

**Statewide Suicide Prevention Council  
Quarterly Meeting  
August 23-25, 2010  
Kotzebue, Alaska**

**August 23, 2010**

**4:00 p.m. Call to Order**

**Public Comment:**

**Karen Bitzer;** She works for Alaska 211 and Anchorage United Way. The purpose of 211 is to connect Alaskans to necessary services. They have received more calls to 211 in 2010 than in all previous years combined. They partner with Careline and law enforcement to transfer callers in crisis to more appropriate crisis lines. In 2009 they transferred 43 calls to Careline or a domestic violence hotline. In 2010, they have already made more than 60 transfers to Careline or a domestic violence hotline.

**Sam Trivette:** He is a suicide survivor. He lost his son to suicide June 28, 2007. He and his wife Gayle are active in youth suicide prevention, the Juneau suicide prevention task force, and the local schools. The Juneau task force has made progress, but more needs to be done. The Suicide Prevention Summit was great and he would like to see it occur annually. He and his wife want to support the Council any way they can. He suggested adding a public comment to the end of Council meetings, in addition to the beginning. He also asked that the Council plan their meeting schedule a year in advance so the public can participate.

**Michelle Woods:** She works for the local school district, coordinating the Youth Leaders program. The program started as the Natural Helpers program in the Lower Yukon School District, where she used to work, in 2000. In the Kotzebue region, the program works with students in grades 9-12, in 11 sites in the district. The use peer education and mentoring as part of suicide prevention, along with domestic violence and substance abuse prevention. In the first year, 35 interventions were made through the Youth Leaders program; in Year 3, 50 interventions have been made. The Natural Helpers program resulted in no completed adolescent suicides after it had been operating for 6 six years. The Youth Leaders program evaluation is available. It is sustainable, with a \$100,000 gift from Teck [formerly Teck-Cominco].

**Patricia Harding:** She teaches social work classes at the Chukchi campus. She has been in Kotzebue 20 years. She sees a need to improve quality of life for all people, young to old, building hope and resilience. Community connections and activities are important. Security in villages is important.

**Mary Russell:** She has worked with youth in Kiana and Noatak. Her husband works security at the hospital in Noatak, and reported to her that in January and February he had daily suicide watch responsibilities for 2 weeks straight. Social problems cause suicide, not just mental illness or depression.

**Bob Curtis:** He works with youth through the churches. The problem looks huge, but we have strengths, too. Look at the cultural context by region, and allow the room to try what works best. If a square peg won't fit in a round hole, make the hole bigger.

**Liz Moore:** She works with NANA and the Northwest Arctic Leadership Team. This is a coalition of NANA, the school district, the borough, and Maniilaq. The Department of Justice was just in Selawik looking at public safety issues, and suicide is a big concern.

**Elizabeth Hensley:** She wants to learn about the Council. Everyone is touched by suicide in the region, in the state. We need safe avenues to talk about suicide. She is glad the regional agencies are committed to preventing suicide. After her cousin attempted to commit suicide, she organized a group of artists to go to the schools in Kotzebue, Kiana, and Selawik to work with youth. "Naughty" kids have gifts and talents, too; they need to be nurtured.

**Matt Lazarus:** He is pastor at the Kotzebue Bible Baptist Church. He wants to learn about approaches to suicide prevention beyond what he knows from the Bible.

**Bruce Alver:** He is pastor at the Church of God. Activities for youth, like basketball, are very important. Youth can't read or stay focused. He described a program that offers anger management to adults who were abused as children. The program was designed by a minister and has good feedback from participants.

**Representative Reggie Joule:** Suicide is personal to him, and frustrating because nothing ever changes. The simple message is "Respect." Respect for yourself, for others, for animals, for the land. We need to use actions to show that we value each other. For rural Native Alaskans, "we wonder sometimes if we have any value . . . to anybody." They are taught "don't act smart," "don't call attention." Pay attention to abuse of boys and young men; quit ignoring the problem. Parents have an important role. To a child, a parent is "bigger than God," so if the parent isn't healthy, then what? We're waiting for someone else to solve the problem of suicide. We need to take responsibility. The Legislature wants to see data and results — what the Council is doing. They want to see what they are paying for is working.

**Linda Joule:** Village based counselors need tools that fell "true." The first step is how would you react personally, then to figure out how to use the tool. We need to redefine leadership. We "can't give up" on kids.

**Sgt. Stone:** He is an Alaska State Trooper. He has worked all over Alaska. It is hard to balance the public safety response with suicide prevention and intervention, but they try. Working with youth in villages is important.

**Craig Moats:** He is the new Kotzebue chief of police. He has been in town 3 weeks.

**Stan Hawling:** He is a tribal advocate for needy families in Kivalina. Social programs in the villages don't work. The IRAs don't do what they should. They just had a juvenile attempt suicide last week by overdosing on medication. He attributed it to stress caused by questioning by an Alaska State Trooper. People in the villages need to know they have personal power, they have rights, they have strength.

**Recess**

**August 24, 2010**

**8:40 a.m. Meeting resumed.**

**Roll Call:**

**Present:** Chair Brenda Moore, Melissa Stone, Phyllis Carlson, William Martin, Bernard Gatewood, Lowell W. Sage Jr., Rep. Anna Fairclough, Rep. Berta Gardner.

