

**Alaska Statewide Independent Living Council, Inc.  
Quarterly Meeting**

**LOCATION**  
Juneau, Alaska

**DATE**  
February 12 – 14, 2018

MEETING MINUTES

Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo  
Peninsula Reporting

*Monday, February 12, 2018*

**Board Members Present:**

Michael Christian, chair	Advocate/Consumer
Joan O’Keefe	Advocate/SAIL, CIL Representative
Tom Cyrus	TVR Representative
Justine Fine	Advocate/Consumer
Deb Etheridge	SDS Representative
Velja Elstad	DVR Representative
Cheri Johansen	Advocate/Consumer
Janalee Gage	Advocate/Consumer
Jaye Destiny Palmer	Advocate/Consumer
Buddy Kutch	Advocate/Consumer
Jen Brower	Advocate/Consumer
Cathy Gerby	Advocate/Consumer
Annette Alfonsi	Advocate/Consumer

**Staff:**

Heidi Frost, Executive Director  
Kathy Munk, Administrative Assistant

CART Provided by: Lenny DiPaolo, RPR, CRR, CCP

**CALL TO ORDER – 9:00 a.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

**REVIEW AGENDA**

Joan O’Keefe **MOVED** to approve the agenda, **SECONDED** by Jen Brower.  
Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

**APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

Tom Cyrus **MOVED** to approve the minutes from the November 2017 meeting,  
**SECONDED** by Jaye Palmer. Hearing no objection, the motion passed.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Heidi Frost presented to the Council as follows:

## **Administrative Update:**

### ***New Council Members:***

- Buddy Kutch
- Janalee Gage
- Cathy Gerby
- Jaye Destiny Palmer
- Jen Brower
- Annette Alfonsi

### ***New Staff:***

- Kathy Munk – full time

### ***Federal Report:***

- End-of-the-year federal report for the SILC was completed.

### ***Ethics Report:***

- Ethics reports are completed quarterly. Planning to have a brief ethics overview in June 2018.

### ***Non-Profit Development:***

- During the strategic planning session in September, the SILC has decided to move forward with fundraising strategies. The SILC is now a registered charity with the State of Alaska.

### ***Marketing:***

- The concept of marketing the independent living message was also discussed during the strategic planning session.

### ***Policies:***

- The federal government has mandated many new policies for the SILC.

### ***Other Issues:***

- They are continuing to look for a renter to share the SILC's office space.

## **Financial:**

- Financial review results
- Charitable giving
- Budget – will be reformatted

- Financing the SILC after FY '19 – operational grant, and applying for additional grants - Mat-Su Health Foundation to augment existing assistive technology grant.

### **State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL) – SILC Duties Include:**

- Create the SPIL
- Monitor, review, and evaluate implementation of the SPIL
- Begin to create the next SPIL.

### **Collaboration and Coordination**

- TBI – Focus, conference, Brain Institute
- Transportation – Anchorage transit, rural transportation
- Healthcare Access – Mental health in Fairbanks, emergency management
- Employment – Alaska Association for People Supporting Employment First (APSE) and youth.

### **Outreach:**

- People with FAS/FASD
- People with TBI
- People with Mental Illness
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing
- Minority races/ethnicities with disabilities
- Seniors with disabilities
- Youth with disabilities
- Individuals who live 50 or more miles from a CIL.

### **Next Steps:**

#### ***Short Term:***

- Policies and indicators
- SDS database
- Awareness building
- Training plan
- Advocacy.

#### ***Long Term:***

- Fundraising
- Long-term funding – operating funds, other grants
- SPIL development

- Marketing.

