



Southeast Regional Eldercare Coalition

Quality Care • Care Coordination • Social Engagement

SOUTHEAST REGIONAL ELDERCARE COALITION

February 7, 2025, 8:30AM

MEETING MINUTES

Zoom Link:

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

Meeting ID: 899 6661 2080

Passcode: 471844

1. **Call to Order** 8:32am
2. **Agenda Approval** – Agenda was motioned for approval by Wayne Stevens and Seconded by Joan O’Keefe. Agenda was approved.
3. **Minutes Approval** – Minutes were motioned by Wayne Stevens and seconded by Roy DeAsis. Minutes were approved.
4. **SREC Project Update** – Tonya Muldoon
 - a. Sitka Tribe of Alaska and SREC Resource Fair
 - i. March 6, 2025, at Harrigan Centennial Hall Sika Alaska 11AM-4PM with partnership with Sitka Tribe of Alaska Elder Coffee Hour from 11:30AM-1:30PM.
 - ii. Tables are still available, contact Tess Rouse or Tonya Muldoon at JEDC for sign up. We would love to have additional regional vendors available.
 - iii. Free Admission for participants.
 - b. Navi Tool has AI Chat Bot



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- i. We have added an AI Chat Bot to the Navi Tool, navigational website. We ask SREC members to please review the website and provide us with survey responses. The AI Chat Bot learns with questions being asked and it will help us with making sure that information that may be needed by the community is added to the site.
- ii. www.jedc.org/SREC/

5. SREC Steering Committee Report –

- a. Length of Meeting Times, break-out rooms, and working groups

Discussion/Member Comments:

Roy DeAsis: The general meeting a bit longer may be helpful and ensure that co-chairs do not have other commitments backed up to the meeting end time to allow for some flexibility.

Wayne Stevens: Length is not so much an issue if the meeting is structured and disciplined. Ensuring that all agenda items are to Tonya Muldoon by Tuesday or Wednesday prior to the meeting date would be helpful.

John Smith III: Agree in having other meetings that are focused on something like 30-45 minutes focused on a topic. I would like to see us focused on the agenda and if needed have break-out meetings.

Erin Walker-Tollis: The members have utilized announcement times, and this has become an important part of our monthly meetings. Time needs to be allowed for those. She noted that on the agenda for this month there was an extensive list of activities occurring. Having items sent to Tonya Muldoon in advance would be extremely helpful. We are trying not to overpack the agenda to respect time and length of time for the meetings.

- i. Short-Term Emergent Needs Work Group



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- a. Short-Term Emergent Need - As possible sub-committees/working groups on an immediate topic of concern. Such as concerns for the immediate workforce challenges and development needs or the current issues regarding background checks in which we were able to obtain direction from the State of Alaska that helped to address the overarching concerns that employees could engage in training while awaiting their background check clearance.
 - i. Agreed that members could request a working group as needed.

6. **Advocacy Sub-committee** Wayne Stevens

- a. Letters for members to draft their own stories.
 - i. Wayne encourages SREC members to draft letters to be sent throughout the year to local representatives that express the background of their organization, and /or story highlighting their concerns for workforce development and improvements to the social service system.
 - ii. SREC does not have priorities as a coalition for this year, however, it is supporting AgeNET priorities which are:
 - 1. Fifteen percent increase in senior grants as the funding was approved by legislation but the Governor vetoed the funding.
 - 2. Support for Human Services Matching funding for Senior Services van transportation. (Funding needed to pay for replacement of the regional Senior Center Vans).

Comments:

Joan O'Keefe: Spoke on joining the efforts for AgeNet fly-in and having SREC members help to provide education about the coalition to Governor and Legislators while advocating for additional funding and support.



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7. **Best Practice:** John Smith III and Tommie Jimmie: Adventure into Eldercare

Tommie Jimmie, elder community member and retired Substance Abuse Counselor shared his experience as an elder attempting to maneuver through the service system. John Smith III, Clan Brother, assisted as an advocate in the journey.

Tommie described himself as being physically able to do most of anything, but he is starting to lose his hearing and eyesight. He is finding that it is hard to recognize people. On this day, he was seeking information about dentures. He has been seen at SEARHC and told that he needed to have \$2600 paid to get his dentures on the same day that his teeth would be pulled. He has spoken with others who have had to wait for over 8 months before they received their dentures (regarding the elders to figure out a new diet of foods, cope with the immediate loss of self-image, and be a risk for other health risks due to the lack of teeth for 8 months+). He explained that he has Medicaid, Medicare, and Indian Health medical coverage.

He spoke with various navigators and was given 6 phone numbers to call for assistance, when he called, he was given more phone numbers to call, leaving messages and had to wait for calls back. He found this to be very frustrating, especially as he is struggling with vision in writing down information or reading. He carries with him a large magnifying glass but that is only a small part of the adjustments he has had to make. He said most elders by this point would have given up.

John had been present with Tommie in a doctor's appointment and they found that the desk staff were willing to provide forms and information, but that it took John to speak up and ask more questions to get assistance. John said that even at SEARHC who is conducting regular medical services is not always providing pre-screening without advocating for yourself or by others, such as having to ask for such testing for prostate cancer annually. John and Tommie both noted that



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many people are seeking medical services in the continental US or Anchorage instead of locally because of these struggles.

Their journey continued as they spoke with the people at Sitka SEARHC for Healing Hands for a grant, and then on to T&H Regional Council for an Elder's grant, they were told that they would need a letter that said then one funding source would not support them so that they could get the other funding they were applying for. It was jumping through multiple hoops as they went. They got frustrated and determined, so they found Ann Steppington at the T&H Central Council Elder Services who was kind to help sit with them, fill out the application and send it off.

Tommie was about to obtain the funding for the dentures and now has a 4-6 week wait until he can be seen by the dentist for surgery. They both wanted to express the real need for navigation all along the way and the need for advocates helping one another.

Comments:

Royal DeAsis: This story is not alone with the SEARHC beneficiaries but that all communities of elders are being faced with the struggles for advocating for themselves to move through the complexity of the social services systems.

David Ringle: St. Vincent De Paul has housing advocates, and they find that for the twenty-four residents they service that they are offering a min of 8 hours per week to support theses elders with just filling out paperwork and applications. They are finding that it is not just elders who are cognitively compromised but all elders in the community are coming for some level of assistance. Their Housing Team has also been assisting with the basics of independent living as the services are so limited. There are elders who would likely lose their housing if it wasn't for the Housing Team providing some cleaning of units prior to inspections. This is becoming even more common situation.



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He notes that there is the Rural Cap Senior Volunteer Program that helps place seniors with seniors and encourages those who want to help to connect with the mentor's program.

Sioux Douglas: Added that she agreed that there are not enough advocates due to the lack of staffing, especially with specialized medical needs. She encourages others to take the concerns to the leadership of the agencies so that they understand the concerns of the elderly.

Royal DeAsis: Noted that he has found some navigators are better than others and was blessed with one helping him in recent years. He said that there is shortage of medical specialists and again the need to speak with agency leadership to continue to encourage development and growth in the medical services.

John Smith III: Expressed that education behind the front desks is critical even just a reference card of resources for the simple things like transportation would be a start.

Ann Steppington: Offered some solutions, The T&H Elder's Council luncheon is partnering with SEARHC and will have a staff member available to talk with about the challenges. Sherry Patterson will be coming for training, and John Brett will be conducting Bingoize. The hope is that the luncheon will provide a safe place to come to talk openly about their concerns and experiences with the SEARHC staff.

8. **Comments from members:**

- a. Cameron Young PATH Academy will be offered next week in Juneau for free for each session. Folks are welcome to come for one day or to come all week. Classes will be offered daily at SERRC.



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- b. MESSAGE from SREC member Diane Kyser: She was not available to join us today but wanted to make sure that the coalition was aware she will be having the Widow's and Widower's Garden Group at Riverview Senior Living March 3, 2025. They will be planning activities including gardening at the Southeast Foodbank, attending bowling events, hiking events, and other activities as members suggest. Last month's meeting went very well. They watched a video, "Men and Their Greif" which generated insightful conversations, and she wanted to express a heartfelt thank you for all who were willing to share.

9. Adjournment 9:33AM

10. Next Meeting

Scheduled March 7, 2025, at 8:30AM

11. Upcoming events

- Sitka Tribe of Alaska Elder Coffee Time and SREC Resource Fair
March 6, 2025
Harrigan Centennial Hall Sitka, Alaska
Resource Fair: 11AM-4PM
Elder Coffee Time: 11:30AM-1:30PM

WE ARE LOOKING FOR REGIONAL VENDERS. TABLES ARE FREE FOR THE EVENT. CONTACT TONYA MULDOON OR TESS ROUSE. SREC@JEDC.ORG

- **Riverview Senior Living** is offering free Support for Memory Care, RSVP Zoom meeting, See flyer for more details: [Riverview Memory Matter Support Group flyer](#)



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- **Widow's and Widower's Garden Support Group (WE ARE ALL LIVING IN THE GARDEN OF LIFE)**

Riverview Senior Living

3041 Clinton Dr

Juneau Alaska 99801

First Monday each month 2-4PM

More information contact Diane Kyser at (907) 723-1917

Next Meeting March 3, 2025, 2PM-4PM

- **Alzheimer's Association Legislative Advocacy Feb 3-7, 2025 & Policy Priorities**

- Alzheimer's Association state advocacy week will have in person and remote meeting options, registration is here: <https://alz-ak.quorum.us/event/20329/>
- Share your dementia/caregiver story with your state Representative and Senator in a 15-minute meeting, either remote via Zoom or in person in Juneau, whichever works for you, the week of February 3-7. Alzheimer's Association will organize the meeting, provide you with 1 on 1 preparation, support you in the meeting, and handle the policy discussion.
- Alzheimer's Association State of Alaska Policy Priorities:
 - 100,000 in funding for the Dementia Education and Prevention Program (DEPP)
 - The State of Alaska's DEPP has identified a 2025 goal to expand education and risk reduction efforts in rural and underserved communities, and to include the



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Alaska Native / American Indian Healthy Brain Initiative.