**Via Teleconference:** Sen. Fred Dyson, Sharon Norton.

**Absent:** James Sipary (excused), Barbara Jean Franks (excused), Meghan Crow (excused), Alana Humphrey (excused), Sen. Johnny Ellis (absent), Rep. Woodie Salmon (excused).

**Staff:** Eric Morrison, project assistant Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (Council); Kate Burkhart, executive director SSPC, Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB), Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA); Thomas Chard, planner AMHB and ABADA.

**Guests:** Rep. Reggie Joule.

**9:47 a.m. MOTION** to approve agenda made by William Martin; seconded; no objection.

**9:48 a.m.** Request for ethics disclosures; none made.

**9:49 a.m.** Discussion of public comment from Council meeting at Toksook Bay.

Brenda Moore said she really enjoyed the meeting and said it had the most impact of any Council meeting she has attended. Berta Gardner said she was glad to see so many Native Alaskans at the meeting that are not professionally involved in mental health or suicide prevention. She said there were lots of voices represented.

Brenda Moore said there was also some trouble shooting that was done at the meeting. James Sipary was such a big part of the groundwork. Unfortunately after the meeting there were some suicides, one of them was a younger person doing planning in Aniak. One of the suicides was committed by one of James Sipary's family members. She called him and spoke for some time about the incident. She told him if they needed some more crisis intervention support that the Council could help arrange that, either through the state or tribal resources if they chose.

Brenda Moore said she also appreciated public comments in Kotzebue the previous night.

Melissa Stone said the strength of people and the stories that they share in villages is very important for the Council to hear. She is impressed with people's individual knowledge of what is not working. It's largely about wellness, and many people see that.

Brenda Moore said she is struck by how much resilience there is and how many people in each community are committed to wellness and doing what they can to promote it.

Berta Gardner said there are tools available. There are many people that are advocating for more than just talk. Many Native Alaskans seem to believe there are tools in place; they just need to be implemented.

Phyllis Carlson said, being of mixed racial background, she agrees that people know the problems, but, perhaps because of Alaska history, it is difficult to sort through the issues and know what power and resources communities have. The Council heard it loud and strong in Toksook Bay from people who said community members are the ones that are left to deal with the problems, that the people from outside the community come and go. Communities have expressed that they would like some guidance for what has worked in other areas, but commented that people need to customize what works for their communities.

Melissa Stone said that, for communities, it is about facilitating what they want and for the State, it is about trying to have resources available for the right thing at the right time, which isn't easy. It's not a blanket statement, but something that is individual.

Phyllis Carlson said that for as long as she has been on the Council they have not heard from the youth themselves, which is the target audience. She doesn't have a suggestion right now, but it is a voice that really needs to be heard.

Brenda Moore said at the summit they were pulled aside by some youth and there was a difference between what they were saying and what the elders were saying. The youth are much more here and now, and that is part of the issue. A young person told her that sometimes in villages, everybody knows everybody and it is sometimes difficult to deal with gossip. She appreciated hearing from the person who said that everybody knows all your secrets in a village and it can be hurtful and difficult to talk.

Phyllis Carlson said she keeps going back to what was said in Toksook Bay and how elders keep going back to parenting, how they know the responsibilities of respect and the boundaries and what is expected. In contemporary culture that clarity isn't really there and people rely on the media and don't think about the responsibility and respect. There is a lot of truancy and there is a lack of respect and break down in communications between parents and their children and a breakdown of support in the community.

Brenda Moore said she wanted to clarify the psychiatric break down and the discussion of the social impacts. When there is harm being considered, it is a psychiatric emergency. When people need help, they don't have to go into a hospital necessarily, but need to be helped and have discussion. While visiting Barrow, she and Bernard Gatewood saw a place where people were held by police before they were transported for help. If there was a stabilization bed, situations could often be deescalated and people could be stabilized and stay at home without being sent out of town. Many tribal medical centers don't have stabilization beds.

Melissa Stone said there have been changes as resources change and people move on. There is a lack of resources. The part of the puzzle that needs to be plugged in has had a lot of variance and change.

William Martin said psychiatric stabilization isn't a good phrase because it implies that people have gone crazy. Emotional stabilization is a better term. Youth have different emotions that take time. If you remember, as a teenager there are many constant changes in emotions. Native Americans are sensitive people and can have their feelings hurt very easily, but on the flip side of

the coin, they can be very happy at the drop of a dime. People need to understand those emotions. He had an influence as a child from an uncle. He couldn't talk to his parents as easily as his uncle, to whom he could talk about things like relationship break ups. Grandparents are good for emotional stabilization. His grandmother could explain things his parents never could. He was glad to have that relationship with his grandmother and often had a barrier with his parents that he didn't with his grandparents. This is something that has been in place for time immemorial. Now he can't speak with his nephews in the same way because of the barrier and conflict he would get from their parents. People need to understand how to talk to the youth because it has changed, but he doesn't understand why. They need to get back to the traditional family and community connections.