## **ALASKA BRAIN INJURY NETWORK (ABIN)**

Dr. Adam Grove stated that ABIN has been working on developing awareness and collaboration with other entities in the state, and he thanked the Council for the ability to present to them today. He shared a CDC graph representing the comparison of annual incidence showing that the invisible epidemic of traumatic brain injury (TBI) far surpasses incidents of MS, spinal cord injuries, HIV/AIDS, and breast cancer in Alaska. He noted that it is an invisible epidemic because there is not much awareness of it, and Alaska's rate of TBI is greater than the national rate, particularly among Alaska Natives. The Northwest Arctic region has the greatest incidence of non-fatal TBI hospitalizations in Alaska.

Dr. Adam Grove stated that ABIN was established in 2000 to address the needs of Alaskans with TBI. Their mission is to educate, plan, coordinate, and advocate for a comprehensive service delivery system for TBI survivors and their families. Their vision encompasses working to prevent TBI and promoting wellness for Alaskans with all brain injuries. The structure of ABIN is as follows:

- Small non-profit with two full-time staff and two part-time staff
- Eight members of the board of directors
- Funded by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and state and federal grants
- Open-door policy where staff work hands on with consumers on a walk-in basis.

ABIN's partners include:

- Providers of mental/behavioral health and medical services
- Division of Behavioral Health
- Disability Law Center
- Alaska Commission on Aging
- SILC
- Division of Senior and Disabilities Services
- UAA Center for Human Development
- Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium.

ABIN's areas of interest include:

- Expanding Medicaid benefits for Alaskans with TBI. Hope to have targeted case management by 2019.
- Expanding access to treatment for those who are not Medicaid eligible.
- Providing support to communities to grow their own services
- Determining more accurately the magnitude of the problem of TBI in Alaska.

ABIN's current projects include:

- Brain Injury Outreach Clinics (BIO Clinics)
- Research grant – Approximately \$200,000 capital grant
- Support groups in Anchorage and Ketchikan
- Training – Brain Institute 2018, On-Demand Brain Injury 101 training.

ABIN's future projects include:

- Increasing public awareness of the TBI problem
- Expansion of BIO Clinics statewide
- Increased diversity of financial support.

Dr. Adam Grove fielded questions from Council members and concluded his report.

## **DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION (DVR)**

Velja Elstad stated that DVR's mission essentially is to provide services that assist people with disabilities in obtaining and maintaining employment. They are an eligibility-based program, and there is no financial basis for qualification for the program.

Velja Elstad stated that DVR operates out of five regions, and their numbers have remained fairly consistent through the years. This past year they served approximately 3,400 people statewide. One of the biggest changes they have seen with their division is Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) delivered to students, and this program has been booming.

Velja Elstad stated that one of DVR's greatest challenges is providing services in rural areas. She stated that although the state has seen a lot in the way of travel restrictions, DVR's ability to travel to provide services to outlying areas statewide has not been affected.

Velja Elstad informed the Council about DVR's \$225,000 federal Independent Living Older Blind grant, which is matched by \$25,000 from DVR. Those funds are granted out to three ILCs and the Center for the Blind. These funds are designed to provide assistance, peer counseling, and treatment for people experiencing a visual impairment aged 55 and older.

Velja Elstad shared that she felt DVR needs to continue to work on relationships and partnerships, fielded questions from Council members, and concluded her report.

Jim Kreatschman stated that Pre-ETS is funded with \$1.5 million every year for the purpose of working with kids in school who are potentially eligible for vocational rehabilitation. Last year they served 957 students in 117 different communities. He stated that most of his work revolves around working with community rehabilitation providers (CRPs) or working with school districts that deliver job exploration and work readiness training. They work very closely with Access Alaska, Arctic Access, and SAIL on the delivery of those services. He noted that a lot of the success of their program depends on partnerships and collaboration with other entities.

Jim Kreatschman stated that they will be working on how DVR counselors are going to be serving schools. He commented on the changes happening within DVR as a result of attrition, noting that some of the historical information within DVR will be lost. As a result, extensive work will be done in terms of staff training.

Jim Kreatschman shared that other successes they have had with Pre-ETS have been adopting peer mentoring at UAS, Jobz Clubs and the School Store. He fielded questions from the Council and concluded his report.

