

# A History of the Council's Major Accomplishments

## 1975

Produced its first public policy document entitled De-Institutionalization Action Plan. The Department of Health and Social Services adopted the recommendations in the report, which became the basis for the creation of community-based services.

## 1981

Drafted a nation leading law to reform **guardianship** procedures. The Alaska legislature passed the Council's model statute.

## 1984

Adopted and promoted **service principles**. The principles are used today to guide the delivery of services and supports to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.

## 1986

- To meet the needs of students with significant developmental disabilities and intensive needs living in rural areas, the Council created the Special Education Service Agency (SESA). Serving as SESA's Board of Directors, the Council assures that the organization continues to serve rural districts.
- Led the effort that involved over 200 people to plan a comprehensive, coordinated statewide service system of early intervention for infants and toddlers with developmental disabilities. In 1991, the Alaska legislature agreed to adopt this new services and have the Council serve as the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC).
- Successfully advocated for Personal Care Assistance Services for people with severe or multiple disabilities to be added to the Medicaid Options list.

## 1987

Initiated the collaboration of beneficiary groups by forming the Alaska Mental Health Lands Trust Coalition, which assisted in securing a settlement to the decade-long legal debate.

## 1988

The Council's Residential Services Task Force studied individual needs and costs to serve the residents at Harborview Developmental Center in their home communities. The Council's findings resulted in a policy of no new admissions into Harborview and the report

was the basis for the Department of Health & Social Services to aggressively de-populate the center.

## 1989

Parents and Professionals Coming Together was the theme for the first Pathways Conference. The Conference, which was planned and supported by the Council, was a dream of Dot Truan, the Council's Executive Director for 15 years.

## 1991

Working with the Older Alaskans Commission (now the Alaska Commission on Aging), the Council made recommendations on how the state could use Medicaid to the benefit of people with disabilities. The result was the creation of Medicaid Waivers to serve people with home and community-based supports and the TEFRA Option, which provided families with Medicaid-funded medical services for their children.

## 1994

To promote inclusion in public schools, the Council drafted changes in regulations. Once passed, the changes allowed school districts to receive funds for special education students based on the intensity of the student's needs rather than the place where they received their education.

## 1996

In order to establish a balance in the development of long-term care, the Council and the State Council on Independent Living succeeded in securing a moratorium on the licensing of new nursing home beds and a working group produced a report with recommendations impacting future development of long-term care.

## 1997

- Worked with the State Independent Living Council and Governor's Committee on the Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities to plan the first-ever Disability Summit.
- Closure of Harborview Developmental Center and voluntary de-certification of Hope Cottages' ICF/MR facilities (now Hope Community Resources), which made Alaska the first state in the country with no public or private institutions for people with disabilities.
- Secured funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Rehabilitation Services Administration (in 1998) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid

Services (in 2000) to increase the employment rate of Alaskans with severe disabilities. With award of Department of Labor funds to the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and Social Security Administration funds to the Center for Human Development in 2000, became part of the broader Alaska Works Initiative.

## 1998

- Worked with People First of Anchorage, the Center for Human Development and the Disability Law Center to plan and coordinate the International People First Self-Advocacy Conference in Anchorage for over 1,000 people from 18 countries.
- With the State Independent Living Council, successfully advocated for passage of the assistive technology lemon law and the puppy guide dog bill.
- As a result of the advocacy of the Council, the State Independent Living Council, the Governor's Committee on the Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities and the Disability Law Center, the State legislature passed a Medicaid buy-in for working people with disabilities. Alaska was the first state in the country to pass legislation and the second state to implement a buy-in program.
- Secured funding from the reallocation of savings from the closure of Harborview Developmental Services and from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to implement core services for people waiting for services.
- Conducted an examination of the two DD Waiver programs, which resulted in several recommendations for improvement.

## 1999

- Secured funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust for the Center for Human Development's Learn as You Earn program, which provides distance education for direct service workers who provide services to individuals with developmental disabilities and their families.
- Successfully advocated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the legislature for funding to improve the quality and safety of the services DD service providers deliver.

## 2000

- Successfully advocated for passage of a bill requiring the Department of Health and Social Services to establish a waiting list for state-funded services for persons with developmental disabilities and requiring the department to submit an annual report concerning the waiting list and persons with developmental disabilities.

