

ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY
PROGRAM & PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING
July 27, 2023
8:30 a.m.

Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
3745 Community Park Loop, Suite 200
Anchorage, Alaska 99508

Trustees Present:

Agnes Moran, Chair
Anita Halterman
Rhonda Boyles
Kevin Fimon
John Morris

Trust Staff Present:

Steve Williams
Katie Baldwin-Johnson
Eric Boyer
Allison Biastock
Miri Smith-Coolidge
Valette Keller
Sarah Morrison
Michael Baldwin
Autumn Vea
Debbie DeLong
Kat Roch
Carrie Predeger
Janie Ferguson
Luke Lind
Travis Welch
Jimael Johnson

Trust Land Office Staff Present:

Jusdi Warner
Jeff Green

Also participating:

John Springsteen; Stephanie Hopkins; Don Habeger; Daniel Delfino; Donald Gotchal; Jennifer Smerud; Susan Kessler; Tonya Newman; Patrick Reinhart; Janny Weisshaupt; Julie Coulombe; Hattie Harvey; Edra Morledge; Aaron Surma; Doreen Schenkenberger; Ann Ringstad; Joanne Singleton; Carmen Winger; Charity Carmody; Liz Hunt; Tamar Ben-Yousef; Jared Parrish; Lance Johnson; Kathy Craft; Steph King; Laura Russell; Eric Murphy.

PROCEEDINGS

CALL TO ORDER

CHAIR MORAN called the Program & Planning Committee meeting to order and noted that they would keep to the original timeframes.

FY25 TRUST BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS PRESENTATION HOUSING HOME & COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES

MS. BARSTAD stated that it was her pleasure to talk about the Housing & Home and Community-Based Services focus area. This focus area, which was shortened to Housing & HCBS, began in 2006 and just started with housing; and home- and community-based services were added in 2013. She added that this focus area ensures that beneficiaries have the opportunity to live meaningful lives with access to and inclusion in the communities. They are connected to the COMP Plan in two different sections: Goal 3, which focuses on economic independence; and Goal 7, which reduces the institutional placements that people experience. Some of the history of home- and community-based services was that this entire sector was developed to deinstitutionalize individuals from skilled nursing homes and other institutions that were used to place people with disabilities. She stated that this work is critical because it supports the core mission of the Trust to prevent institutionalization, and to ensure that the beneficiaries are transitioned away from institutional care. She continued that the home- and community-based service system does have some robust aspects; however, only one category of beneficiaries is able to access these services through Medicaid. She explained and added that this entire continuum of care is important for the entire population of Alaska, but especially for Trust beneficiaries. The key components of a robust home- and community-based services system are that the services are person-centered and flexible. She highlighted two current projects that had a real impact with these services. One was the care coordination support project because it showed a good partnership between the Trust and Senior & Disability Services, as well as the private provider system. She stated that a care coordinator is required to access any of the 1915(c) home- and community-based services waivers. She continued that the care coordination network is still very vibrant and alive. The Alaska Association for Developmental Disabilities also supports some of the care coordination efforts through memberships. She continued and talked about the incredible array of services that are available to beneficiaries with intellectual and developmental disabilities, with more work to do to ensure access to Medicaid benefits for home- and community-based services for the other beneficiary categories; and looking at how the system could respond more quickly and more flexibly to people's specific needs. She stated that there is a huge challenge bringing home- and community-based services to a small community because it is very difficult to open assisted living homes. There may not be enough residents to keep that type of business afloat. She continued that the basic in-home services, like personal-care services, chores, respite care could be developed anywhere in the state, and there are parts of Rural Alaska that need those services. More work is needed in developing the capacity to ensure that those services are available statewide. This is an ongoing goal and is supported by the Trust. A rural home- and community-based services coordinator is needed, and the Commission on Aging is looking at that. She added that there are a lot of Alaskans in need of more home- and community-based services, and she talked about the challenges. The other budget strategies looked at policy coordination and capacity development, which is key for any area. Another section optimized the information technology and the analytics and we have some good data. She moved to the HUD continuum of care designations with Daniel Delfino and Jennifer Smerud online. She

asked them to talk about how HAP and SHG were divided out between those two continuums of care.

MR. DELFINO stated that he is with Alaska Housing. He continued that the specialized housing grant and the homeless assistance programs have distinctions of having Anchorage and the balance of the state. He added that the special needs housing grant program and the homeless assistance program operate outside of that. It is a lower-barrier resource for communities to access all across the state and had considerably less red tape and data entry. That makes it easier for the program sponsors working with that resource. He added that the funding is competitively allocated. He stated that he could provide a list of the supportive housing from the special needs housing grant. For the service component, there is a good distribution across the state. The more recent exceptions for that were the supportive housing development funded in partnership with the Trust and some of the federal partners in Nome and in Bethel.