## **DIVISION OF SENIOR AND DISABILITIES SERVICES (SDS)**

Lisa Morley reported that the CIL grants and the SILC funding transitioned to DHSS/SDS, and the overall SILC and CIL grants total \$1,250,000. She stated that based on the experience of SDS in overseeing community living funding, it was a great match for independent living to move over to this division.

Martin Morris stated that they have gathered all the data from the CIL 704 reports to review what they are doing and to put in place some performance measures to be able to report to the SILC. He explained the data points that were reviewed for this

snapshot of the CILs, and he noted that they are looking to transition the CILs over to the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) that the division uses to manage data. Lisa Morley commented that SAMS collects consumer information about services received, has a module for case management notes, and has a system for information and referral. She noted that all SDS grantees use SAMS. Deb Etheridge added that the CILs all using the same system will allow the division to compare apples to apples among the CILs, which will become particularly important once they move to a funding formula.

Lisa Morley stated that the SPIL is the funding formula for distributing Part B and general funds. The Part C funds go directly to the centers. These funding sources have been combined to begin looking at a statewide formula. Once they figure out the methodology and the formula, then they can equitably distribute funding based on the SPIL. She reviewed data showing the statewide funding and population breakdown as well as numbers served. She noted that there is a large disparity in average cost per individual between regions. She then reviewed scenarios of funding by average cost and funding by population.

Members of the Council engaged in a discussion about how the funding formula will need to be considered as the SILC begins the development of the next SPIL and they consider un-served and under-served areas and populations.

## **ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING**

Denise Daniello began her presentation by stating that the purpose of the Commission on Aging is to help older people maintain their good health, independence, and dignity, and they do that through planning, advocacy, education, and interagency collaboration. By statute they are responsible for developing the four-year Alaska State Plan for Senior Services. The Commission also satisfies a federal requirement of the Older Americans Act that each state has an advisory council that advises policymakers on anything that has to do with aging.

Denise Daniello stated that Alaska continues to lead all states in the nation as having the fastest growing older adult population, people age 65 and older. That population currently stands at 129,908, which is a gain of more than 4,000 seniors than last year. Almost 1 in 5 Alaskans are aged 60 years or older. She highlighted that people with disabilities are also living a lot longer, which makes partnerships among entities very important.

The Alaska Commission on Aging is supporting the following legislation this year:

- HB 236/SB 170 – Senior Benefits Program – these bills have now combined.
- HB 123 – Disclosure of Healthcare Costs
- HB 106 – Civil Legal Services Fund
- HB 186 – Food Donations

The Alaska Commission on Aging’s advocacy priorities are as follows:

- HB 236 – Senior Benefits Program
- Senior Safety Net – grant-funded and waiver-funded services, Pioneer Homes, et cetera
- Personal care services
- Family caregiver support – adoption of a uniform caregiver assessment tool
- Adoption of enabling technology in the waiver program
- Improved support for people with Alzheimer’s disease and related dementia.

Denise Daniello shared some information from the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Survey. She stated that Alaska adapted this national survey to include the perceived cognitive impairment module looking at increasing memory loss and confusion. She noted that the data showed that 14 percent of Alaska seniors who participated in this survey reported increasing memory loss as compared to 10.4 percent of seniors in 20 other states. Other troubling data they saw was that almost one out of three seniors experiencing increasing memory loss said that they lived alone. This is an increase from the data received back in 2013, which showed one out of eight.

Denise Daniello fielded questions from Council members and concluded her report.

## **OVERVIEW OF INDEPENDENT LIVING IN ALASKA**

### **Independent Living Center – Gulf Coast Region**

Joyanna Geisler stated that ILC serves Kenai Peninsula, Kodiak Island, and the Valdez/Cordova area. ILC is the Short-Term Assistance and Referral (STAR) as well as the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) for this region. ILC

currently has 12 grants through SDS, the Older Blind grant through DVR, and other Department of Transportation grants.

