

**COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND SEXUAL ASSAULT
(CDVSA)**

Host Location:

State of Alaska Department of Public Safety
Council on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault
150 3rd St., Suite 201
Juneau, AK 99801

**CDVSA Quarterly Council Virtual Board Meeting
FY 2022 Quarter 3 (Q3)
March 30 – 31, 2022**

Wednesday, March 30, 2022

Board Members Present:

Lydia Heyward, Interim Chair
Laura Brooks
Jillian Gellings
Commissioner Cockrell
John Skidmore
Kami Moore
Angela Garay
Ryon Turley
Blaze Bell

Guests:

Eileen Arnold
Brenda Stanfill
Kim Kovol
Stephanie Hopkins
Rowena Palomar

Staff:

Diane Casto, Executive Director	Ella Nierra
Angela Wells	Catherine Mohn
Marsha Layton	Karragh Arndt
Marjorie Hamburger	Meggie Stogner

Minutes prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

Lydia Heyward called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established. Lydia opened the floor for the new board member, Blaze Bell, to introduce herself.

AGENDA REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Lydia Heyward called for a review of the meeting agenda. There was no opposition to the agenda.

CONFLICT INQUIRY

No conflicts of interest were declared.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF BOARD MEMBERS AND CDVSA STAFF ATTENDING

Lydia Heyward opened the floor for board members and staff introductions. Diane Casto noted that Marsha Layton will join the CDVSA staff Monday, April 4, 2022 as the new Administrative Officer II. Marsha introduced herself and shared her work history and excitement to be joining the staff at CDVSA. Lydia Heyward shared her appreciation for Teresa Lowe's service on the CDVSA board. Diane added that Teresa was on the board for three years, chaired for the last two years, and added value to the work done in the domestic violence/sexual assault arena.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Lydia Heyward directed the members to the draft December 2021 meeting minutes. She asked for corrections or additions to the minutes. Hearing none, she stated that the board meeting minutes were approved.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT, January – March 2022

Diane Casto directed the members' attention to the executive director report included in the board packet and highlighted the following information:

Staffing and Personnel:

Diane Casto was pleased to announce that beginning April 4, 2022, CDVSA will be fully staffed. She reported that Catherine Mohn was hired as the new Research Analyst III. Catherine began her employment on January 3, 2022, and she is the first permanent remote telework employee. Diane noted that the two UAA practicum students will be leaving at the end of April 2022, and added that the student's contributions to the Council during their tenure were invaluable. Both Karragh Arndt and Jen Anderson have done a great job providing new ideas and new energy.

Diane Casto reported that CDVSA had modified its mitigation protocol to keep its office, colleagues, and families safe while working. The Council continues a hybrid telework schedule for most of the staff and eased the requirements for returning to the office following travel.

CDVSA Funding Challenges:

Diane Casto reported that during the past three months, the Council was able to rectify many of the coding errors, complete delayed payments to sub-grantees, and complete the final FY 21 closeout. Due to minor payment errors that were not discovered until after the closeout of FY 21, the Council was required to make corrections to FY 21 sub-grantee funding using FY 22 funds. The amounts were relatively small. Having the financial records corrected, changes documented, and final budget numbers clear is critical for future audits. The Council is confident that its current financial information and attached Q3 financial reports are accurate and provide a clear picture of its financial health.

Diane Casto reported that during the Q3 board meeting, the Council will have a full review and discussion of its current budget challenges, needs, and stopgap measures. She noted that while the Council continues to struggle with the steep reductions to the VOCA formula funding from the Office for Victims of Crime (OVC), the Council received several one-time funding opportunities that have mitigated the overall impact on the budget despite a 34.6% reduction in VOCA formula grant between FFY 20 and FFY 21. Due to a one-time \$8.0M increment to CDVSA's FY 22 budget in the form of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSLRF), CDVSA maintained current funding levels for the 35 community-based agencies. Up for discussion at the Q3 meeting is an approximate \$2.8M in remaining CSLRF funding for use in FY 23, and the Governor's budget has included an additional \$3.5M in CSLRF funding to be used in FY 23 to maintain current funding levels for all CDVSA sub-grantee funding.