MS. BARSTAD concluded her presentation.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

MR. BOYER stated that the workforce focus area has been one of the priority areas since 2008. He began with a brief background and stated that all of the funds in the workforce priority area were allocated. The work of the Trust could not be done without the partners, with the University of Alaska being a key partner. One of the advocacy points that the Trust and partners worked on for years was for the direct support professional; there was no standard occupational classification for that position. This was advocated through legislative levels to get that changed. It passed out of Senate Committee and was at Homeland Security. It was Senate Bill 1332, which opened positions for direct support professionals. He continued through his presentation describing and discussing some of the programs.

CHAIR MORAN asked Kathy Craft and Eric Murphy from the University of Alaska to talk about developing a school psychology program.

MS. CRAFT stated that she was the associate vice-provost for health programs for the University of Alaska Anchorage. She lives in Fairbanks and also works with UAF and UAS because they do not have programs across the state.

DR. MURPHY stated that he is the head of the psychology department at UAA. He noted that Dr. Hattie Harvey was also online.

DR. HARVEY stated that she is an associate professor in the psychology program.

CHAIR MORAN stated that they were seeing a move to getting mental health counselors in schools. It takes a pretty specialized person or mix of talents to deal with the kids in middle school and high school and then in the elementary school, which is different from what is seen from a regular child psychologist. She was curious about how those issues are being addressed.

DR. HARVEY stated that in the past year there was a culmination of a lot of different information, including the needs assessment, as well as a number of stakeholders meetings with different school districts and the Department of Ed. She continued that over the past 20 years there was some initiation of trying to start a school psych program. He continued that they are in

a good position now with administrative support as well as the recognition of behavioral health and school-based mental health services coming to the forefront as a priority. This interdisciplinary lens shows there are numerous professionals who can support children. She added that school psychologists are required by the Individuals with Disabilities Act, federal legislation that requires school psychologists to be part of school-based services for identifying children with disabilities and supports. Broader, the National School Psychologist Association has a substantial training outline regarding comprehensive services which focuses on prevention and intervention. She stated that the behavioral work with multiple professionals for school-based mental health services will be critical.

CHAIR MORAN asked about the timeframe for bringing this program online.

DR. HARVEY replied that this past year was Phase 1; a very informal gathering of information. FY24 and FY25 are in preparation for fully developing curriculum policies for teachers, partnerships with school districts. At a minimum, they are required to have three full-time faculty for a licensed school psychologist. The goal is to have their first cohort in the fall of 2025. The cohort, by the accreditation standard, is 12 for every full-time faculty. It is a three-year program with a minimal requirement, by national accreditation, of 60 credits.

MR. BOYER thanked all three and continued to the SHARP support which is directed towards the Division of Family and Community Services, API.

TRUSTEE BOYLES asked how long the Trust was looking at supporting that program, and then when it would go for approval to the Board of Regents.

DR. HARVEY replied that the goal was to have this to the Board of Regents by March so they could have it and review it on their summer agenda.

MR. BOYER thought that it was a three-year startup to get to the point where it would be a sustainable program within the university system. Once the cohorts are brought on, the funding for those will take over and manage that program.

CHAIR MORAN called a break.

(Break.)

CHAIR MORAN called the meeting back to order, and recognized Jimael Johnson.

EARLY CHILDHOOD INTERVENTION & PREVENTION

MS. JOHNSON stated that she would present on the Early Childhood Intervention & Prevention priority area within the FY25 budget. She began with a brief background on the priority area. She continued that the first goal of the COMP Plan focused directly on early childhood: the reduction of adverse childhood experiences through emotional resiliency for young families. She moved on and talked about the vast benefits for Trust beneficiaries. Children born with developmental disabilities who were able to access the early intervention services had much better health and education outcomes when entering school-aged services. She gave a snapshot of some of the program data and then talked about some of the higher-level population outcome data from the scorecard. She highlighted the Help Me Grow Alaska with the All Alaska

Pediatric Partnership, which is a national model of linkage and supports for health and related services for families with young children. That was how it was designed. This program has seen a sharp increase in the need for mental health services since the pandemic. It was one of the programs that tracked, in real-time, because of that on-the-ground exposure, and contracted with both families and providers what was needed throughout the state at any given time. She continued going through and explaining the budget and the programs that were being supported.

