



AADD ALASKA

May 2022

From your AADD President, Amanda Faulkner

The days are getting longer, there's energy of "aliveness" in the air and leave slips for vacations are lined up for mass landings across my desk! Summer in Alaska is a welcomed reprieve after a cold dark winter. This summer feels especially vibrant after the past two winters where "cold and dark" took on new meaning. As we prepare for weekends filled with camping, hiking, and gardening it's important to remember that while many of the mandates around COVID-19 have faded, we still need to remain diligent. As I reflect on the past 26-months the phrase "New Normal" resonates. The pandemic taught us that the transmission of a virus can potentially be deadly and have lifelong impacts to our physical and emotional health. It also taught us that we can reduce the transmission of ANY virus with precautionary steps. As we resume social activities, we must be mindful that 1 negative COVID test at the onset of symptoms does not mean you won't test positive in several days; it also doesn't give you the green light to expose others to a contagious illness with another name. Over the past month, I've noticed colleagues who appeared to be ill quickly reassure others in the workplace that; "it's not COVID." Only to either discover it was COVID after a second test, or it was a flu/severe cold that was quickly passed to others in the workplace. Bottom-line, nobody likes to be sick, and we cannot concretely reassure anyone that flu-like symptoms today are not another variant of COVID. I strongly encourage providers to review their Workplace Illness Policies and embed some of the preventative safety measures adopted during the pandemic into our everyday practices that support maintaining a healthy work environment. Our workforce is invaluable, and we must protect their health like they courageously did for the individuals we support. As we move into the "New Normal" let us NOT forget to take with us our motto; "We are Stronger Together". Stay healthy friends and TOGETHER let's recharge in the midnight sun!

Public Health Emergency likely to be extended again in July

A Bloomberg news article reports that a Public Health Emergency (PHE) renewal is planned for July. Link: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-05-16/us-set-to-extend-covid-19-public-health-emergency-past-july>. ANCOR reports that CMS has confirmed this intention with their staff. States were not given the 60 days notice promised before the end of a July expiration. If the PHE is extended again to mid-October, the earliest the flexibilities would expire in Alaska, given our 6 month extension, would be mid April, 2023.

SDS UPDATE

ARPA (aka 10% FMAP) funds definitions and application are out for your comments. By May 31st. Please review them carefully and register for the SDS webinar June 3rd. SDS will walk providers through the application process which will be due June 30th. If you have no expenses from the base year (4/1/21—3/31/22) because those costs were covered by other funds, apply immediately for 0 funds. Otherwise the funds will not remain available to you at the second reallocation for expenses between 4/1/22-3/31/23.

ORR (Office of Rate Review) reports they are 90% done with the desk audits for the Cost study. They hope to complete the rate study by May 20th for next steps in rate re-basing.

New SDS staff

Pam Kellish—New Chief of IDD/ILP/ Training (replacing Maureen Harwood) (pam.kellish@alaska.gov)

Kat Sowa-Lapinkas—Care Coordinator Liaison, Pilot Project with SDS (katarzyna.sowa-lapinkas@alaska.gov)

Anna Williams—Program Manager II, focusing on Person Centered Services (replacing Maggie Winston) (anna.williams@alaska.gov)

Numbers:

- ◆ 537 ISW recipients
- ◆ 2,069 total IDD recipients
- ◆ 10 drawn in May for IDD
- ◆ 40 drawn for ISW waiver

When you lead, your real job is to create more leaders, not more followers.

Kevin Kelly

ALASKA DHSS BUDGET

The budget approved by the Alaska state legislature included a total of \$32M for funding. The language included said “It is the intent of the legislature that the employer entities receiving the increased reimbursement rate for providing services under the Home and Community Based Service Waivers, Personal Care Assistant State Plan, Community First Choice, and the Long Term Services and Supports, Targeted Case Management programs provide a 10% increase to employee wages”. Our current regulations contain a stop loss that allows no more than a 5% increase or decrease in the rates per year.

Additionally the budget includes 20 additional draws, added to the current 50 draws for the IDD waiver each year. It also requires a five year study on how to eradicate the waitlist completed by SDS for the legislature.

REMINDER: NCI Staff Stability Survey

The National Core Indicators Staff Stability Survey is underway. All HCBS certified providers who employ DSPs are expected to complete this survey by June 30. Follow-up phone calls will begin in early June to providers who have not completed the survey.

This survey collects data on workforce data such as wages, turnover, and vacancy rates and is critical in advocacy and policy specific to this workforce. If you have any questions, contact Kim Champney at kim@champneyconsulting.com.

Legislation of Interest

HB 133—ABLE Act—Passed into law
HB265-SB175—Telehealth Bill—Passed into law
HB172/SB124—Crisis Now—Passed into law
HB 182/SB92—Bill by union—Did not pass
HB 98—Adult Home Care (was foster care) - Did not pass

Study on Care Coordination Services in Alaska

The Mental Health Trust grant to evaluate Care Coordination in Alaska is in the final months. Adkison Consulting (supported by Champney Consulting) conducted focus groups in January and interviews in February and March. Kimberly is now working on the data and statistics gathered with a statistician. This report will be completed by the end of June and distributed widely. A big thank you to all the care coordinators that contributed to the information.

CALENDAR

June 2, 2022 Board Meeting at 9:00
June 7, 2022 Care Coordination Group—10:30
June 9, 2022 AADD Monthly Meeting—11:00
June 16, 2022 No CFO Group in June
June 23, 2022 Compliance Group— 10 to 11

AADD’s New Executive Director Kim Champney— July 1, 2022

AADD is pleased to announce that Kim Champney has accepted the position of AADD’s next Executive Director



Kim has a long history with AADD; she first started participating in AADD meetings nearly 20 years ago and was a member of AADD’s board from 2010-2016, as well as it’s President for a number of years. In 2016 Kim started a consulting practice; her first big project was facilitating the DD Shared Vision. In addition, she has assisted over 25 organizations with strategic planning as well as managed multiple statewide projects specific to disability services and aging.

Kim is particularly committed to strengthening the direct support professional workforce and has had the privilege of assisting the development of the Alaska Alliance of Direct Support Professionals (AADSP).

Another impactful project that Kim has been working with is the Peer Power’s board of directors. She sees this organization as an important partner in AADD’s work to fully implement the Shared Vision.

Prior to starting a consulting business, Kim worked for REACH, a Juneau-based service provider, for nearly 20 years. She has a Master’s in Social Work from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

“I’m grateful for this opportunity to help AADD implement its strategic plan and to continue the great work of Lizette in partnership with the AADD board,” Kim said.

If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else.

Booker T Washington

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