

## Southwest Region Event: Summary Notes of Priorities and Plans

### General Takeaways and Considerations

- **Aging Out:**
  - Addressing the critical challenges faced by young individuals, particularly those aging out of foster care, who often lack support and guidance in navigating the complexities of adulthood and mental health.
- **Culturally Appropriate:**
  - Focusing on the need for mental health services that are deeply rooted in cultural understanding and sensitivity, recognizing the importance of preserving and respecting diverse cultural values.
- **Complications with Juvenile Justice System:**
  - Highlighting the importance of existing residential programming, recognizing the potential complications arising from the intersection of mental health issues with the juvenile justice system, emphasizing the restorative approach.
- **Challenges Navigating the System:**
  - Recognizing the difficulties individuals face in accessing mental health services, including issues of communication, understanding the system, and coordinating services, necessitating improvements in accessibility and clarity.
- **Step Down, Lack of Services / Facilities for Reintegration into the Community:**
  - Addressing the absence of facilities and services for individuals transitioning from intensive care to community living, emphasizing the need for step-down programs and supportive environments for successful reintegration.
- **Access to Telehealth:**
  - Advocating for the enhancement of telehealth services to improve accessibility to mental health care, particularly in remote areas, ensuring individuals have the means to connect with services regardless of geographical location.

**Event note:** Due to a storm and airlines being unable to land in Bethel, many participants were unable to attend in-person. On Day One, the opening remarks were accompanied by a slideshow presentation, which are posted on the [State of Alaska Behavioral Health Roadmap for Youth Project Website](#).

<b>Six Service Categories:</b>
<b>Prevention / Early Intervention, Social Supports, Health Related Social Needs</b>
<b>Community Level Supports / Home and Community Based Services / Outpatient</b>
<b>Mental Health in Schools</b>
<b>Residential Services</b>
<b>Crisis Services</b>
<b>Acute Care</b>
<b>Current Resource Inventory</b>

**A note on how this document is structured:** Denali Daniels + Associates (DDA) provided facilitation for the regional event. The tables below represent the culmination of two-days of structured conversations with approximately 46 participants (attendance fluctuated across two-day/hybrid meeting). Groups developed these priority solutions, including plans with next steps to address some of the largest gaps this region faces. The last page is a current resource inventory that is non-comprehensive and is designed to evolve through ongoing edits; bolded names on this list represent that they appear in two or more service categories.

DDA took notes, capturing both the online and in-person conversations. These notes were streamlined into the current table format; a copy of these notes was then shared with the Steering Committee as well as our Tribal partners for input on accuracy and completeness.

These notes are a starting point for information-gathering. If additional information is added subsequent to the event, that **text will be blocked in a different color and in bold italics**. Additionally, the **[last updated]** date in the footer will be refreshed to reflect the most recent change date.

## SERVICE CATEGORY DEFINITIONS

### **Prevention, Early Intervention, Social Supports, Health Related Social Needs**

Efforts to cultivate healthy homes, foster positive peer relationships, and nurture a robust cultural environment. Encompasses ensuring basic physical necessities are met, empowering individuals to make informed choices, and providing ample support. These initiatives extend beyond billable services, focusing on holistic well-being.

### **Community Based Services and Supports**

A broad spectrum of accessible resources within the community setting. Examples include primary care facilities, outpatient mental health services, telehealth options, and various clinics. These services are designed to enhance community members' overall well-being and provide necessary support.

### **Mental Health in School**

The closest approximation to a universal environment for young individuals. Within this context, comprehensive educational and supportive structures are implemented to facilitate the development and growth of students, promoting their academic achievements and personal well-being.

### **Residential Services**

Diverse settings where individuals reside for extended periods. This category includes recovery camps, residential child care facilities, and locations where individuals live round-the-clock. These environments are tailored to provide a supportive living arrangement, offering necessary care and guidance.

### **Crisis Services**

Dedicated crisis response systems, such as call centers, mobile response teams, and crisis centers. These facilities serve as essential points of contact for individuals facing acute crises, offering immediate assistance, intervention, and support during challenging situations.