Melissa Stone said those are important things and said they have changed how the system works in the state. They need to build relationships and acknowledge that they are the backbone to people helping people. It doesn't mean you have to always call the trooper, when you could call a sister or someone else. They need all the pieces, but need to remember that there are other ways. It takes courage.

William Martin said depression is a journey and they need someone to be there with them as their link to reality. You can't just put a depressed person in jail if they are depressed. You can't just pop a pill because the pill makes you feel good but doesn't change you mentally. They need someone the person respects and understands to be there to be a link to reality. A comment could put someone over the edge. The strangest things can affect your mind, so it is important having someone that you can rely on to be there with you. He is talking from personal experience. Almost every Alaska Native has been depressed at some point, either for a short or long period.

Phyllis Carlson said she likes to build from strength. She liked the youth program being done in the Kotzebue area and she thinks leadership skills are good. The Council should support these youth groups and build on them. Building on some of the strengths communities have is something the Council should do.

Brenda Moore said they are looking for a youth member to join the Council, hopefully a younger person that can be working with the Council for a couple years. There is the possibility of setting up a SSPC youth task force that could have meetings via videoconference or teleconference. Native Alaskan youth are often quiet in a group of adults, but if they are with a group of their peers, they often speak up more. That may lead to more of a youth voice.

Bernard Gatewood said he doesn't think that it is just Native youth, but kids in general. If they can get a group of youths that can get together, it could provide support from their peers. He supports a youth group and more groups.

William Martin asked what the age requirements are for the youth member on the Council. Kate Burkhart said grade 9 through 12. He said the Council ought to extend the age to college age.

Anna Fairclough said, instead of asking a new group to form, maybe they should try to find a group to partner with the Council. Maybe the Council could find times to meet up with them. Rep. Joule said the young First Alaskans emerging leaders group is a strong voice and group to be connected with. There are ways the Council could very easily meet with people.

Anna Fairclough said they could find an organization to make a resolution to partner with. It would be good to meet with kids to find the age appropriate difficulties in high school that are different. She doesn't know the social pressures for the kids in this generation but she knows that there is harm that they are facing because of decisions they make.

**MOTION** to contact Emerging Leaders to see if the Council can get on their agenda made by Anna Fairclough; seconded by William Martin.

**Discussion:** Anna Fairclough said the Council could send a delegation. Berta Gardner said the Institute of the North is meeting soon in Talkeetna, which could be an option. She is impressed by that group of youth, who are intelligent and important.

Brenda Moore said the Alaska Association of Student Governments is also an amazing group of young people.

Anna Fairclough said the motion should be discussed.

Bernard Gatewood pointed out that there was not a quorum, so until a quorum is established, these are just suggestions. They can't vote on the motion

Anna Fairclough said she thinks that's a technicality.

Kate Burkhart said staff takes direction without needing a motion.

Anna Fairclough and Brenda Moore directed staff to contact the Emerging Leaders of First Alaskans Institute.

### **10 a.m. Council Member Orientation**

Council member Sharon Norton called in, establishing a quorum.

Melissa Stone asked if there is anything that needs to be added or changed to the orientation packet that Anna Fairclough's staff has created.

Anna Fairclough said they don't have a budget or suicide statistics in there. She suggested a budget amendment process. The orientation packet is a draft. It would be nice to be hole punched and in a three-ring binder, with places for notes, to add in meeting agendas and packets that are provided.

Kate Burkhart asked for council volunteers to add to institutional knowledge to help build up the history. Staff can provide suicide statistics, and there is a different way to deal with the budget amendment process.

Anna Fairclough said there was a conversation last time about how to move money around.

Phyllis Carlson said they need budget info in order to strategically plan and to know how much money there is to plan for things and allocate money for certain things.

Anna Fairclough suggested staff could work with Nancy Cooperrider at the Division of Behavioral Health to learn how much money there is and how to allocate funds.

Phyllis Carlson said the previous idea was also to get away from crisis spending.

Brenda Moore said the other issue was that often there was money left over that had to be spent in a short amount of time. There were questions about travel and how to allocate money for travel that doesn't revolve around meetings, such as training. It has been used for suicide meetings or events or conferences, which was done through the executive meetings.

Kate Burkhart said they should make a travel plan that can be approved in the next year that can set the groundwork.

Anna Fairclough said there should be a certain amount of flexibility.

Kate Burkhart said travel reimbursement can be an issue and it is not the stated 10-day period, but closer to 90 days for reimbursement.

Anna Fairclough said the orientation packet is a draft. The council should be planning out farther in advance. There were tickets to Kotzebue that were up to \$150 cheaper three weeks in advance, that many of the tickets were bought about 8 days prior. The budget process is going on in the state departments for fiscal year 2012. If there is to be any input for the upcoming fiscal year it ought to be on the agenda to discuss. That is why the Council has been trying to pay for the ticket rather than people paying out of pocket, so there is greater chance for quick reimbursement. She and Berta Gardner could bring that issue up if there is a problem with reimbursements.

Melissa Stone agreed on a three-ring binder for the packet. She would also like to see sources of funds, including federal grants, that can be used to answer when asked what the State is doing for suicide prevention.

Anna Fairclough asked what staff needs for creating three-ring binder orientation guide.

Kate Burkhart said that she needs volunteers for council history.

