



## Summary Report of Fall Board Meeting October 11-13, 2022

### Executive Summary

The Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) hold joint board meetings for the purpose of promoting the effective coordination of Alaska's behavioral health services and programs. The fall meeting was held in Fairbanks, AK at the Westmark Hotel and headquarters of the Alaska Careline. The boards also hosted a public comment hearing to gather personal testimony from providers, administrators, and behavioral health consumers.

### Planning and Announcement of the Meeting

During the spring board meeting in Sitka in May 2022, board members elected to convene in Fairbanks in the fall. Fairbanks is the second largest metropolitan area in the state, with 96,655 people residing within the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Fairbanks is served by an array of social services. The following entities and providers participated in the board meeting either through a panel, presentations, or by hosting a site visit:

- Fairbanks Native Association
- Alaska Native Women's Resource Center
- Alaska State Troopers
- Alaska Careline
- Family Service Center at the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District
- Fairbanks Youth Facility (Division of Juvenile Justice)
- Stone Soup Café-Bread Line Inc.
- Fairbanks Rescue Mission
- Tamarack Living Center
- Graf Rheenerhanjii (Tanana Chiefs Conference)
- City of Fairbanks
- Alaska Behavioral Health
- Restore Incorporated
- True North Recovery
- Fairbanks Police Department

### Schedule of Events

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| October 10 | Board members and staff arrive in Fairbanks and site visit to True North Recovery facility.  |
| October 11 | Community welcome, board business, Statewide Suicide Prevention Council update, panel on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons, and site visits. |
| October 12 | Trust update, update on 988, board business, public comment.   |
| October 13 | Site visits, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons Rally, panel on Crisis Services, board business.  |



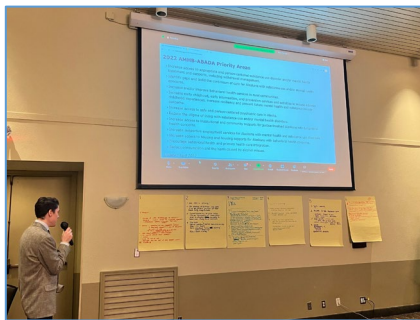
## Highlights from Board Business

### *Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) Governing Board*

The Governing Board meets during the third Thursday of every month and is currently working on a review of API bylaws as a result of the Department of Health and Social Services split. The board is very pleased with the current CEO and staff, though they reported API is still struggling with workforce issues. The governing board is not currently in statute, something the Boards may want to review in the future.

### *FY 23 Priorities*

Facilitators from Denali Daniels + Associates reviewed priority focus areas set in 2022 with the board. Board members were asked if each area remained a priority for FY23, what the priority meant to them, what the current environmental and political landscape is, and to make a list of partnerships and organizations already working in those areas. The newly appointed Legislative Advocacy committee will work with the facilitators to finalize a report on the final priorities for 2023.



Lee Breinig, ABADA Board member, speaking on FY22 AMHB/ABADA Priority Areas. (10/11/22)

### *AMHB/ABADA Psychiatric Care Subcommittee*

This subcommittee, formed in 2018, has recently begun meeting again to work on patient rights at API. HB 172 passed earlier this year and requires the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS), and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) to engage in a stakeholder process to develop recommendations on patients’ rights along with participation from AMHB. DOH and the Trust are currently soliciting contractors to facilitate this process.

### *AMHB/ABADA Committee Assignments*

The following slates for the Executive Committee were determined by the Nominations Committee for consideration:

#### **AMHB**

Chair – Charlene Tautfest  
Chair Elect – Brenda Moore  
Secretary – Bobby Dorton  
At-Large – Sharon Clark

#### **ABADA**

Chair – Lee Breinig  
Chair Elect – Diane Fielden  
Secretary – Anthony Cravalho  
At-Large – Kara Nelson

Board members voted to accept these slates, which will be seated in December 2022.