### **Acute Care**

The highest level of care provided in hospital or inpatient settings. This category includes emergency rooms, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, and short-term inpatient stays. Acute care facilities are equipped to address severe medical or psychiatric conditions, ensuring timely and specialized treatment for patients in critical situations.

## Prevention/Early Intervention, Social Supports, Health Related Social Needs

*Identified priority: Technology (Telehealth)*

Priority because...	Challenges	Next Steps	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The high cost of travel in the region and inclement weather can impact the quality of service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teenagers prefer telehealth vs. sitting face-to-face with a provider – they can talk more freely when virtual.</li> <li>Capacity of use - scheduling, number of clients vs. number of clinicians vs. time.</li> <li>The ability to use telehealth services may be limited.</li> <li>Some communities do not have Elders or cultural activities.</li> <li>The tribal council may not view telehealth favorably.</li> <li>Establishing who would be responsible for the telehealth service.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identifying grant opportunities.</li> <li>Determine the comfort levels and willingness of the tribes to create a culturally relevant plan.</li> <li>Identifying the type of equipment, maintenance, shipping, and locations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Starlink</li> <li>School districts that already possess the necessary technology</li> <li>Local tribes</li> <li>Office of Children Services</li> <li>Behavioral Health Aides</li> <li>Internet Providers</li> <li>Elders</li> </ul>

## Community Level Supports/Home and Community Based Services/Outpatient

*Identified Priority: Build Capacity for Youth that are Aging Out of Foster Care and for Those That Are Not in Foster Care*

Priority because...	Challenges	Steps	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are inconsistencies in the current system. Many children don't meet the level of care for consistent case management.</li> <li>● Children are moving between rural and urban communities, creating difficult transitions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Incohesive case management.</li> <li>● Funding.</li> <li>● Identifying the gaps.</li> <li>● Meeting qualification for certain services.</li> <li>● There are kids who need services who do not have that access.</li> <li>● Cultural connections during transitions.</li> <li>● Communication and coordination between stakeholders and youth.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Review recent regulations to implement legislation that is coming down the pipeline (SB57 Adult Home Care).</li> <li>● Legislation has established adult host homes. Some regulations are currently in development that should be ready for public comment in spring 2024.</li> <li>● Have legislation established for children who do not meet the criteria, such as children with developmental disabilities, substance use, and mental health disorders.</li> <li>● Work with case managers.</li> <li>● Improve communication and connection.</li> <li>● Collaborate with behavioral health and substance misuse providers to help with consistency with programs and transitions.</li> <li>● Identify if youth are experiencing homelessness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Legislative body</li> <li>● Rehabilitation Program</li> <li>● Excel Program</li> </ul>

## Mental Health in Schools

### *Identified priority (1 of 2): Better Networking Between Community Providers*

Priority because...	Challenges	Steps	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Help serve clients, support the community, and provide equitable distribution of resources, all at no cost.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Scheduling</li> <li>● Proximity</li> <li>● High Turnover</li> <li>● Regulations</li> <li>● Past experiences and ill feelings</li> <li>● Trust</li> <li>● Not knowing who to contact</li> <li>● Cultural/language barriers</li> <li>● Training</li> <li>● Education/technology skills</li> <li>● Differences between Bethel and village life (culture shock)</li> <li>● Being open and respectful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Identifying the partners</li> <li>● Quarterly meetings</li> <li>● Cultural immersion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tribal Council</li> <li>● Village Peace Officers / Village Public Safety Officer</li> <li>● Clients</li> <li>● School Districts</li> <li>● Yukon Kuskokwim Health Center</li> <li>● Office of Children Services</li> <li>● Church</li> <li>● Unknown Partners</li> </ul>

## Mental Health in Schools

*Identified priority (2 of 2): Each Village has their own Behavioral Health Professional*