Additional funding to assist with FY 23 sub-grantee funding is to allocate \$1.0M from one of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) COVID mitigation awards. The Council had received three new FVPSA awards in addition to its annual formula funding. Two of the awards have precise specifications for how the money should be spent; one of the awards for \$1.26M provided more flexibility, and the board decided to utilize \$1M of those funds for DV sub-grantees in FY 23 and FY 24. The additional \$260,000 will assist sub-grantees in receiving support, training, and technical assistance to expand their ability to use technology to improve services and outreach. This project will be reported on during the Q3 board meeting.

Diane Casto reported that an ongoing fiscal challenge is the VOCA Crime Victims Fund (CVF) and its continued low funding levels. The CVF and its reduced deposits and revenues for the past two to three years have contributed to lower VOCA grant funds. Money from the CVF is what funds the VOCA formula and discretionary grants and was the focus of the VOCA Fix Act enacted last July. The intent of the VOCA Fix Act was to increase the type of crime fees and fines deposited into the CVF with the hope that these changes would begin rebuilding the CVF in the next two to three years. Unofficial conversations with OVC have indicated that the CVF balance is currently lower than expected.

Diane Casto reported that the CVF is not accumulating as quickly as anticipated, and all VOCA award amounts will continue close to the current level of funding. For CDVSA, this may mean that the FFY 22 VOCA award will continue to be approximately \$2.8M, considerably less than prior to FFY 21. This means that CDVSA will continue to have less funds than before. This is especially concerning regarding funding stability for the years beyond FY 23. Currently and for the near future (FY 23 and FY 24), much of the CDVSA annual budget includes considerable one-time funds that will be reduced or expended by the end of FY 24. The budget for FY 23 looks to be adequate to fully fund the current 35 community sub-grantees; FY 24 and forward will be less stable without additional steady funding sources. The CDVSA board needs to monitor the funding for FY 23 and beyond.

Impact of COVID-19 and CDVSA's Response:

Diane Casto reported that the impact of COVID-19 has significantly lessened at this time but is not yet over. COVID-19 continues to impact the sub-grantees and their ability to provide services, albeit less, by still requiring mitigation measures, distancing, sanitizing, and other steps to keep participants safe and healthy. Additionally, the need for alternative service delivery and increased use of technology requires considerable support.

The other impact of the continuing pandemic is reduced staff and inconsistent staffing to accommodate exposure to or testing positive for COVID-19. Because the numbers are down, strict protocols to keep exposure low are not required. Managing and monitoring the ever-changing pandemic statistics also creates higher levels of oversight, monitoring, cleaning, and vigilance. For these reasons, CDVSA has decided to extend current Victim Services and Enhanced Services grant awards for one additional year (FY 23) and not initiate an open competitive request for proposals process. This decision was made because of the uncertainty of future funds available for grant awards and to eliminate the need for already overworked community-based service programs to use valuable time applying for new funding. While the Council strongly supports the need for fair and competitive access to CDVSA public grant funding, the current timing does not support this type of stress and disruption to the currently funded programs. The Council is hopeful FY 23 will see a further reduction of COVID-19 and a significant return to a new normalcy. The Council will continue to monitor the impact of this virus on service availability and continue mitigation strategies to provide strong programming.

CDVSA Priority Projects Updates

CDVSA Sunset Audit

The Council's Sunset Audit was reviewed by the Legislative Budget and Audit Committee on December 15, 2021 and approved for finalization.

In January, Representative Tarr introduced House Bill 291, "An Act extending the termination date of the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault; and providing an effective date." The bill received two House committees of referral, House State Affairs and House Finance. In February, a committee substitute (CS) for HB 291 was introduced to add two new positions to the Council board membership: one public member who shall be a member of an Alaska Native Organization, and one state member, the chief executive officer of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority or designee. A copy of CS for HB 291 is included in the board packet. CS for HB 291 passed out of House State Affairs and will next be heard in House Finance.