- 1,500,000 in funding for Adult Day Service Grants
- For development and expansion of respite services in underserved communities and dementia education for staff. This funding was vetoed last year by Governor Dunleavy, and we seek its inclusion this year.
- Medicaid Coverage for Cognitive Assessments and Caregiver Consultations
- Medicaid Code 99483 covers the cost of cognitive assessments and conversations between caregivers and providers. The Medicaid code is already covered by Medicare in Alaska and is covered by Medicaid in other states - but not in Alaska. Governor Dunleavy could address this gap today by adding 99483 to the list of approved Medicaid billing codes.
- *Alzheimer's Association has several other state priorities that address expanding the health care workforce, improving care provider dementia education, and improving dementia data collection.*

- **Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education:**

- Juneau Community Forum**

- Monday, February 10, 2025 4PM-5PM

- Alaska Office Building Room #115

- 350 Main St. Juneau, Alaska 99801

- Flyer: [Juneau Community Forum Flyer](#)



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- **Consumer Financial Protection Bureau Webinar**

Series: Cognitive Decline and Financial Exploitation in Older Age

Wednesday, February 12, 2025 | 2:00 - 3:30 PM ET

Webinar Description:

This webinar, hosted by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, will explore how mild cognitive impairment, often undiagnosed in older adults, can affect financial decision-making and increase the risk of financial exploitation - the most common form of elder abuse. Experts will share insights to inform the work of professionals such as law enforcement, adult protective services, financial institutions, and other service providers.

[Registration Link](#) (Google form)

- **Department of Labor Job Fair Sitka**

Wednesday February 12, 2025

10AM-2PM

Harrigan Centennial Hall

330 Harbor Drive Sitka, AK 99835

[2025-02-12_SitkaJobFair](#)

- **NCUIH Culturally Sensitive Safety Screening Techniques for Relationship Violence - Webinar Feb 13, 2025**

Join [National Council of Urban Indian Health Organizations](#)

(NCUIH) for a free webinar to address the unique challenges of relationship violence within American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) communities. This training provides health care professionals with trauma-informed, culturally responsive skills to conduct safety screenings effectively. Through presentation, peer



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discussions, and Q&A, participants will learn best practices for identifying and supporting survivors with compassion and cultural awareness. They will gain insights and tools to enhance patient trust and connect those affected by violence to essential resources within their community. One continuing nursing education (CNE) credit or social work education credit (NASW) is available.

Register [here](#).

To view NCUIH newsletters and sign up for alerts, visit <https://ncuih.org/newsletter-archive/>.

- **Senior and Disabilities Services Reminder: American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Home Modifications and Enhancements Application due February 15, 2025**



ARPA EMOD Fund
Overview.pdf



ARPA EMOD
Application.pdf

The Division of Senior and Disabilities Services is offering **one-time funding to enable home modifications and enhancements that will encourage providers to serve individuals with complex behavioral and/or medical needs**. This one-time funding opportunity is being offered through support provided under the American Rescue Plan Act (APRA) of 2021 under Section 9817 and State Medicaid Director's Letter #21-003 dated May 13, 2021. Eligible providers must be actively certified and enrolled to provide group home habilitation, child and/or adult family home habilitation, or residential supported living services since July 1, 2021.



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**The application submission period for this program is open.
Applications must be submitted
to hss.dsds.arpa@alaska.gov no later than February 15, 2025.**

Please see the attached funding overview and application.

Questions? Email hss.dsds.arpa@alaska.gov

- **UAS Spring Career Fair**

February 25 11AM-2PM

Employer Registration: (on Handshake)

alaska.joinhandshake.com or contact uas.career@alaska.edu to
set up an account.

More information can be found

at <https://career.uas.alaska.edu/career-fair/>

- **Focus and Flourish Brain Health Series: 6-Week Brain Health
Fitness program**

[Focus Flourish Series Flyer](#)

- **Dept of Labor Juneau Job Center Spring Job Fair**

Friday February 28, 2025

12:00PM-6:30PM

Mendenhall Mall Juneau, Alaska

- **Community Resources Connect**

March, 2025

11:30-1:00pm

TBA

RSVP Community_Advocacy@tlingitandhaida.gov