



# Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition

Quality Care • Care Coordination • Social Engagement

## SOUTHEAST REGIONAL ELDERCARE COALITION

### MEETING MINUTES

Friday, June 14, 2024, 8:30 am

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89966612080?pwd=Y2s1MU16dzdjbFkraFF4ZFZjcXNPQT09>

Meeting ID: 899 6661 2080

Passcode: 471844

1. **Call to Order 8:33AM**
2. **Agenda Approval**
  - a. Sioux Douglas motioned to approve the agenda. Joan O'Keefe seconded. Agenda was approved.
3. **Minutes Approval – May 3, 2024**
  - a. *Glenn Mitchell* motioned to approve the minutes. Sioux Douglas seconded. Meeting Minutes approved.
4. **Steering Committee Report – Erin Walker-Tolles presented and introduced the new Steering Committee Members:**
  - a. Nikki Bass, Co-owner of Tides, Inc. She brings to the SREC Steering Committee 18 years of experience working in Social Services in Juneau. Her agency supports IDD consumers and families seeking to resolve long term housing.
  - b. Gloria Burns, Vice President of The Ketchikan Indian Community. She was not able to attend today but is looking forward to joining us next month.
  - c. Kirsten Rioux-Testoni, RN. Director of Home Health and Hospice for Petersburg Medical Center. She has worked to develop the home care services in the Petersburg's community with success in growing the nursing staff significantly and services.
5. **SREC Project Director Report – Tonya Muldoon**

- a. UAS DSP Certification course has been successful with 8 students just completing their week of hands-on learning.
- b. Continued work on the Summit and Navi Tool development and planning.
- c. Tonya Muldoon and Brian Holst meet last week with SREC Project grantors Margeret Cargill, Philanthropies for a Learning Convening. The meeting was of grantees from across the north US who work in eldercare. Many providers are foundations that provide grants to rural communities. They have been very supportive of the work that we are accomplishing.
- d. Tonya Muldoon and Tess Rouse will be continuing to reach out on updates on the project.

## 6. Old Business

- **Summit Update** -*Tonya Muldoon*
  - Still have some opening for topic ideas and possible speakers. Tess Rouse will be reaching out to confirm the agenda and speakers.
- **Legislative Advocacy Update** - *Erin Walker-Tolles*
  - SREC has joined AgeNet, a statewide senior advocacy group. Erin Walker -Tolles explained that Bert Stedman and other SE delegation is supportive of senior needs in the region however additional support is needed form other regions thus the support in joining AgeNet to strengthen the Senior voice for lobbying.
  - Senior Grants have in recent years had additional support through ARPPA and Covid relief funding. These additional funding sources have run out. The legislation was asked to flat funding for the programs. The Governor has two-line items in the current pending budget 1.5 million for Adult Day services and 1.5 million for Community Grants.
  - Food Stamp Benefits (SNAP) offered by the Department of Public Assistance has extended funding. They have also expanded the program to a more broad-based eligibility. They have increased the poverty guidelines from 130% to 200%. They have removed the asset test. This will mean that more people will be able to obtain food stamps services.
- **Subcommittee Update** - Tabled

## 7. New Business

- a. Photo Contest and Save the Date fliers have been emailed to Coalition members. The Photo Contest is open to the public, agencies, and individuals to submit images of elders, elders with caregivers, and elders

in the community. All entries must have a signed release form attached for consideration.

8. **Best Practices Presentation** –*Tony Newman, Director,  
Senior & Disability Services, State of Alaska*

Tony Newman has been an Alaska resident for the last 30 years. His wife Linda Newman works at Wildflower Court in Juneau. He was hired with the state of Alaska in 2001 and has been Director of the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services (DSDS) for the last four years. DSDS provides a variety of statewide supports such as:

- Personal Care Services
- Grant program
- Home and Community Wavier Services
- Nursing Transitional
- Critical Incident Reporting – Central Intake Services
- Adult Protective Services
- Medicaid Information Office
- Care Coordination

DSDS has been working on several priorities.

- a. Senator Cathy Giessel proposed a bill to increase Medicaid rates and supports. He stated that SOA has regularly increased rates over several years. They, however, have found that the rate methodology is flawed. DSDS has released an RFP looking for a vendor to support the rate review of all services especially behavioral health and DSDS. The bill was supported with a \$10 million line item.
- b. Governor Dunleavy bill #157 supports the Adult Host Homes which would be a new program that allows for the creation of limited assisted living homes that are provided a daily flat rate for care. The bill also allows for Legally Responsible adults, spouses and parents of minors to act as caregivers under the Community First Choice Program. New regulations have been created and recently released following several public comments' presentations. The program will allow families to be paid when other staff can not be located. DSDS will start researching the family caregivers (Legally Responsible Adult) to help determine the impact on the DSP workforce.
- c. Tony Newman commented that workforce issues are challenging on many levels even at the State of Alaska. They continue to have problems finding and keeping staff. DSDS through AARPA and Covid funding supported the DSP agencies with hiring bonuses and overtime bonuses however that funding is ending.

- d. DSDS is working to create a new Medicaid Wavier Assessment. It came about in response to the IDD Medicaid Wavier waitlist however will have components for all Medicaid Waivers. The hope with the new assessment will be that it will be more person centered and offer more flexibility.
- e. National Association of Direct Support Professional (NADSP) pilot. DSDS has completed a pilot in which they were successful in having 50 DSP's complete level three NADSP Certification. DSDS provided education through UAA and funding for the courses and NADSP certification costs. The pilot was completed using AARPA and Covid relief funding which has run out. However, the Alaska Mental Health Trust has funded the project to continue.

**Member Comments:**

- a. Joan O'Keefe (SAIL) – Joan asked Tony Newman about the rate review affecting the E-Modification Program.

The rate review will include the e-modification program eventually. DSDS is working on a plan to provide to Governor Dunleavy about the program. The program has authorized plans for home changes however they have not been delivered due to the challenges of the program. They recognize the need and have hired someone to provide an analysis of the program. They have also looked at the option of utilizing the program for modifications for Assisted Living Homes utilizing the last of their AARPA funding. They have been seeking approval to review the program through the Commissioner's Office which is pending currently. He notes that there are two distinctive problems with the program: the lack of contractors and the rates under the program. There is a hope to increase the e-modification rates from \$18,000 to \$40,000, based on successes seen in Minnesota.

- b. Heidi Young, Owner Island Care Services, Care Coordinator. She commented on the e-modification program that there are contractors with interest in the region however they turn away from the projects due to the paperwork. Heidi noted that Gainwell, the company that assigned Medicaid provider numbers has been very challenging to work with and has a back log of 2 months. This has been a barrier to services for elders and new providers. What can we do to get the Medicaid provider numbers?

Tony Newman commented that they have hired Jamie Walker to review the program and e-modification system. He notes that agencies can send

him the name of the provider in question, and he can assist to follow up with Gainwell for the approval.

- c. Tyler McNeil Program Director Community Connections. E-modification program would be wonderful if providers did not need to be involved with Medicaid.
  - a. He wanted to share an observation and concern regarding rate rebasing. The current rate for the Personal Care Services (PCA) are equal to that of Respite services, however the requirements for the program are significantly more. PCA services have a lot of demands such as the requirement of nursing, training, and PCA enrollment. Community Connections has found that they end up having to right off a great deal on funding due to the program and the rate deficits. It is hard to justify, and the agency has had to question if they will continue to program or not.

Tony Newman noted that the Medicaid Access Rule has recently passed which is the biggest package in years. CMS new rule is the 80-20 rule in which 80% of rate must be provided to Direct Support Professionals. There will not be any funding that comes with the rule change. Agencies are expected to follow the ruling. Tyler McNeil noted that Community Connections has an 18% administration and that will not cover the costs for all programming for the future.

- d. Carl Rayburn, Interim Executive Director Riverview Senior Living. He commented that there has been a 2-3-week delay with background checks for new hires.

Tony Newman commented that the background check unit is now through Healthcare Services under Director Renee Gayhart. DSDS is looking at digital finger printing.

- e. Nikki Bass, Co-Owner Tides Inc Commented that they had a loss of about dozen possible staff over the last year due to delays in the background check system. She commented that a digital Finger printing system could be helpful to speeding up the process for checks.

## 9. Event Reports

- **Recent Event Outcomes**
- **Upcoming Events**

Please send any current or upcoming events to Sioux Douglas, Erin Walker-Tolles or Tonya Muldoon for posting.

## 10. Other

- a. Thank you for all the new members who joined today from throughout the region. We welcome you to the SREC Coalition.

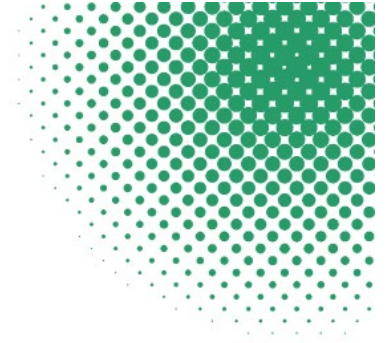
11. **Member Comments-** See above

12. **Date of Next Meeting** – July 12, 2024, at 8:30AM

13. **Adjournment** 9:37AM



## Save the Date: Southeast Regional Eldercare Summit 2024



### Connecting the Community

Join the Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition (SREC) in our first ever SREC Summit! This Summit is meant to bring together regional eldercare providers, resources, and personnel to explore this year's theme "Connecting the Community". Together we can be a collaborative force for change!

**Preconference:** September 30, 2024

**Summit:** October 1-2, 2024

**Location:** Centennial Hall - Juneau, AK



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# Photography Contest

[www.jedc.org/srec-summit](http://www.jedc.org/srec-summit)

We're seeking original and artistic photos of elders (60+) in Southeast Alaska. Judges will look for images featuring elders, elders with caregivers, and elders engaged in the community. All Southeast Alaska communities are encouraged to participate. Join the contest and showcase the beauty of our region's elders!

First Place: \$300  
Second Place: \$200  
Third Place: \$100

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