Brenda Moore said she believes she has some of that information.

### **10:30 a.m. Break**

### **10:45 a.m. World Suicide Prevention Day**

World Suicide Prevention Day, sponsored by the World Health Organization, is September 10, 2010.

Anna Fairclough said to ask the Governor to write a proclamation, a letter to all the mayors. She suggested meeting with the editorial boards.

Thomas Chard said he encourages it as an opportunity to publicize the new SSPC Web portal. People could get on SSPC Facebook page, start a group on the Web portal.

William Martin suggested having a walk from the Marina to the Capital and inviting the Governor to attend. It would be good to do a “My Turn” and put it in the *Juneau Empire*.

Kate Burkhart said Governor’s proclamation and contacting mayors can be something staff can take care of.

Berta Gardner said she would write a letter to the editor.

Kate Burkhart said staff can take care of statistics, press release and talking points that can be used to promote World Suicide Prevention Day.

Phyllis Carlson asked what the message should be, because people who experience or have experienced a loss in that way have more of a connection to that mission. They are looking for something from them. In the Juneau School District they have started a campaign called “Connect” in order to connect with a young person. It may sound trite, but it connects. Is there is a “ray of hope message” that can be used to promote World Suicide Prevention Day?

Brenda Moore said there are some that the staff has moved forward.

### **11:11 a.m. Debra Caldera, Alaska Public Health Association**

Debra Caldera represents the ALPHA and serves as an advisor the U.S. Arctic Research Commission. The ALPHA goal is to promote local health. The Arctic Research Commission is a group that was established to guide federal agencies in the Arctic. In 2009, they suggested a study on arctic health, as well as the Bering Strait study.

Said there is one member of the Commission who looks mainly at health issues affecting Alaskans. What he found without looking too hard is mental health and suicide issues, child malnutrition, substance abuse, and the continued affects of those issues on the people in the arctic. He was extremely affected by the high rate of suicides by young Alaskan males. The proposal is to take about 18 months to look at suicides, substance abuse and malnutrition, but it would also include more. In fact, it would really focus on resilience and promising strategies. The study would include promising programs that are happening in the Arctic and in other areas that could prove helpful in the future. It would provide recommendations and promote collaborative efforts for all the groups work together with behavioral health. The study would be a hardback book of about 300-500 pages available for people working in the region on the area. It would be available online.

They are at the advocacy step right now for the study. There are a number of people that believe a study from the Institute of Medicine to find ways to deal with the topic would be helpful. They think it is important and are taking the opportunity to talk to people about it. They welcome anyone and everyone in the advocacy group to help.

Phase 2 is looking for funding. It would cost about \$1.2 - \$1.5 million, so a number of people would be asked to help out. They would be looking for 12-14 people to conduct the study, people from Alaska that are experts in various areas, Native Alaskans and non-Natives. They pick the information that is provided by the funding sources and researchers would do their work independently. The researchers would meet 5 to 7 times, in Alaska and outside. An independent



group would review the work to make sure it is unbiased and provide a rigorous way to offer proper suggestions.

She has met with people throughout the state. Some are supportive and others are not. At this time they are looking for letters and memoranda of support.

Phyllis Carlson asked if they have they talked to any of the tribal peoples that they study. There is a history of them being studied and there is a history of them being not very pleased with the results. Tribal groups want insurance that there is Native Alaska input at all levels.

### **11:50 a.m.: Jo McNeal, Pacific Northwest Area Director for the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP).**

The AFSP is looking to set up an Alaska Chapter. It is not a crisis center and does not provide direct services.

The AFSP has five core strategies: 1) fund scientific research; 2) offer educational programs for professionals, using films for physicians and nurses; 3) educate the public about suicide projects; 4) promote policies and registration that impact suicide and prevention; 5) provide programs and resources for survivors of suicide loss and people at risk.

The AFSP does this work so that other families and friends don't have to experience the loss, McNeal said. The next step for Alaska is to start with all the requirements to start the chapter. AFSP is hosting an Out of the Darkness Walk, planned for May 14, 2011 at Delaney Park Strip in Anchorage.

To begin an Alaska chapter requires the group to conduct at least two AFSP approved education programs annually. It would be promoting AFSP research programs within the chapter service area. The group would create a board of directors, with a minimum of 9 members, and have them create a chapter work plan according to their goals for outreach to schools, survivors, event planning and fundraisers. They would appoint a field liaison for the chapter to lead advocacy efforts on national, state and local levels. The chapter would be expected to adhere to all AFSP bylaws. Anyone can email Jo McNeal at [jmcneal@afsp.org](mailto:jmcneal@afsp.org) with questions or help to organize the Alaska chapter.

Anna Fairclough suggested that the Council try to get a person on the chapter's 9-person board to help stay up to date on what is going on.

### **12:15 p.m. Working lunch to talk about Council member activities.**

Tom Chard talked about the efforts with the Web portal and about the statewide summit. He co-presented with representatives from Florida and Maine at the 2010 ASA Conference in Orlando. Next ASA Conference is being held in Portland, Oregon in April, 2011.

Tom Chard discussed a couple of national trends, including information about state initiatives to require school staff to be required to have intervention training. In Alaska, no one is required to have this training. In Alaska, the schools are reluctant to take on new training because they are mandated to have a lot of training already.