The following subcommittee appointments were made:

**Legislative Advocacy**

- Lee Breinig (ABADA)
- Anthony Cravalho (ABADA)
- Bobby Dorton (AMHB/ABADA)
- Diane Fielden (AMHB/ABADA)
- Brenda Moore (AMHB)
- Kara Nelson (ABADA)
- Tonie Protzman (AMHB)
- Christine Robbins (ABADA)
- Charlene Tautfest (AMHB)
- Kathleen Totemoff (ABADA)

**Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC)**

- Brenda Moore (AMHB)
- Diane Fielden (AMHB/ABADA)

**API Governing Board**

- Charlene Tautfest (AMHB)



AMHB/ABADA board and guests tour True North Recovery's new substance use disorder residential facility. 10/10/22

Partner and Ex-Officio Updates

*Ex-Officio Update: Department of Corrections (DOC)*

Deputy Director of Health and Rehabilitation Services Adam Rutherford, AMHB ex-officio member, presented an update on DOC operations in the past year and statistics on the individuals that move through his department. DOC is working with a population that largely has not had any medical care within the prior year, with 40% of the population having at least one chronic medical condition. Over the past five years, DOC has seen a 60% increase in the number of people diagnosed with psychotic



disorders, and DOC remains one of the largest providers of medical, mental health, substance misuse and detox care in Alaska. DOC recently integrated substance misuse screening into the electronic health record and found that alcohol remains the primary drug of choice, followed by opiates, stimulants and THC. DOC is working on becoming a full medication-assisted treatment (MAT) provider in addition to the current service array that includes psychiatric care, intensive outpatient, residential and co-occurring treatment.

*Ex-Officio Update: Division of Behavioral Health (DBH)*

Director Gennifer Moreau-Johnson, AMHB & ABADA ex-officio member, presented an update on the Medicaid Section 1115 waiver renewal application, tentatively scheduled for December 2022. The division is planning to renew the waiver with no substantial changes, as there is an opportunity for regulatory revisions to be made for items that don't require federal approval.

Program Coordinator II Leah Van Kirk presented on a variety of projects DBH has in the works, including the Alaska Careline <sup>1</sup>crisis call center and the rollout of 988, the national suicide prevention hotline, which went live on July 16, 2022. The Careline serves individuals that need to speak to someone to prevent a crisis and help accessing resources. 988 callers are assessed for suicide risk and works with a volunteer/staff to develop a safety plan and identify resources and natural supports. Careline supports are available by call, text or chat (in app). 988 is for individuals experiencing emotional distress, a mental health crisis or suicidal ideations. The rollout for 988 has been a deeply collaborative process, and future work will assess how it can be integrated into crisis call center technology with a focus on warm transfers from 911 to 988.

*Ex-Officio Update: Department of Education and Early Development*

Education Specialist II Sharon Fishel, AMHB ex-officio member, shared an update on her teams staffing and announced the upcoming Alaska School Counselors Association annual conference taking place in November 2022. DEED is working with Regional Educational Lab Northwest to launch an implementation survey of the trauma work the department and the Association of Alaska School Boards has put together, which will tentatively be ready to present to AMHB/ABADA and the Statewide Suicide Prevention Council before their next meetings.

*Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC) Update*

SSPC Chair Barbara Franks, SSPC Project Assistant Eric Morrison and Executive Director Bev Schoonover presented an update on the draft 5-year state plan for SSPC, named *Messages of Hope-Alaska's Statewide Suicide Prevention Plan 2023-2028*. SSPC has a subcommittee meeting monthly to write this plan, which is due to be completed before March 1, 2023. The subcommittee has developed goals, strategies and action items for the plan, and will soon start developing performance indicators and how they will measure success. The plan will then be presented for public comment, and once feedback is incorporated it will be finalized and sent to the legislature and Governor. Board members heard the goals and strategies and provided feedback on how they can be expanded upon.