The current termination date for CDVSA is June 30, 2022. The passage of this piece of legislation is critically important for the continuation of the Council and its work.

Perpetrator Rehabilitation Workgroup

The workgroup continues to meet monthly for two hours each month. A total of 11 meetings have been held. The workgroup concluded its initial phase of gathering and reporting on critical aspects of what quality, evidence-informed BIP programming should include. This phase was essential to ensure all workgroup members had the same

foundational information as they separated into three identified breakout groups: assessment, interventions, and monitoring. The workgroup discussed the roles of the courts, mental health providers, tribal and rural needs, and child welfare and juvenile justice needs. It explored the role of monitoring, accountability, and safety for victims of perpetrators enrolled in BIP programs.

Beginning in February, the workgroup began meeting in breakouts related to the three identified topics with the intent that each group will provide recommendations for their identified area that will be shared and discussed by the entire workgroup. Following this process, they will invite identified stakeholders to review and discuss the recommendation to identify gaps, support identified recommendations, or request changes. The workgroup will have recommendations made and agreed upon no later than October 2022. Once the workgroup completes its work, the internal CDVSA work will begin to implement the identified changes, work with DOC to update related regulations, and establish a new process for agencies to apply to become a state-approved perpetrator rehabilitation program.

CDVSA Regulations Update Project

Diane Casto reported that the CDVSA regulations revision project had made significant progress. Once the legislative session began, all work on department regulations (except for some critical projects) was temporarily halted. Work will start again at the close of the legislative session in May. She extended a thank you to Meggie Stogner, Kelly Howell, Brad Sharp, and others who will help the Council get this project over the finish line.

CDVSA Language Access Plan (LAP)

Diane Casto reported that the implementation of the CDVSA LAP is making progress as they work with the contractors, the Alaska Institute of Justice (AIJ), and with the assistance of Jen Anderson, a Council MSW practicum student. Progress includes completing a complaint form to be used by the public to express concerns regarding CDVSA policies/practices related to language access. AIJ is currently getting bids for translating the complaint form and getting the language access procedures translated into the top eight languages identified in the LAP. Translation will begin soon.

The Council is developing a document with information about the 35-funded service agencies, their services, and how to contact them. Jen Anderson created a spreadsheet with all the information and data she collected from a SurveyMonkey request to all sub-grantees. The spreadsheet is nearly complete and will then be submitted for cost bids to translate the information.

Once these documents are translated, CDVSA will post them to its Language Access webpage. AIJ and CDVSA are working with DPS IT to create a location for this information and enhance the home page with clear information about alternative languages available to the interested public. These are the first steps and will take time to finalize. The Council will continue to identify and translate additional critical information moving forward.

STOP/VAWA Four-Year State Development Plan

Diane Casto stated that the STOP/VAWA Four-Year State Development Plan would be discussed in detail later in the meeting. Ann Rausch and Karragh Arndt will provide an update on the STOP plan and progress and will provide board members an opportunity to ask questions and hear more about the final steps. Staff will also discuss the timing for the board to review the final draft plan before submission to the Office on Violence Against Women (OVW). Diane expressed the Council's appreciation to Ann and Karragh for their hours of work to create a document that meets the needs of the partner agencies, the Alaska tribes, and the many stakeholders in this work.

CDVSA Five-Year Strategic Plan

Diane Casto reported that in March, Council staff re-engaged with the contractor John Gregoire from Professional Growth Systems to discuss a plan for a review of year-one progress on the five strategic initiatives and begin planning tasks and action items for year-two activities.

The three strategic initiatives for year one that have made significant progress despite dealing with a pandemic include:

- 1) Implementation of GrantVantage, the new grant management system
- 2) Improved access to services through the implementation of the LAP
- 3) Updating/improving the perpetrator rehabilitation programming to better align with the needs of those who use violence in their relationships and keep the victims and communities safe.

Diane Casto noted that the Council has updated the action strategy tracking system for the three initiatives and will begin updating the other two initiatives, increased prevention, and enhanced collaboration, in the coming month. The goal is to have a discussion with staff and the board to align the work, recommit to the initiatives, revise, and, if necessary, add an internal initiative.

Communications, Outreach, and Media

Diane Casto reported that February was Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month nationally and within Alaska. The Council worked with Walsh|Sheppard, the communications contractor, to use TV, radio, and social media messaging to inform and educate Alaskans about teen dating violence and the role everyone can play in ending teen dating violence. Diane stated that having a strong, consistent, and comprehensive media and social media presence regarding all issues related to DV/SA is the continuing goal. Unfortunately, the current funds do not provide the opportunity to accomplish that goal. For this reason, the Council has increased its ability to find low-cost messaging practices. Social media placements are less expensive than TV and radio, so they use social media broadly. April is Sexual Assault Awareness Month, and the focus will be on issues related to consent, anonymous sexual assault reporting, and where help is available.

CDVSA BUDGET REVIEW/FISCAL REPORT SFY 2022 BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

Diane Casto highlighted the following information current March 15, 2022:

- Page 1 – Program Budget FY 2022
 - Total budget authority, \$31,975,598
 - State funding authority total, \$12,968,700
 - Federal funding authority, \$19,006,898 (includes ARPA funds)
 - Total operating budget, not including grants, \$3,865,997
 - Total program budget, \$20,661,690
 - Total budgeted obligations, \$24,527,687
- Page 2 – Grants Awarded FY 2022
 - Total grant award authority, \$28,092,298
 - Total awarded to programs, \$20,661,690
- Page 3 – Detailed Sub-Award Plan for FY 2022
 - Total amount allocated for sub-awards, \$20,661,690
 - Total amount awarded to subgrantees, \$20,661,690
- Page 4 – Contracts and Services FY 2022
 - Total authority for contracts and services, \$2,548,097
 - Total of contracts and services obligations, \$917,100
- Page 5 – FY 2021 Remaining Balances
 - Total remaining balance across all appropriations, \$8,324,086

Diane Casto expressed the Council's appreciation to Rick Wolverton, Rick Silaj, and others in the DPS financial offices for their assistance with financial matters of the Council.

Diane Casto noted that even though the Council has 35 sub-grantees, the staff manages 101 grant agreements. She explained that during the VOCA site visit in 2018, one of the findings was that the Council was not following proper federal procedures by co-mingling funds. Every funding source has to have its own grant agreement, which culminates into 101 grant agreements to comply with regulations.

PROJECTED FUNDING FOR FY 23 AND BEYOND

Diane Casto directed the members' attention to the document titled *CDVSA SFY 21 – 24 Grant Funding – All Grant Types*. Diane reported that the Council would be short on funding in future years, and there is a need for the Council to be talking about what that means and how the Council will respond moving forward. Diane shared an overview of projected SFY 23 and SFY 24:

- State FY 21
 - \$21,809,739 grant funding (includes general funds, designated GF, interagency receipts, federal VOCA, federal SASP, federal VAWA)
- SFY 22
 - \$20,415,210 grant funding (includes general funds, designated GF, interagency receipts, federal VOCA, federal SASP, federal VAWA, federal CSLRF)
- Projected SFY 23

- \$21,157,059 (includes general funds, designated GF, interagency receipts, federal VOCA, federal SASP, federal CSLRF)
- Projected SFY 24
 - \$15,053,583 (includes general funds, designated GF, interagency receipts, federal VOCA, federal SASP)

Diane Casto reported that the Council could potentially be awarded funding that was approved in the federal budget. Senator Lisa Murkowski gave CDVSA a one-time \$5M set aside to help with the gap in VOCA funding. Diane noted that detailed information is forthcoming. She anticipates that the money will not be available to the Council until October and that the criteria around it will be based on filling the federal VOCA gap.