Priority because...	Challenges	Steps	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All rural areas and villages require mental health support to address the community's needs and prevent burnout.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Office space in villages</li> <li>● Candidates that qualify</li> <li>● Community members may be reluctant to trust relatives who may have the position</li> <li>● Salary</li> <li>● Childcare</li> <li>● Housing</li> <li>● Training/education</li> <li>● Technological connectivity</li> <li>● Adequate supervision</li> <li>● Weather</li> <li>● Behavioral health training</li> <li>● Lack of support of first responders for emergencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increase recruitment levels of employment</li> <li>● Village community job fairs</li> <li>● Job shadowing behavioral health aides</li> <li>● Working with the school districts</li> <li>● Advertisement through social media, radio, etc.</li> <li>● Identifying education paths for community members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Yukon Kuskokwim School Districts</li> <li>● Tribal Leaders and Councils</li> <li>● Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation</li> <li>● Churches</li> <li>● Elders</li> </ul>

## Residential Services

*Identified Priority: Transitional Housing for Youth Doing Well in Residential, but Without a Safe and Stable Home*

Priority because...	Challenges	Steps	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Youth need to reacclimate to the region and their family. Young people may end up back in care or homeless if they are forced to return to an environment that does not support their recovery. The goal is to prevent re-admission to residential or state custody while keeping them in their cultural region.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Lack of available mental health care.</li> <li>● Training culturally competent staff</li> <li>● Licensing</li> <li>● Funding</li> <li>● Lack of sex offender treatment</li> <li>● Youth with arson charges are not accepted</li> <li>● Need help navigating referrals and systems</li> <li>● Assistance to families without state involvement</li> <li>● Who is going to operate this facility?</li> <li>● Ages 0-18 emergency shelter for children in care before placement</li> <li>● No staff to run the program</li> <li>● No services within the region solely for female</li> <li>● Lack of resource: therapeutic foster care, building, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Getting funding to create - seed money to start and long term sustainable funding</li> <li>● Identify a model for programming, i.e., modality, gender, age groups, licensing, family therapy, and engagement.</li> <li>● Build or locate the facility – male and female considerations</li> <li>● Hiring and training - cultural competency, trauma-informed and life skills</li> <li>● Looking at staff and kid retention – referrals for kids, keep staff long term.</li> <li>● Collect data to assess the efficacy and inform decision (keep it simple)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Residential Center for Children and Youth (RCCY)</li> <li>● Families and RTC (Artic Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder Regional Training Center)</li> <li>● Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation</li> <li>● AVCP (Association of Village Council Presidents) Elders</li> <li>● Non-Compact Tribes</li> <li>● ONC (Orutsararmuit Native Council)</li> <li>● Bethel Family Clinic</li> <li>● Lower Kuskokwim and other School Districts</li> <li>● Tundra Women’s Coalition</li> <li>● Covenant House</li> <li>● Office of Children Services (OSC)</li> <li>● Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)</li> <li>● Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)</li> </ul>

## Crisis Services

### *Identified Priority: Youth Crisis Residential Facility in Bethel (Step Down from DES Level of Care)*

Priority because....	Challenges	Steps	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There is a need for a transitional facility that can provide necessities and create an environment that fosters growth instead of just survival.</li> <li>● This will decrease the requirement for a high level of intervention while also serving as a preventative measure for youth services.</li> <li>● This facility will provide basic needs with wraparound services</li> <li>● Currently, there is a significant gap in meeting this need.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Who will run this facility?</li> <li>● Who would pay for this facility?</li> <li>● Staffing</li> <li>● Building</li> <li>● Logistical concerns, including range of ages that need help and how to best serve them</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Work with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority</li> <li>● Establish funding sources</li> <li>● Partner with the Bethel Homeless Coalition.</li> <li>● Look at the eligibility standard - who is the target?</li> <li>● Who will own the program / facility?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● State of Alaska (SOA)</li> <li>● Office of Children Services (OCS)</li> <li>● Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)</li> <li>● Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (AMHTA)</li> <li>● Schools</li> <li>● Bethel Police Department</li> <li>● Alaska State Troopers</li> <li>● Native Corporations</li> <li>● Homeless Coalitions</li> <li>● Tribal Health Corporation</li> </ul>