Joyanna Geisler reported that ILC opened a small office in Kodiak in October. ILC's staffing is as follows:

- Homer – six staff and a MASST volunteer
- Kenai/Soldotna – eight staff
- Seward – two part-time staff
- Kodiak – two part-time staff.

Activities of ILC include:

- Nine nursing home transitions last year, three more completed so far this year.
- Partnering with SAIL to do Home MAPs in various regions around the state.
- Veterans directed home and community-based services program. 36 veterans have been enrolled on the Kenai Peninsula and Kodiak Island in the last two years.

### Access Alaska

Doug White stated that Access Alaska was incorporated as the first Independent Living Center in 1983. They began in Anchorage and expanded into Fairbanks to serve the Interior and have since opened an office in Wasilla. They provide limited personal care attendant services through small offices in the Kenai and Dillingham areas.

Doug White stated that in addition to providing the five core independent living services, they have a large durable medical equipment loan closet in Anchorage, which is staffed by three individuals with disabilities who also provide a lot of peer counseling and support.

Doug White stated that Access Alaska provides the following services based on their funding sources:

- Traumatic and acquired brain injury (TABI) peer support.
- Older Blind grant
- Medicaid counseling and outreach

- I/DD services in Anchorage and Fairbanks
- Interpreter referral line in Fairbanks
- Pre-ETS in partnership with DVR
- Information and referral services
- Peer advocacy and support – partnership with Wall Busters
- Partnerships with Department of Corrections.

Doug White shared some consumer stories with Council members, fielded questions, and concluded his report.

### *Arctic Access*

Denice Gilroy stated that beyond the hubs of Nome and Kotzebue, she visits 37 villages in her region. Arctic Access is involved in the following:

- Pre-ETS – 63 youth participated last year. Focus on Nome Youth Facility and the special education program at the high school.
- RuralCAP and Home MAP – completed four last year, will do six this year.
- Working closely with the food bank and the homeless shelter.
- Peer support groups for people experiencing physical disabilities and TBIs.
- Working to assist with the bedbug epidemic in the region.
- Assisting individuals to access benefits and legal help.
- Outreach through career fairs and health fairs.
- Garden project.

Denice Gilroy shared her desire for an equitable funding formula because of the great need of her region. She fielded questions from Council members and concluded her report.

### *Southeast Alaska Independent Living (SAIL)*

Joan O’Keefe reported that SAIL became a non-profit in 1993, and they have offices in Juneau, Sitka, Haines, and Ketchikan. Last year they were awarded one of three grants in the country to do an Indian country demonstration project from the Administration on Community Living. SAIL is in the process of hiring part-time staff in six rural villages in Southeast as a result of this project, which is a three-year grant.

Joan O’Keefe stated that SAIL’s operating budget is a little under \$2 million, and they are very aggressive about applying for all types of grants.

Joan O’Keefe shared SAIL’s activities as follows:

- Adaptive recreation programs
- Transportation advocacy
- Accessible playgrounds
- Home MAP program
- ADRC and STAR programs for Southeast
- Active loan closet and assistive technology demonstration
- Employment – CRP for DVR
- Pre-ETS engagement and activities
- IL STAND – focus on Alaska Natives
- Medicare counselors
- Older Blind grantee
- Peer supports and support groups
- Veterans directed home and community-based services program
- Advocacy and education/cross training.

Joan O’Keefe fielded questions from Council members and concluded her report.

### **ALASKA MENTAL HEALTH TRUST AUTHORITY**

Kelda Barstad stated that as a program officer for the Trust, the focus areas she oversees are Housing and Long-Term Services and Supports. The other focus areas of the Trust include Beneficiary Employment and Engagement, Disability Justice, and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment.