- Secured funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for the Division of Public Health, Section on Maternal, Child and Family Health to develop a behavioral health initiative for young children under the age of eight.
- Secured funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to develop strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of direct service workers who provide services to Trust beneficiaries with developmental disabilities.

## 2001

- Worked with the Department of Education and Early Development, Disability Law Center, PARENTS, inc and other advocacy organizations and stakeholders to make changes to the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam legislation. As a result, students with disabilities may be able to earn a diploma if they successfully complete an alternative assessment program.
- Successfully advocated with the legislature for a \$700,000 increment to help reduce the Early Intervention/Infant Learning Program wait list.
- Designated by the Governor to receive a starter grant for implementing systemic reform of Alaska's long-term care systems. As a result, the Division of Senior Services received two federal grants in October 2001 to 1) transition people from nursing homes to the community and 2) increase consumer control of personal assistance services and supports. In addition, the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities received a federal grant in October 2002 to integrate self-determined service delivery into current service delivery systems and develop, implement and evaluate consumer-driven care coordination/case management systems.
- Co-sponsored and helped plan a one-day workshop on Transportation Funding during the annual Transit Conference, which resulted in the formation of the Alaska Mobility Coalition.

## 2002

- Co-sponsored and helped plan the Autism Summit; as a result, a commitment to funds an in-state Autism Resource Center was secured from the Commissioner of the Department of Education & Early Development.

- Co-sponsored and helped plan the first annual Full Lives Conference for direct service staff, which was a smashing success; with 250 people were expected to attend the conference, the actual attendance was over 350.
- Supported passage of SB345 relating to school districts' eligibility to seek payment from Medicaid for covered services paid for or furnished to eligible children with disabilities.

## 2003

- Worked with the State Independent Living Council, the Alaska Mental Health Board, the Alaska Commission on Aging and the Governor's Committee on Employment & Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities to plan the second Disability Policy Summit. As a result, secured commitment from the new administration to work together with the disability community to implement a number of specific recommendations.
- The Council served as the steering committee for the Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process for early intervention and special education. State staff began implementing the improvement plan in July.
- The early intervention and education committees jointly spearheaded a parent training collaborative to empower parents through training and information. As a result, parents now have access to a monthly e-mail list of learning opportunities and an electronic discussion group focused on early intervention and special education practices.
- As a result of the Council's advocacy, Alaska ranks first in the country in terms of the percent of people with developmental disabilities (99 percent) residing in publicly funded out-of-home settings for six or fewer persons.
- The Alaska Mobility Coalition secured a variety of state and federal funds for coordinated community transportation; six communities received funding to plan coordinated transportation systems, prepare for or start up operation, purchase vehicles for coordinated use or initiate a shuttle or taxi voucher service.

## 2004

- As a result of the Council's leadership of the Alaska Works Initiative, a number of new or improved programs or policies were implemented, including 1) the establishment of a statewide benefits counseling program; 2) changes in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation's self-employment policies; 3) identification of local contacts by the Social Security Administration; 4) increased access to one-stop job centers; 5) the piloting of Alaska's first Individual Development Account

program; and 6) inclusion of disability in diversity training offered by the Division of Personnel.

- A comprehensive, multi-media training package on parent-professional collaboration and family support resources was developed through the Council's Far North Family Support project.
- Successfully advocated for the re-authorization of SESA through June 30, 2013.
- Together with a number of partners, the Council sponsored Wrights Law "Boot Camp" on Special Education Law Advocacy. The training provided parents and professionals with good, authoritative information about their rights and responsibilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and how it fits with the No Child Left Behind legislation. A total of 339 people attended the training (100 in Juneau and 239 people in Anchorage).
- The Council received a two-year Department of Justice grant to train disability service providers, victim services providers, women with disabilities and family members to increase awareness and appropriate responses for women with disabilities who have been victims of sexual or physical assault or stalking.
- The Council co-sponsored the October 21-22, 2004 Transition Policy Summit. Over 50 people helped develop strategies and performance measures to achieve the following vision: All youth with disabilities are given the means and support to obtain the American dream.
- As a result of the Council's co-sponsorship of the November 19, 2004 Disability Policy Summit, 140 participants reviewed the results of the 2003 summit and developed new recommendations in each of the six life domains: community participation, education, employment, health care, housing and transportation.