William Martin said the National Congress of American Indians has been working hard on suicide prevention for the past three or four years. They have been working diligently and trying

to do something about it on an educational level. It's not a high priority, he said. He plans to be at the next meeting in New Mexico in November.

Lowell Sage said Maniilaq Corp. has a behavioral health counselor in each village. The past five years there have been some really bad fall storms and there have been some erosion problems, which has created a lack of rest and discomfort in the community of the Kivalina. He works as a superintendent that oversees 12 churches and is working on networking for individuals that can act as a safety net that is visible in the community. There are a lot of different dynamics and situations with people in different ages in this region. He has found that it is best to not have a set solution, but rather to have a solution that works for certain villages. The advisory group from Maniilaq Corp. will meet in Kotzebue next week.

Most of the pastors in this region in the church group are elderly, so they know how to respond when a family member has called. They know how to listen, but, because they are elderly, because of the age difference, there is a disconnect with the young people that generally try to commit suicide. He thinks that it is being addressed more in the villages. It would be beneficial if there were more adequate suicide prevention training opportunities for the pastors. There is some degree of shame when a family member commits or tries to commit suicide and it is sometimes "swept under the rug," which sometimes works and sometimes becomes reoccurring.

Brenda Moore said the Council needs to find a way to make rural training available to ministry leaders. When they talk to the folks that have gone through the program, now they are passionate advocates for their communities. It is an untapped resource in the communities that are not maximized to work in the community.

Melissa Stone said from a provider standpoint, the pastors were very much a part of the solution. She believes it is about \$30,000 to complete that training. She thinks some pastors are extremely well recognized. Another possibility would be a statewide training for clergy.

Lowell Sage said even though they hear about the attempts and the suicides in the region, they don't hear the success stories. It's not documented, but there have been some successes. The young are caught in two worlds, where they are told they have to find a job and succeed in the western world, but are still trying to maintain their traditional lifestyle at home. They are told they have to get a job to pay for gas to hunt, but that there are no jobs in the villages.

Phyllis Carlson said she believes the Council needs to look at and tap into faith-based organizations to help people in different communities.

Lowell Sage discussed the Family Wellness Warriors Initiative. This kind of teaching and counseling, not only to hear people out, but to give them the tools they need to work things out, will be important in the villages. He said many people in villages won't travel to Anchorage or Fairbanks, but it would be helpful to bring people out to the villages to help out.

**MOTION** by Anna Fairclough for the Council to partner with Wellness Warriors or others for clergy training in rural Alaska to help reduce and prevent suicide. Bernard Gatewood seconded the motion for discussion.

**Discussion:** Brenda Moore suggested having Wounded Warriors to speak at the next meeting.

Anna Fairclough said it would be nice to start in a small area and to have it get bigger, to have someone that would want to invite the Council and Wounded Warriors into their community to work with on a training.

Phyllis Carlson asked if the plan is to act now as opposed to waiting.

**Motion passed without objection.**

Lowell Sage said one of the strengths that they have in the region is the 12 churches in the NANA region all have Native Alaskan pastors. There are other denominations with non-Native pastors. If there is going to be training for clergy in the region he would suggest it be in Kotzebue. They have a pastors' conference in the second week of January that clergy come in for. If they brought in the training, it would be able to make it onto their agenda.

Anna Fairclough, Lowell Sage, Brenda Moore and Fred Dyson said they would work on a committee to coordinate a suicide prevention training for clergy. Anna Fairclough suggested someone from the Governor's office be involved too.

**1:45 p.m. Alaska Federation of Natives Invitation Discussion**

Brenda Moore said she thanked and publicly acknowledged the work William Martin has been doing to help discuss suicide prevention with AFN. How we can prevent suicide is the presentation topic at AFN, but she is not sure of the scope of the project. Council members should talk about what the Council wants to present.

William Martin said he would like to be the one to address AFN. He thinks they need to hear what they can do to help. A big part of prevention will need to be directed toward the leaders, who will be there. The message needs to be "this is the time." We have been working on it for several years. The ball is in their court. The tribal leaders have to be on-board. The tribal organizations were very receptive to doing something. The problem is funding.

Anna Fairclough said they had talked about a tribal elder speaking with a youth, and had talked about trying to get Elizabeth Hensley as the youth.

William Martin said the fact that this invitation came out of the blue is interesting because it hasn't been too high a priority on their agenda in recent years.

Bernard Gatewood said it could be all the years that people have talked about this issue, it has built up and it is probably the work that has been put into it for years.

Brenda Moore said since suicide is about building resilience in communities, this topic lends itself well to the AFN theme.

Anna Fairclough talked about engaging a sponsor and having some kind of gift that would keep people in their seats and draw people there.

Fred Dyson said since he was appointed he has read what he could find on teen suicide and is interested in the correlated factors in the kids, particularly in Western Alaska. Loneliness, feeling like there is no hope, having a bad family situation, FASD — all appear to have correlations on a

national level, but he hasn't seen the statewide information. Transmitting information in an appropriate way to AFN would be valuable. Counseling is good, but at some time we have to get into the prevention.

Berta Gardner said the youth voice is very important, but what they are talking about is evidence based, not just discussing one person's feeling.

Anna Fairclough said she wants there to be consistency in the message.

Brenda Moore said it would be helpful to have folks work on a framing of the message so there is something to work on.

Melissa Stone again said to use this as a forum to generate a new message or campaign that could be used in the future. She is willing to work with the staff and the contractor, along with the Council, so that we can create an idea.

Anna Fairclough suggested having an idea for the Native leaders to follow up with, like asking them to watch the prevention CD from the state.

#### **2:45 p.m. Careline update with Kimberlee Jones, Director**

Kimberlee Jones said Careline has seen a 55% increase in total call volume from January to July when comparing 2009 to 2010. The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority partnered with them and did some strong advertising on Facebook, which has created a large increase in hits on the Careline web site. People are looking for help and for information on suicide and prevention. Careline has seen a 23% increase in people involved with addiction and a 54% increase in people involved in mental illness.

They have worked hard with veterans and members of the military that are struggling with PTSD. They generally don't want to come forward with it, so they are working on building trust. They are not seeing a lot of veterans jumping on board to deal with those issues.

Kimberlee Jones said she would like to do a statewide survey because she wants to see where Careline fits in. Careline see themselves as part of the team when it comes to suicide prevention. They want to know who knows about them, who needs to know them, what is the perception, how are they seen, what can they do to improve their Web sites, and who else do they need to Facebook.

A request was made for help in mailing out posters to different communities.

Anna Fairclough asked what kind of money they are looking for postage. Kimberlee Jones said it is about \$4 to mail a poster tube. Berta Gardner suggested having the posters at AFN. Kimberlee Jones said that would be great and said another \$500 for postage would be great.

Brenda Moore asked how much of the increase in calls is related to the economic downturn. Kimberlee Jones said she hasn't seen people calling specifically about the economic downturn, but that there are more people dealing with homelessness, medicine costs and transportation issues. In some communities, people are socially isolated and may not qualify for transportation programs. She doesn't think they are seeing a low-income spike in calls.

Anna Fairclough said she wanted to talk about PTSD as an advocacy issue. She had received a constituent letter that said if they don't mark problems on the exit exam they can't get federal care.

Tom Chard said that, with PTSD, they have extended the deadline, but there is a taskforce now that is trying to extend the deadline even further.

### **3:15 p.m. Doug Modig, Maniilaq, Suicide Prevention Strategies for the Arctic**

Doug Modig works on suicide prevention in the Arctic. He said suicide prevention is one of Maniilaq's highest priorities. They are working with a gentleman from the Arctic to work with community development. The idea is to work with the cultures to move this issue forward. The people that it affects need to relate to the information. Reports are good, but if they don't read them, they are not effective. They have been getting new information from the current communities. The idea with Maniilaq is to engage the communities in a facilitated process to raise awareness, to gather tools to share, to listen to stories, to build new networks with other Native Alaskan groups, and bridge geographic isolation.

Doug Modig said Native Alaskan people have a difficult time living in the modern world. Part of it is that Native Alaskans add to some of the negative social aspects. What we need to do is plan what is going to happen to our kids in the future, to teach kids to live successfully in the modern world: an unknown future. He said about 17% of the population has some form of dyslexia; 40% of the Native Alaskan kids in southern Southeast Alaska are dyslexic, so if they can't read by third grade they are not likely to be successful in school. They have to read to learn; if they can't read, they can't learn. Said people have come so dependent on others helping them that they have forgotten how to take care of themselves. One of the things the region has done is digitize the traditional stories that can help them exist in the modern world.

### **4:05 p.m. Tom Chard, StopSuicideAlaska.org and other social media awareness activities**

Tom Chard has set up a Facebook page for the Council. Chard showed the StopSuicideAlaska.org web portal and explained the opportunities and the ideas behind it.

Phyllis Carlson said she wants to be sure to show this at the AFN meeting.

Tom Chard said the web portal information could be put on flash drives and distributed for free at AFN. Maybe there could be make stickers of the web address, too.

### **5 p.m. Recess**

## **Wednesday August 25, 2010**

### **8:55 a.m. Roll call**

**Present:** Chair Brenda Moore, Melissa Stone, Phyllis Carlson, William Martin, Bernard Gatewood, Lowell W. Sage Jr., Rep. Anna Fairclough, Rep. Berta Gardner.

**Via Teleconference:** Sen. Fred Dyson, Sharon Norton.

**Absent:** James Sipary (excused), Barbara Jean Franks (excused), Meghan Crow (excused), Alana Humphrey (excused), Sen. Johnny Ellis (absent), Rep. Woodie Salmon (excused).

**Staff:** Eric Morrison, project assistant Statewide Suicide Prevention Council (SSPC); Kate Burkhart, executive director SSPC, Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB), Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA); Thomas Chard, planner AMHB and ABADA.

Brenda Moore said first thing on agenda was the procedures for a travel plan. She said staff would look at the State's travel plan and members would discuss it at the next meeting.

Melissa Stone said one thing to discuss is whether there are any parameters for individual members traveling to conferences and what were appropriate travels on the Council budget. It has generally been an executive decision.

Phyllis Carlson said she wanted to discuss council member attendance guidelines so that there is a better idea of who is able and allowed to travel to what events throughout the year for better budget management.

Anna Fairclough said last year there was a question at the last minute about one member flying a couple of places to represent the Council at the end of the fiscal year. It was questioned if it is appropriate for the executive committee to decide what travel is approved and if it is fair for one member to use the rest of the available travel budget.

Brenda Moore said it would be good to have a list of national conferences at AFN to see early in the fiscal year what travel needs might be.

Bernard Gatewood asked if there is a budget mapped out for this year.

Kate Burkhart said yes and located the information.

Brenda Moore said in the past James Sipray was invited to present at a conference in the state and had an invitation to Greenland for a conference on the Arctic and the executive committee decided it was a good use of budget to send him to those places. Because none of the regular Council members were able to attend they asked Eric Boyer [Alaska Children's Services] to attend because he had some connections down south and he has been very active in a suicide coalition.

Anna Fairclough asked if the Council asked Boyer or if he asked the Council. Tom Chard said Boyer asked the council.

Anna Fairclough said that is what she thought. People see the budget and ask for money, when there isn't really a strategic plan. Even though the funds have gone toward good things, it is not very strategic.

Kate Burkhart said for FY11 the total for travel is \$32,700, which includes travel inside and outside of the state. Out of state has been budgeted at \$2,800 for the fiscal year.

Phyllis Carlson asked how many voting members are on the Council. Kate Burkhart said there are 11 voting members and four nonvoting members.

Phyllis Carlson asked how much it typically costs to travel. Kate Burkhart said it depends on who travels and where they travel.

Anna Fairclough said she is on the Council because she has a passion to help kids, but said she is not trained in suicide prevention. She has her own travel budget, but is not sure that public members have that ability to attend trainings. The council needs to look strategically where meetings will be next year to plan accordingly. She can travel on her budget if need be. She said as long as the executive committee is doing due diligence, and as long as one person isn't accessing all the funds, it should be sufficient.

Berta Gardner suggested that, if a person travels on the Council budget, they provide something back to the Council, such as a report, gathering materials for the group library, etc., so the whole Council gets something out of the travel funds.

Tom Chard said both Eric Boyer and James Sipary were planning to attend the Kotzebue meeting and provide an oral report but things came up.

Kate Burkhart asked if staff is getting direction to formulate a year-long travel budget.

Phyllis Carlson said the other can of worm is scheduling meetings in advance for budget consideration, also so the public knows in advance. She said it should be a published calendar and the Council should stick to it.

Anna Fairclough said the Council should figure out dates and locations now, saying that it is not staff's job. She said it should have already been done. They should hold to the meetings and people should be able to call in if they can't physically attend so that there can be a quorum.

Bernard Gatewood asked if there will be another suicide prevention summit.

Brenda Moore said it hasn't been decided yet.

Bernard Gatewood asked what kind of programs came out of the last suicide prevention summit. Kate Burkhart said the Alaska State Troopers and Alaska Children Services are working together so that all troopers would get gatekeeper training over next two years, which has never happened. The resilience DVD was aired in the Ketchikan market and GCI plans to air it statewide. Tom Chard said an emergency contact list was created and distributed in Ketchikan through a partnership of Rotary, businesses and the Chamber of Commerce. Kate Burkhart said that the Council should be setting the travel dates and suggested setting travel dates. William Martin said the Council should set travel dates.

**MOTION** by Brenda Moore to set travel dates; seconded by Anna Fairclough.

Bernard Gatewood asked for the motion to be repeated.

Kate Burkhart said staff would create a travel plan for the remainder of FY11 to be brought back to the Council for approval. Staff will draft a procedure for executive committee approval of travel. The travel plan will include trainings, conferences and speaking engagements.

Bernard Gatewood asked when the vote to approve the travel plan would take place.

Kate Burkhart said it could be voted on telephonically.

William Martin asked if the vote could be by email.

Kate Burkhart said she prefers telephonically because she wants to abide by the Open Meetings Act.

**9:26 a.m. Motion carried without opposition.**

Brenda Moore asked about meeting dates.

Anna Fairclough said the budget should have been approved at the May meeting and she feels the Council is under the gun, but said it is only about four goals. Said there was talk about clergy training instead of summit. Suggested a meeting in Fairbanks, could have a strategic planning meeting the day before the AFN meeting, but it might be difficult on hotels.

Phyllis Carlson asked if there could be a date set to go on a calendar.

Anna Fairclough asked if there is a date.

Bernard Gatewood said the meetings should be spread out a little, but he is fine with AFN because the Council has been invited.

Melissa Stone said if they are planning to pay for people to go to AFN, the Council might as well have a meeting there as well.

Berta Gardner said there was a threat in the Legislature of the Council being cut.

Anna Fairclough said the Council has been looked at by the legislature as dysfunctional. They should have a meeting as soon as possible to have a strategic plan. If they are sending Council members to Fairbanks, the Council might as well hold a meeting there, too.