Kelda Barstad stated that the priority areas for the Trust include Medicaid Reform and Criminal Justice Reform and Reinvestment. The Trust has been actively involved with the 1115 Behavioral Health Demonstration Waiver as one aspect of Medicaid Reform. They have also been involved with the newly established Palmer Family, Infant, and Toddler court as part of Criminal Justice Reform.

Kelda Barstad stated that in her project area of Housing, they have housing coordinators in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks working on the issue of homelessness. This focus area also supports the Housing First projects in each of those cities. For Long-Term Services and Supports, one project has been work on

the DD Shared Vision. This project has been a large effort designed to move the system toward delivery of more person-directed care.

Kelda Barstad stated that the Trust is supporting \$5.3 million in state funds into the Homeless Assistance Project and the Special Needs Housing Grant.

The Trust is supporting the following legislative priorities for this year:

- Legislation to formalize the details of how the Trust invests in their lands.
- Criminal justice reinvestments to address beneficiaries overrepresented in corrections and develop strategies to prevent and keep beneficiaries out of incarceration. Continued involvement with the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission.
- Continuation of the multiyear effort to improve the Title IV statutes.
- Other legislation that could impact any of the Trust's beneficiaries.

Kelda Barstad stated that Mike Abbott is the new CEO of the Trust. He will be supervising the chief operating officer Steve Williams on the Authority side as well as the head of the Trust Land Office. In addition to herself, Jimael Johnson was also recently hired as a program officer with the Trust, and she will be exploring early childhood interventions as a potential Trust focus area.

### **TRAINING ON LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY**

Teri Tibbett, advocacy coordinator with the Alaska Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) and the Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB), presented to the SILC on how to successfully engage in public advocacy. She reviewed a PowerPoint presentation and explained in detail the following areas:

- What is public advocacy?
- Who are policymakers and what is the role of the public versus the policymakers?
- The public process – democracy
- Power of the people
- Power of a constituent
- Coalition power
- Getting your opinion to policymakers
- How to meet with a policymaker
- Appropriate public places to meet with a policymaker

- Communicating with a public official through e-mail or letters
- Testifying at public hearings – basic rules
- Rules of order
- Action – follow through
- Join the Trust Advocacy Action Network.

Teri Tibbett engaged in dialogue with members of the SILC regarding their legislative visits and fielded questions from Council members.

## **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

Public testimony was heard, and a full transcript was prepared.

## **OTHER INFORMATION FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

### **Infographic**

Heidi Frost directed members of the Council to the independent living infographic and reviewed the contents with Council members. She noted that this is a great graphic representation of the cost-effective services that IL provides to keep people living successfully in the community.

### **Supported Legislation**

Heidi Frost reviewed the legislation the SILC is supporting as follows:

- Telecommunications relay services
- Fake service animals
- Support for home and community-based services.

## **RECESS**

The meeting recessed upon the conclusion of public testimony at 5:06 p.m.

*Tuesday, February 13, 2018*

**Board Members Present:**

Michael Christian, chair	Advocate/Consumer
Joan O'Keefe	Advocate/SAIL, CIL Representative
Tom Cyrus	TVR Representative
Justine Fine	Advocate/Consumer
Deb Etheridge	SDS Representative
Cheri Johansen	Advocate/Consumer
Janalee Gage	Advocate/Consumer
Jaye Destiny Palmer	Advocate/Consumer
Buddy Kutch	Advocate/Consumer
Jen Brower	Advocate/Consumer
Cathy Gerby	Advocate/Consumer
Annette Alfonsi	Advocate/Consumer

**Board Members Absent:**

Velja Elstad	DVR Representative
--------------	--------------------

**Staff:**

Heidi Frost, Executive Director  
Kathy Munk, Administrative Assistant

CART Provided by: Lenny DiPaolo, RPR, CRR, CCP

**CALL TO ORDER – 8:30 a.m.**

**ROLL CALL**

**ELECTIONS**

Elections were held with the following results:

- Vice chair – Tom Cyrus
- Secretary – Cheri Johansen
- SVRC Liaison – Janalee Gage

## **INTRODUCTIONS / ICE BREAKER**

Council members introduced each other and conducted an ice breaker exercise.