## 2005

- The Council worked with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Alaska Mental Health Board Alaska Commission on Aging and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse to develop a strategic communications plan. The goal of the campaign is to promote broad-based support for services and reduce stigma and discrimination; a variety of media outlets are being used, including print, radio and television.
- Over 70 people helped develop a new five-year strategic plan for the Alaska Works Initiative, which focused on achieving the following vision: Alaskans who experience disabilities are employed at a rate as close as possible to that of the general population.

- Co-sponsored the in-state Alliance for Full Participation and facilitated the participation of Alaska delegation of 32 individuals in the national summit held in Washington, D.C. Participants developed a state plan to 1) grow the next generation of leaders; 2) increase the community participation and self-determination of Alaskans with developmental disabilities; and 3) ensure a quality workforce.

## 2006

- The Council took an active leader and coordination in helping over 60 people helped develop the Early Learning Guidelines, which encompass outcomes for infants and toddlers; preschool guidelines that focus on 5 domain areas and guidelines for K-2 children should know and be able to do.
- The Ad Hoc Committee on the DD Waitlist prepared a set of 17 recommendations to better manage the waitlist for developmental disabilities services; as a result, an increment of \$3 million in state funds and \$4.1 million in federal funds was secured from the legislature.
- After several long years of advocacy, the Newborn Hearing Screening Bill was passed by the legislature.
- As a result of leadership from the Trust and advocacy from the Council and other stakeholders, the legislature funded preventative and restorative dental care and dentures for adults on Medicaid.
- The Statutory Reference Disabilities bill (HB 357) was signed into law by the Governor.
- The Council contracted for a State of the State report, which described how Alaskans with developmental disabilities are living and how they viewed their lives and their place in the community.
- The Council was awarded a three-year research and demonstration grant from the Office of Disability Employment Policy to increase the number of Alaskans with disabilities who are self-employed.

## 2007

- Successfully advocated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust to fund Early Childhood Comprehensive System Grants (\$100,000) and Positive Supports Training for Young Children (\$80,000) in FY08 as part of the Bring/Keep the Kids Home Initiative.
- The Ad Hoc Committee on Autism developed of a set of recommendations for the Trust, the new administration and the legislature; as a result, the FY08 budget included a \$500,000 (\$250,000 Trust and \$250,000 in state funds) appropriation for expanded autism diagnostic clinics.

- A \$300,000 increment for early intervention/infant learning program services was approved by the legislature.
- The Medicaid buy-in program for working people with disabilities was changed to allow participants to save up to \$10,000 for an individual (formerly \$2,000) and \$15,000 for a couple (formerly \$3,000) without losing their ties to Medicaid.
- The Council was awarded a three-year grant from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence against Women to build collaborative networks between the disability community and the victim services community.
- Conducted a Provider Rate Freeze Survey to determine the impact of the Medicaid rate freeze on providers and a Family Survey to determine the impact of the rate freeze on service recipients and their families.

## 2008

- Co-sponsored the Disability Employment Policy Summit with the Governor's Office to secure commitments from state agencies to 1) make the state a model employer of people with disabilities; 2) help people with disabilities build assets; and 3) better integrate services and resources.
- Successfully advocated with the legislature for a \$250,000 increment (\$125,000 state funds and \$125,000 Trust) for autism workforce development capacity building.
- The legislature provided funding to increase Medicaid home and community-based waiver rates by 4%.
- The Governor signed HB 272, which phases in increases to the Base Student Allocation, makes adjustments to the district cost factors, recalibrates the amount of pupil transportation grants and phases in funding increases for students with intensive needs.
- The legislature allocated \$1,100,000 for coordinated transportation (\$800,000 general fund and \$300,000 Trust); this is the first time that any state general funds have been available for coordinated transportation.

## 2009

- The Council's five-part autism initiative continued to gain momentum. FY10 funding for expanded diagnostic capacity transitioned from a mix of state general fund dollars and Trust funding to 100% state general fund dollars (\$500,000 total). An additional \$125,000 in state general funds was secured for workforce development and for the first time, state general funds (\$150,000) were obtained for the Alaska Autism Resource Center.