Brenda Moore said the Council needs to buckle down and have a plan that has long-term and short-term goals. It takes time, especially that with this group because it is an active group of people with new members on Council. There needs to be time to set up strategic plans. The Council has been proactive rather than reactive. She wants to set a retreat date to come up with strategic plan that covers 3 to 5 years with long-term goals and more attainable short-term goals. That type of planning doesn't happen in a three-hour meeting.

Phyllis Carlson asked how many meetings a year the council is required to meet.

Kate Burkhart said the bylaws say the council meets as often as the chair determines.



Berta Gardner suggested setting next meeting October 19, 20 and 21.

Phyllis Carlson wants to complete a date structure so members can leave the meeting and everyone can know what the dates are. She asked what the cost typically is.

Kate Burkhart said it depends on where the Council holds the meeting and who attends. It is cheaper to have a meeting in Anchorage with everyone than to have a meeting in a rural area with half of the members going. In summer a lot of people are busy, so it is easier to hold meetings around the tourism season.

Phyllis Carlson said since this meeting is in August, holding the next meetings in November, February and May would space them out. It might be a starting point for discussion.

Anna Fairclough asked if members wanted to hold meeting with AFN; if not, she wants to limit the number of people who travel to AFN to reduce costs.

Phyllis Carlson asked what the meeting would be about.

Anna Fairclough said would cover the budget and be a brief meeting that takes care of the fall Council meeting. Having it in Fairbanks is less costly. Possibly, executive elections can also be held.

William Martin suggested having meeting in the afternoon. Anna Fairclough suggested having a working lunch, maybe from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Brenda Moore called for a show of hands in favor of meeting October 22, 2010 in Fairbanks in conjunction with AFN presentation, to cover the budget, travel planning, and executive committee elections. All members were in favor.

Phyllis Carlson said, given the timeframe and the Council's AFN presentation, the agenda should be pretty focused. Those are items that could get accomplished.

Berta Gardner said she likes the suggestion of meeting in February and would like to see it in Southeast or Juneau. Phyllis Carlson suggests Juneau. Berta Gardner suggests February 3-4, 2011 in Juneau.

Kate Burkhart suggested the meeting include a formal presentation with food to show the accomplishments of the Council, with the rest as planning sessions. The Council could hold a strategic planning meeting on Sunday, January 30; meet with legislators on Monday, January 31; and then meet with the community on Tuesday, February 1.

Without objection, the January 30-February 2, 2011 meeting was approved.

Brenda Moore asked if members wanted to set spring meeting. She suggested meeting in Barrow in May.

Anna Fairclough asked about a budget regarding "trinkets" for AFN that could have the portal web site as well as the Careline phone number on it. She talked about having a light that could be

turned on at AFN during the presentation for everybody who has lost a friend or family member to suicide.

Kate Burkhart said the total commodities budget for FY11 is \$7,500. She asked if the Council members could determine a budget and then staff could research ideas and come up with options.

Berta Gardner suggested half of the budget and suggested getting as much as possible of whatever item is.

**MOTION** by Anna Fairclough to spend up to \$5,000 for trinkets. Phyllis Carlson seconded.  
**The motion passed without objection.**

Brenda Moore suggested tentatively scheduling a May meeting in Barrow, to begin May 16 if we can get a community invite and if people will be back from whaling. Accepted without objection.

### **11 a.m. Closing comments**

Melissa Stone said being in local communities is essential. There is more than one “right.”

Anna Fairclough said doesn't want the Council to “study,” she wants it to take action. She was pleased to have a packet ahead of time and glad to have staff. It is important to meet with local people.

Berta Gardner said the first eight months on the Council she was frustrated. She is much happier now. We are going to see a big change in the Council in the next year. She wants to go everywhere and talk to people.

Bernard Gatewood said is happy to be in Kotzebue. The Council is making strides. He commended the Chair for her work. He is excited to have Kate Burkhart and Tom Chard to work with, based on his work with AMHB and ABADA. He likes the direction the Council is taking. He appreciates the work of Berta Gardner and Anna Fairclough.

Phyllis Carlson said she appreciates the staff, structure of meetings, visiting villages and hearing village voices, listening and learning. She would like more input from youth on suicide.

William Martin said he is happy to be in Kotzebue. The Council has come a long way. Having legislators on the Council is a plus. He wants to see the Council partner with other communities, regions, etc. He liked the reception. He wants to hear from kids themselves on issue.

Lowell Sage said that, when he came to the meeting, he was going to decide if it was his first meeting or his last meeting. He said it is his first. The Council is real. He suggested regional meetings and to invite village leaders. As we learn more, compile a library. He said to recognize people in authority and let them know when the Council is coming to communities, such as tribal leaders, corporation CEOs, mayor, elders, pastors, principals, youth leaders, etc.

Sharon Norton said she is grateful for the teleconference, but said it is not as good as attending in person. She's looking forward to seeing the orientation packet. It is important to talk to people. She agreed that the Council is missing a youth element.

Tom Chard is thankful for the orientation packet. He appreciates the passion of Council members. Face-to-face meetings are important.

Sam Trivette noted that Alaska is a small state in that we are all connected by family, work, etc. He is glad for dedicated staff and will support the Council. He is thankful for legislative support for the Council.

**MOTION** to adjourn by Berta Gardner; seconded by William Martin. Without opposition, the meeting adjourned.