Diane Casto stated that the financial matters of the Council will need the board's attention, and she recommended that the board members begin to think about the best approach to the situation. She questioned: Does the Council continue to advocate for current funding levels, more funding, more general fund dollars that can be consistent funding moving forward, or does the Council try to find other avenues for funding?

Diane Casto noted that researching other grants to apply for takes a lot of resources and staff time. If successful, managing additional grants at the federal level is time-consuming. With the limited staff and current workload, procurement and management of new grants would be complicated. Could it be done, yes; but does the Council have the resources, not really. Diane opened the floor for comments. A summary follows:

Angela Garay asked how widely known the information is. Do sub-grantees understand what is projected, and are they able to begin planning for what could potentially be devastating cuts in funding? Diane Casto responded that all programs know that funding is on shaky ground. Sub-grantees face the same challenges as the Council when soliciting other grant funding.

Brenda Stanfill commented that the programs are already at bare bones. They've all had to increase wages to get staff. She believes they need to go to legislators in each individual community and say: This is what we do for our community, this is our importance, and we need you to say we have to prioritize our victims' safety. This is a public safety issue. Legislators can't ask the programs to go out and compete for federal dollars. As a state, we should show our priority, not by backfilling federal dollars, but by designating state funding.

Lydia Heyward commented that Alaska has the highest domestic violence and sexual assault rates in the country. She asked what the options were. Diane Casto responded that she thinks Brenda Stanfill's point of involving the legislature is valid because the legislature is the body that approves funding. They need to hear from communities, programs, and the general public that this is a priority. It's also a public health issue, and Alaska cannot continue to have the high rates of domestic and sexual violence and not address it.

Jillian Gellings commented that data shows how programs and the needs have grown while the funding remains flat. She also spoke about data and outcomes for people and being tied to public health and how maybe the loss of this federal match could cause a considerable economic burden in communities than the grant funding and use that to maybe tell the story to the legislators. The inflation need is essential for these programs because they pay for rent, food, and not just staff salaries or other internal needs. She suggested telling that story as well.

Diane Casto proposed developing a white paper based on the input from the board members and including what the needs are for the next ten years. The white paper could include the data supporting the need for state funding, the economic impact for communities when federal funding is cut or eliminated, and how inflation has affected finances for programs. Diane noted that the FY 24 budget process would begin in the summer, and the budget is put together through DPS. She pointed out that the Council has to be sensitive to the political environment and the administration's tone. She believes the Council has support in the administration for these issues and public safety in general.

Angela Garay pointed out that the courts have not been running trials for the last two years. Many cases involving victims have been backed up in the court system, and the victims have not been able to move forward, have not received restitution, and have not seen justice. With trials just starting, those cases are being pushed through trying to get a resolution. That has impacted services because the victims are in a holding pattern, unable to reach a resolution, and have the safety of the perpetrator incarcerated. That has added to the cost for sub-grantees that are working with victims. She recommended incorporating that and making the plea that that has added costs.

Diane Casto suggested forming a small workgroup that included staff, board members, and ANDVSA to take the ideas presented and decide how to best move forward with a clear, concise message.

TENTATIVE TIMELINES AND STEPS FOR FY 23 CONTINUATION APPLICATION, REVIEW PROCESS, AND FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS

Diane Casto reported that the Council is preparing to put out the request to the current sub-grantees for continuation budgets for next year in April. Once that process is complete, Council staff will look at current data to match the programs' expenditures with the four categories of children's services, sexual assault, domestic violence, and other crimes of underserved populations. Staff will then go through the internal process of preparing for a board review and approval, after which they will move forward with FY 23 grant agreements.

After a brief discussion related to the Q4 rural outreach board meeting, the board agreed to schedule the meeting for June 15 – 16, 2022 at which time, whether they meet in Ketchikan or virtually, the board will have the opportunity to review and approve the applications.

PUBLIC COMMENT

A public testimony period was offered, and a full transcript was prepared.