- The Council organized and oversaw the development and implementation of the Alaska's Kids Can't Wait campaign. As a result, the legislature funded a \$1 million increment for early intervention/infant learning program (EI/ILP) services and \$300,000 for EI/ILP workforce development/highly qualified staff.
- The Council successfully advocated with the legislature for a \$150,000 increment for rural transition services.
- Together with many stakeholders, the Council successfully advocated for the passage of HB26, which permanently re-authorized the Medicaid preventative and restorative dental program for adults.
- The Council received funding from the Trust to hold a residential services summit May 28-29; approximately 125 participants learned about new technologies and approaches to providing residential services and identified implementation priorities.
- As a result of the Council's advocacy, the State Board of Education & Early Development added advanced nurse practitioners to the list of medical personnel that can make an autism diagnosis for special education purposes (adopted 6/12/09).
- The Council provided public comment and coordinated testimony by People First members to the State Board of Education & Early Development on proposed regulations to replace MR with "Cognitive Impairment." (adopted 9/9/09)

## 2010

- The legislature passed SB219, which established a traumatic brain injury program within the Department of Health & Social Services.
- A comparison of a 2002 and a 2010 survey commissioned by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority shows a fundamental shift in people's perception of Alaskans with developmental disabilities in terms of comfort level (79.4% to 82.1%); ability to hold down a job (31.8% to 53%) and whether services can improve their quality of life (58.9% to 73.4%).

## 2011

- The Council helped established three Project SEARCH sites to improve employment outcomes for youth with developmental disabilities (2011)
- \$1 million allocated for Public Transit Programs State Match, which was distributed to partially fund federal match requirements of senior and disability transportation providers

- Secured \$325.0 OTI increment (half-year funding) for the Complex Behaviors Hub (2011)

## 2012

- The Autism Insurance Reform Bill (SB 74) passed the last day of the session.
- Successfully advocated for a \$135,000 increment for services for the deaf
- Successfully advocated for a \$100,000 increment for Project SEARCH
- Job centers start accepting Tickets-to-Work from Social Security beneficiaries on SSI and/or SSDI, thereby increasing employment options for people with disabilities
- Worked with Division of Public Health, Section on Women, Children & Family Health to secure a health promotion grant from the Center for Disease Control
- Secured 5-year grant from the federal Administration on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities to increase the employment of youth and young adults with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities

## 2013

- The Respectful Language Bill (HB 88) was passed, eliminating the “R” word
- Worked with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to initiate the Trust Beneficiary Employment and Engagement Initiative focus area which secured a commitment to 5 years of funding over a million dollars a year to improve beneficiary employment outcomes
- Successfully advocated for a \$25,000 increment for the Trust Microenterprise grant

## 2014

- The Employment First Bill (HB 211) was passed unanimously in both houses
- The Safe Student Act (HB 210) was passed
- The High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE) was repealed by passage of HB 278 which included a retroactive provision
- Successfully advocated for the inclusion of \$450.0 GF/MH base funding for the Complex Behavior Collaborative in the SFY15 budget
- Alaska Association for People Supporting EmploymentFirst (APSE) Chapter was created

## 2015

The Medicaid: Used Durable Medical Equipment Bill (HB 161) passed

## 2016

The Alaska ABLE Act (HB 188) was passed and signed into law establishing financial accounts for individuals with disabilities providing opportunities for increased independence and employment.

## 2017

The Disability Training and ID Bill (HB 16) was passed and signed into law, promoting positive interactions between individuals with disabilities and law enforcement officials through a law enforcement officials training program at the Academy level and a voluntary option to place a discreet mark on a driver's license or ID card regarding one's disability.

## 2018

- The Developmental Disability (DD) Shared Vision Bill (SB 174) was passed and signed into law, placing aspirational language into state statute to give a solid platform for how services are provided throughout the state to ensure that they lead to meaningful lives for individuals with DD.
- The Supported Decision-Making Agreements Bill (HB336) was passed and signed into law, proving an alternative to full or partial guardianship by allowing written agreements between an adult and supporters which describe a process for making life decisions.
- The Council was awarded a Living Well \$1.96 million federal Administration on Community Living grant to implement the Alaska Shared DD Vision over 5 years.

## 2019

GCDSE co-leads the new Alaska Work Matters work group with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

## 2021

- Successfully advocated for the re-authorization of SESA through June 30, 2029.
- An Act relating to house rules for assisted living homes (SB 89) was passed and signed into law. This addressed rights for individuals in assisted living homes — including visitation and brings it into compliance with federal law.

## 2022

- Regarding the elimination of minimum wage exemption (SB185) passed.
- ABLE Act (HB 133) was passed. This bill brings Alaska into alignment with federal updates and keeps ABLE with the Dept. of Revenue instead of GCDSE