## Acute Care

### *Identified Priority: Support Clinician Training*

Priority because...	Challenges	Steps	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is important to prevent the use of heavy medication and to prevent relocating children to another area.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Clinical unaware of the cultural style</li> <li>● Employee retention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Refresher courses</li> <li>● Talking to the university - do they have a local LSW program?</li> <li>● Recruit local</li> <li>● Conduct small meetings in villages</li> <li>● Providers go to villages to learn/understand community and culture</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Having a career day at schools</li> <li>● Onsite rural human services professional to collaborate with the family and clinicians</li> <li>● Clinician requirements to attend cultural training as part of continuing education - does state already have one?</li> <li>● More collaborations between family/providers/clinicians</li> <li>● Interpreter</li> </ul>

## CURRENT RESOURCE INVENTORY

### Prevention, Early Intervention, Social Supports, Health Related Social Needs

4H  
Bethel Housing Coalition  
Bethel Winter House  
Bethel Youth Center  
BNC/ONC/AVCP assist with various needs for tribal members including assistance of heating oil and electric bills

### **Churches**

Culricawaq  
Fish Camp, family comes together  
Food Bank/Pantry  
Friday Night Supper Club  
Healthy Families Classes  
Kuskokwim Consortium Library  
Lower Kuskokwim School District Social Workers/Counselors  
Meyers Farm reduced price produce boxes  
Public Health Center  
Shelter for Homeless Youth (18+)  
Teens Acting Against Violence (TAAV)  
Tundra Women’s Coalition  
Tundra Women’s Coalitions Thrift Store  
Yukon Kuskokwim Fitness Centers reduced prices for individuals in need

### **Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC)**

### Community Based Services and Supports

4-H  
Aleut Tribal Government of St. Paul  
Aleutian Pribilof Island Association  
AVCP Social Services  
AVCP Workforce Development  
Baptist Church Vacation Bible School  
Bethel Youth Center after school program

Bristol Bay Area Health Corp  
Camp Hope  
Community Health Clinics  
Covenant Church Youth Group  
Eastern Aleutian Tribes  
Igiugig, Kokhanok, Nondalton, Pedro Bay, Port Alsworth, Newhalen, and Iliamna serviced through Southcentral Foundation – often telehealth  
Job Center  
Kodiak Area Native Association (KANA).  
Providence Hospital (Outpatient services)  
ONC (Orutsaramiut Native Council) program for providing elders with subsistence foods and “meals on wheels”  
ONC Youth Program  
Project Homeless Connect (through Bethel Community Services Foundation)  
Qagan Tayagungin Tribe  
SAFE (women’s shelter)  
Serviced by YKHC  
Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)  
Sobering Center (18+)  
Southcentral Foundation  
Sun’aqTribe  
TAAV (Teens Acting Against Violence)  
Table of Grace Lutheran Church Food bags  
Tribal Men’s Services Program  
Tundra Woman’s Coalition = youth against violence  
Tundra Youth Home (homeless 18 – 24-year-olds)  
YKHC Crisis Respite Center  
YKHC Opioid program  
Yukon-Kuskokwim Health Corporation

### Mental Health in School

Bethel Youth Clinic housed at Bethel Regional High School  
DEED Rural Counseling Group (training)  
Free lunches and breakfasts in schools  
Kuskokwim Learning Academy  
Kuspuk School District “dotcome” telehealth  
Lower Kuskokwim School District Social Work Department  
MSW level counselors in schools, but not all regional schools  
School Counselors  
**Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC)**  
Yupitit School district – Akiak promotes social emotional learning

### Residential Services

AHC substance abuse  
Ayagnirvik Healing Center  
Bautista House  
**Choosing Our Roots (Alaska Housing Stabilization Program)**  
Jakes Place-Addiction Recovery  
Malone Home Developmental Disabilities services  
McCann Boys Treatment Center  
Tundra Women’s Coalition – temporary, will take youth parental permission  
Tundra Youth Home  
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC)  
Morgan House

### Crisis Services

Behavioral Health Aides  
Calricaraq in some villages

### **Choosing Our Roots (Alaska Housing Stabilization Program)**

### **Churches**

Family  
School Counselors/Social Workers  
State Troopers  
Village Peace Officer  
Village Public Safety Officer  
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation

### Acute Care

DES  
Emergency Services  
Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation