SDS is partnering with the Alaska Training Cooperative (ATC). ATC will become accredited under NADSP (National Alliance for DSPs) to offer training that will allow DSP's to apply for certification in the form of badges from NADSP. This certification will be recognized nationally. A limited number of DSP's will be eligible in the pilot project. This training will incentivize retention and enhance professionalism.

**See E-Alert of April 19th if you want to register for the:
Public Meeting to Seek Stakeholder Input on American Rescue Plan Act Funding**

MAureen Harwood's Replacement at SDS

SDS welcomes Pamela Kellish to the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services as our new Health Program Manager IV, Chief of Developmental Programs! Pam comes to SDS from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, where for many years she has served as Northern Regional Manager, responsible for the supervision and regional operations of staff in the Northern Field Office, providing DVR services to clients over a region stretching across the Interior, west to Nome, and north to Utqiagvik. Before that she served as a rehabilitation counselor, job developer, transitions specialist, and vocational manager through government and nonprofit agencies in Alaska, Oregon, and New York. She holds a bachelor's degree from the State University of New York-Oneonta and a master's degree from Western Oregon University. Pam will be based in Fairbanks. She is starting with us on April 21st, giving her several days to spend with Maureen before retirement day on April 29th.

(Thank you Tony Newman for the update).



MAUREEN HARWOOD
Words cannot express our deep appreciation for your years of "making it work" for so many families and individuals. You have been a huge gift to all of us!!!

DD Collaborative—Alaska Shared Vision Collaboration

The DD Collaborative is a group dedicated to supporting the fulfillment of Alaska's Shared Vision through shared leadership in a highly collaborative network.

The Collaborative meets at least quarterly and creates space and structure for 1) information sharing, 2) collaborating on projects, 3) ensuring the Shared Vision continues to guide services, supporting policies and practices, 4) building on each other's strengths to move the Vision forward, and 5) coordinating advocacy efforts and amplifying the voices of people who receive the services

The Collaborative is an independent, unaffiliated group of Vision supporters allowing stakeholders from multiple groups to share responsibility and ownership of the Vision movement. Members include Disability Law Center, Peer Power, Senior and Disabilities Services, Independent Living Centers, AADD, Governors Council, Stone Soup Group, Personal Care Services and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority.

A chair is selected by the the collaborative members and serves for one state fiscal year. Currently AADD is serving as the chair. If you are interested in joining the group email director@aaddalaska.org.

NCI Staff Stability Survey

Information collected from the past NCI staff stability survey included information on turnover and vacancy rates, providing the necessary data to drive the advocacy around the current workforce shortage. Please make sure that your organization completes this survey so that Alaska will have adequate data for the period of COVID that we know has significantly impacted the workforce.

Public Health Emergency (PHE)

Secretary Xavier Becerra renewed the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency on April 12th, now effective until July 12, 2022. Alaska has 6 months after the end of the PHE to "unwind" the Appendix K flexibilities. The next date to watch for is May 12th. CMS has promised states 60 days notice before ending the PHE. If they plan to not renew the PHE in July, they must notice the states by May 12th.

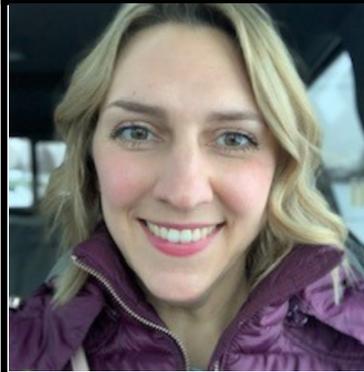
Statewide Disability Pride Day

A one day Disability Pride Event is scheduled for July 25th from 12:00 to 1:00 on Facebook live. This is celebrating the anniversary of ADA being signed. Also watch for local in-person events being planned in multiple communities.

CALENDAR

May 2, 2022	Board Meeting at 9:00
May 2, 2022	Care Coordination Group—10:30
May 12, 2022	AADD Monthly Meeting—11:00
May 19, 2022	Compliance Group— 8:30 to 9:30
May 19, 2022	CFO Group—10 to 11

Meghan Heim—DSP of the year



Meghan Heim was named DD DSP of the Year at the Full Lives Conference.

Meghan owns Infinite Options Care Coordination Services in Fairbanks. Their six care coordinators serve many waivers types in Fairbanks, North Pole, Delta, Valdez and Cordova.

Prior to Infinite Options, Meghan worked at Fairbanks Resource Agency (FRA) in many capacities including Care Coordination Manager and the Residential Director. At FRA she started an Adult Sibling Group and remains active in the local People First Advocacy Group. She also volunteered with Special Olympics for many years.

Meghan has an older sister with Downs Syndrome for whom her parents advocated strongly. Meghan has absorbed and embraced those traits and enjoyed traveling with her sister to participate in Key Campaign in Juneau.

Meghan Heim was elected to the AADD (Alaska Association on Developmental Disabilities) Board to represent Care Coordinators in 2019. She has been invaluable in bringing Care Coordination issues forward to the Association and to SDS. She initiated a monthly Care Coordination Group allowing care coordinators to connect and share issues.

Quote from a co-worker: "You want the definition of a Rockstar—it is Meghan. I don't know how she does all of it with such grace and kindness." Meghan is a huge benefit not only her local Fairbanks community, but she offers her skills statewide. Meghan is very deserving of this recognition.

**Success is not final,
Failure is not fatal,
It is the courage to continue
That counts.** Winston Churchill

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