SELECTION AND COUNCIL APPROVAL OF BOARD MEMBER REPRESENTATIVE ON GOVERNOR'S COUNCIL ON MISSING AND MURDERED INDIGENOUS PERSONS (MMIP)

Diane Casto reported that the Governor, through Executive Order, created the Governor's Council on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons (MMIP). One of the seats written into the order is a seat representing the Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault. Diane stated that Boards and Commissions contacted her regarding the selection and asked that the CDVSA board nominate and approve someone to be the CDVSA representative. In the meantime, Boards and Commissions asked for an interim representative, which Lydia Heyward agreed to do. Lydia volunteered to continue as the CDVSA representative. Diane noted that there is more information about the MMIP in the board packet.

Angela Garay **MOVED** to appoint Lydia Heyward to the Governor's Council on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Persons, **SECONDED** by Jillian Gellings. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED**. (5/0)

OTHER

Jillian Gellings commented that Executive Order 121, which is an order to separate the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) into two different departments, the Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Family and Community Services (DFCS), was passed and will go into effect in July. It is unknown how the change will impact participation on the Council.

Diane Casto brought forward a letter that the Council has been asked to sign related to Senate Bill 9, which changes some of the regulations and processes of the Alcohol and Marijuana Control Office and population-based licenses. Diane shared that there is a section in the letter related to the connection of alcohol use and alcohol density related to interpersonal violence. She asked the board to review the letter and provide feedback.

RECESS

Laura Brooks **MOVED** to recess, **SECONDED** by Jillian Gellings. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting ended at 12:20 p.m.

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Marjorie Hamburger

Ella Nierra
Catherine Mohn
Karragh Arndt
Meggie Stogner
Ann Rausch

Minutes prepared by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

CALL TO ORDER – ROLL CALL

Lydia Heyward called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Roll call was taken, and a quorum was established.

ANDVSA REPORT TO CDVSA

Brenda Stanfill, ANDVSA’s executive director, joined the meeting and shared the following update:

Membership:

- 23 member programs, 24 including Palmer
- Looking at having additional members to include new programs and tribal programs that provide direct service programs to victims.

Membership program update:

- Virtual membership meeting held March 7 – 9, 2022
 - Focus on changes in bylaws and strategic planning
- Positives:
 - New housing projects coming online
 - Fundraising is back on track
 - Creativity in services
- Challenges:
 - Staffing
 - Increase cost of business
 - Overall fatigue
 - Lack of diversity of services/doing it all
 - Lack of housing
 - Lack of senior/disability services

Network activities:

- Legislative/Policy:
 - Budget – additional \$500,000, and \$3.5M in general funds
 - HB 172, Mandatory arrest changes
 - VAWA passage
- Prevention:
 - Prevention Gathering
 - Virtual LEAD ON meeting -
 - Revamping male engagement
 - Safe Schools Toolkit will be ready for the 22/23 school year
 - Safe Schools Act has had an impact
- Advocacy:
 - Rural program – new grant starting, three programs
 - Programs identified a need for additional assistance
 - Creating new training content
 - Writing a new Improving Criminal Justice System Responses (ICJR) grant
- Legal:
 - New paralegal and hiring one more
 - Still need a staff attorney
 - Lo-bono and pro-bono project is effective
 - Barbara Dunham was chosen as the Volunteer of the Month

Kami Moore commented that she would like to connect with the ANDVSA staff related to issues regarding permission to present in schools.

John Skidmore commented that he would like to connect with ANDVSA staff related to the HB 172, mandatory arrest. He noted that mandatory arrest is still in effect for

domestic violence crimes. What they did is they allowed law enforcement to not arrest in the same way the current law does, by calling a prosecutor and asking permission. But one of the things that the prosecutor can authorize instead of no arrest is no arrest and take them to a crisis intervention center. A mandatory arrest is in effect and is required in any DV crime, and the only way to avoid it is to call and have that granted by a prosecutor.