*Partner Update: Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust)*

Chief Operating Officer Katie Baldwin-Johnson, Senior Program Officer Eric Boyer and Program Officer Travis Welch presented an update on the Trust's FY24-25 budget, which was just approved, as well as

---

<sup>1</sup> <https://carelinealaska.com/>



the open positions for Trustee and Program Officer. The Trust shared updates on Crisis Now programming and investments across the state, including work in Fairbanks, Anchorage, Mat-Su, Copper Center and Ketchikan. The upcoming year will include work implementing HB 172, Mental Health Facilities and Meds, which was signed into law earlier this year and continues the Crisis Now model by allowing for short-term stabilization. The Boards were asked for assistance in educating the new legislature on the importance of continuing the braided funding structure to support all of the components of the system of care.

## Highlights from Community Panels

### *Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP)*

Panelists from the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, Fairbanks Native Association and the Alaska State Troopers educated board members on the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples (MMIP) in Fairbanks and statewide, and shared areas where the Boards can help support in advocacy. The Boards heard the need for a toolkit of resources for family members, including grief support, and an advocate to act as an intermediary with law enforcement. More work needs to be done on accurate data collection to ensure that resources are expended to find everyone who is missing and to show the magnitude of the issue.

More awareness, both of the individuals that go missing and for the factors that lead to someone going missing, is critical. Individuals without stable housing and mental health supports are more at risk of going missing or being murdered and are key areas of prevention. Once someone has gone missing, public awareness needs to increase, as constant attention to the case can motivate people to action. One of the ways this takes place is through rallies and vigils like the one board members attended during their time in Fairbanks.

### *Crisis Services in Fairbanks*

Panelists from the City of Fairbanks, Alaska Careline, Alaska Behavioral Health, Restore, Incorporated, True North Recovery and the Fairbanks Police Department discussed the status of crisis services in Fairbanks. Panelists shared the factors that led to Fairbanks having the most developed crisis continuum of care system for adults in Alaska, including key partnerships with the Trust and law enforcement, an emphasis on peer support, and the creation of the Fairbanks Emergency Communication Center. The Boards heard that that additional training relating to the identification of someone in crisis would be beneficial to law enforcement, particularly if that training was provided locally and on demand, and be shorter than the current 40-hour crisis intervention team (CIT) training. Panelists also spoke to the need for a faster process to get individuals signed up for Medicaid as well as the ability to provide presumptive care for individuals in crisis.

The panel discussed the ideal crisis continuum of care for youth services, including the already provided services at the crisis stabilization center and expanded efforts to engage with youth via the Careline. Restore, Inc has recently partnered with the clinic at Eielson Air Force Base to provide services after hours and can now receive TRICARE to serve military dependents. There is still a need for more facilities that will take youth with a very high acute level of care, both in new facilities and additional support for existing facilities.



## Public Comment

The boards heard live comments from seven members of the public. Comments from attendees included:

- Lack of Crisis Now programming in rural communities
- Importance of the “no wrong door” approach
- Information on local resources and support groups
- The issue with prescribing providers has been resolved thanks to Alaska Behavioral Health
- Lack of housing, assisted living and supportive housing for individuals with mental health issues is now the biggest concern
- Peer support is critical, as is the need to incorporate lived experience at every level
- Importance of positive influences like mentors and vocational schools
- Restrictions on federal funding make it difficult for villages to receive assistance
- “Crisis Now is absolutely the best thing we’ve done”



AMHB/ABADA Board members hear public testimony in Fairbanks. 10.11.22

## Follow Up Discussion Items

- The Psychiatric Care subcommittee will be exploring the possibility of placing the API Governing Board in statute.
- Staff will determine if the patient advocate housed at API is still a funded position, and if not, will work on an advocacy strategy to restore the position.
- The Trust, DOH and Department of Family and Community Services(D) are working on recommendations on patients’ rights and need a board member to participate in that stakeholder process.
- Staff will work with DOC to identify what portion of DOC’s population is homeless and report back to board members.
- Staff will work with DEED to disseminate the second phase of the school mental health scan to board members.
- Staff will disseminate reports from the Governor’s Councils on Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and Human and Sex Trafficking to board members, and convene a working group to determine how AMHB/ABADA and their partners can get involved.

## Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Boards will take place via Zoom on January 11, 2023. The boards have selected Prince of Wales Island as the location for the next rural board meeting, which will take place in spring 2023.