FY25 TRUST BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS – NEXT STEPS

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON stated that she would go through the Non-Focus Area Allocations. She went through some of the highlights of some examples of the good work that happened in this area. She explained that they were the kinds of strategies that helped support the work of the Trust. She added that they are not operating dollars, which enables expanding the capacity. She talked about the behavioral health mini-grants and how the individual needs to be working with an agency with the need to meet the criteria of beneficiary status.

MS. PREDEGER continued that, for the individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, families would be enrolled in the infant and early intervention programs.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON asked Kelda Barstad to describe the technical assistance program.

MS. BARSTAD replied that the technical assistance program is a competitive RFP that is put out every four to five years to gather together contracted resources for agencies that serve beneficiaries. These contractors have a contract directly with the Trust, and it is a project that she administers. She continued that the agencies contact program officers that check to make sure there is a contractor that meets a need, and that the need is one of the identified priorities within the contract. She added that, most recently, in implementing 1115 services, the TA contract had been good for getting some of the startup activities necessary to put agencies on a trajectory to offer these services to the community.

TRUSTEE FIMON asked for more specifics about Communications.

MS. BIASTOCK explained that the communications line primarily funds the contract with a communications firm. Those funds support the paid media for the media campaigns, graphics support, and development for things like the annual report, some of the social media graphics and other things like that.

MS. BALDWIN-JOHNSON moved to the COMP Plan data evaluation section which had funding to support the COMP Plan work. She also talked about the scorecard update. She wrapped up with the changes in the budget.

CHAIR MORAN called for a short break.

(Break.)

CHAIR MORAN picked up with the FY25 Trust budget recommendations and recognized Steve Williams, chief executive officer.

CEO WILLIAMS highlighted a couple of things that were taken away by the trustees from what

developed yesterday and this morning. He reminded all about the good discussion about the COMP Plan. He hoped that the trustees were taking the recommendations that were brought forward in a very collaborative and informed way with multiple stakeholders. He also hoped that the support and efforts and the direction given by the trustees would be used in producing outcomes that improve the lives for beneficiaries and would be brought up in August.

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON stated that the meeting was to reorient what is in the budget and what the strategies are. Between now and the board meeting in August, staff will be further refining, if needed, the level of changes in the budget.

CHAIR MORAN stated that if there were any ideas or suggestions, to please send them to Ms. Baldwin-Johnson and to copy the whole board and the CEO.

COO BALDWIN-JOHNSON suggested sharing the input by August 7th which will leave plenty of time to work on it.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN commented on learning the connection between the COMP Plan and Strengthening the System. She recommended, after presenting to the Legislature, a bit more comprehensive review of the COMP Plan, how it interconnects with Strengthening the System and the Trust's role. She asked that it be pared down for trustees. There were a lot of new legislators which led to a lot more questions about the interconnection of those documents and the process of how it all intertwined to a comprehensive budget. She added that some additional training for the board might be helpful.

CEO WILLIAMS replied that they would be happy to do that.

CHAIR MORAN asked for Trustee Comments.

TRUSTEE HALTERMAN thanked each of the committee chairs for the amount of work it took in preparing for today, and to the staff for the amount of work it took to pull together the documentation for these meetings. For the trustees, some guidance documents from the attorney were expected, and she encouraged that they watch for their emails.

TRUSTEE BOYLES thanked all for accommodating her schedule.

TRUSTEE FIMON thanked the CEO for the lead-in with the grant information received. That set a tone on how the budget was presented and how each program director brought it forward. We not only get good information, but also see that passion of how each one of you care. He stated that the board evolves all the time, and how staff has adjusted to that and continues to adjust is very impressive. He thanked all for putting the packets and the meetings together. He appreciated it all.

TRUSTEE MORRIS briefly stated appreciation for the patience with him as the newest trustee. It is an honor and joy being on this team, a great bunch of folks.

CHAIR MORAN stated appreciation for their patience with her being the Program & Planning Committee chair. She continued that it went pretty smoothly, thanks to the staff. Go U.S. Women's National Team! She asked for a motion for adjournment.

MOTION: A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by TRUSTEE HALTERMAN; seconded by TRUSTEE MORRIS.

After the roll-call vote, the MOTION was APPROVED. (Trustee Halterman, yes; Trustee Boyles, yes; Trustee Fimon, yes; Trustee Morris, yes; Chair Moran, yes.)

CHAIR MORAN thanked all.

(The Program & Planning Committee meeting adjourned at 12:01 p.m.)