## **DIVISION OF SENIOR AND DISABILITIES SERVICES**

Duane Mayes and Deb Etheridge reported on the following activities of SDS:

### ***Electronic Visit Verification System (EVV)***

This is an unfunded mandate from the federal government for states to implement an EVV for personal care attendant (PCA) services by January 2019. This system would require the PCA to log in via the system when they arrive and log out when they leave as well as maintain an electronic log of the services provided. There has been some consideration within the department as to who will purchase and manage the system, the State or providers. There are currently 12 or 13 states that have implemented the EVV system. The State has been diligently working on the issue, and are hoping to be able to show a good faith effort in the event they need to ask for an extension of time. They are also waiting on guidance from CMS before they move forward.

### ***Family Caregiving***

SDS is looking into models regarding reimbursed family caregiving through a waiver package. This would be a low-cost solution needed to prevent seniors from going into nursing homes and keep basic supports in the community. This has been posed to some members of the legislature, and there has been support for this.

### ***Individualized Supports Waiver***

The Community Developmental Disabilities Grant (CDDG) is going to be shifted over to a 1915(c) waiver. This waiver will have a cap of \$17,500 per person annually, and a waitlist will be maintained for it. The division has also set aside a small amount of money for grant services for individuals currently on the CDDG who will not qualify for the waiver.

### ***Day Habilitation***

A soft cap has been implemented on day habilitation in order to reduce costs. In order to continue to keep people safe in the community and provide an opportunity for continued skill acquisition of people receiving services through the I/DD waiver and seniors who receive day habilitation, the division is considering companion services, which is a service that is paid out at half the rate of day habilitation.

### ***Institutional Care Transitions***

Under home and community-based waivers, transition services may be provided to move someone from an institution to a community setting, and those transition services can include care coordination. The division recently submitted a State Plan amendment to establish target case management for long-term services and supports so they can access care coordination while a person is in an institution for 60 days prior to discharge. Other expenditures that could be paid for under this targeted case management include assessment for home modifications, rent assistance, and a number of other things. The two most important aspects for transition include giving the person a choice of where they would like to reside and allowing the State to pay for a much lower cost service than nursing facility care.

### ***Legislative Advocacy***

The message that SDS wants to convey to the legislature is the value of the optional Medicaid services such as the five waivers and PCA. Another strong point to make is to discuss community-based grants as a low-cost solution to keeping people in their homes. Community-based grants have been flat funded for a long time.

Duane Mayes concluded his presentation by reiterating that the department is thrilled to have independent living under their umbrella of services, and he and Deb Etheridge fielded questions from Council members.

## **REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE ADVOCACY ISSUES AND PROCESS**

Heidi Frost reviewed the legislative packets and the process for meeting with legislators and debriefing afterwards. The Council discussed the importance of sharing personal stories, noting that people should only share as much about themselves as they feel comfortable sharing.

Heidi Frost reviewed the important documents that should be highlighted during the meetings with legislators including:

- IL infographic
- Telecommunication relay service
- Assistive technology, telehealth, and medicine management
- Introduction of the concept of fake service animals.

### **OTHER INFORMATION FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER**

Joan O'Keefe stated that she will be proposing to the center directors that they craft a letter in opposition to getting rid of the Certificate of Need process. She asked that the SILC consider sending a joint letter.

Tom Cyrus **MOVED** that the SILC prepare a letter in support of keeping the Certificate of Need process, **SECONDED** by Joan O'Keefe. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

### **ADJOURN**

Jen Brower **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Jaye Palmer. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 11:32 a.m to begin legislative visits.

***Wednesday, February 14, 2018***

Council members engaged in legislative visits.

**Minutes Approved: 6/7/18, P.D.**