Meggie Stogner joined Brenda Stanfill and shared in the presentation as follows:

ANDVSA/CDVSA Partnership Project:

- FVPSA ARPA Funds (The funding is available until September 2025)
 - CDVSA is passing through funds to ANDVSA, \$257,502
 - Equipment for remote services delivery
 - Personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - Training/TA on how to safely provide remote service delivery for advocates, legal advocates, and attorneys
 - Hotel/motel stays for survivors
 - Transportation to safer housing for survivors in rural areas
 - Childcare expenses
- FVPSA COVID-19 Mitigation Funds
 - CDVSA pass-through funds to ANDVSA, \$261,365
 - Supplies for DV programs providers
 - COVID-19 testing
 - Supplies related to COVID-19 mitigation efforts
 - Increasing capacity of DV programs
 - Increasing online and remote access to services
 - Identify needs of survivors experiencing domestic violence during COVID-19
 - Identify issues regarding retention and wellness of direct service provider staff
- Increasing capacity:
 - Increasing online and remote access to services
 - Hire an ANDVSA IT staff
 - Assess the current IT capacity of programs and develop a capital needs list to address deficits
 - Create online training related to safety for survivors and internet safety for service provision
 - Provide training and technical support to DV programs and rural partners statewide
 - This staff position will be a two-year project position
 - Identifying needs of survivors
 - Conducting a needs assessment in a collaboration between ANDVSA, CDVSA, and other partners throughout the state to identify specific needs of survivors relating to experiencing domestic violence during COVID-19. Included would be housing, access to services, public health, and safety needs.

- Taking care of providers:
 - Identify issues regarding retention and wellness of DSP staff.
 - ANDVSA will have one full-time staff specific to wellness in leadership
 - Bring together providers to create a framework to address wellness in direct service programs (funding, grant requirements, voluntary services, staffing needs)
 - Leadership/capacity building
 - Core leadership training for executive directors, new and continuing
 - Ongoing training and TA support through mentorship
 - Economic Justice Project (Delta Project)
 - Develop leadership wellness series for grantee orientation
- Perks of a partnership:
 - Collaboration makes friends
 - Efficient way to meet the needs of programs without programs having to do additional RFPs and reporting
 - CDVSA can monitor ANDVSA instead of 35 programs
 - Leverages other resources:
 - ANDVSA FVPSA ARP, \$299,107
 - ANDVSA Delta, \$430,000
 - ANDVSA COVID-19 mitigation FVPSA, \$357,143
 - FVPA general coalition funds, \$140,000
 - Match funds, \$1,226,250
 - The total collaborative three-year project is \$1,745,117

Meggie Stogner noted that the ANDVSA/CDVSA partnership is beneficial in not having to use an RFP to distribute funds, and they can work with other partners throughout the state that aren't funded by CDVSA or member programs of the Network, but they are serving the same population.

The board members commented that Brenda Stanfill's ANDVSA presentation was impressive, and the work being done at the Network is vital and relevant. They appreciated the Network's partnership with CDVSA. Diane Casto noted that each entity could do work individually, but more can be done when they collaborate and merge the funding.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS ON FOUR-YEAR STATE STOP/VAWA PLAN

Ann Rausch, the STOP administrator, and Karragh Arndt, the Council's MSW Practicum student joined the meeting and presented information related to the VAWA STOP Plan survey as follows:

- The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) was first passed in Congress in 1994.
- It was a key piece of federal legislation that afforded domestic and sexual violence victims their rights to safety, justice, and autonomy. It focused primarily on improving how law enforcement and the court system responded to domestic

violence. It expanded its scope in reauthorization in 2000 and 2005, 2013, and 2022 to increase and clarify access to safety and justice for Alaska Native and American Indian survivors.

- The reauthorization reaffirms tribal criminal jurisdiction over non-Indian perpetrators of sexual assault, stalking, child abuse, sex trafficking, obstruction of justice, and sexual assault against tribal law enforcement and correctional officers. It creates a pilot project to allow a limited number of Alaskan Native villages to exercise special criminal jurisdiction over certain crimes, and it creates a reimbursement program under which the attorney general may reimburse tribal governments for expenses in exercising special tribal criminal jurisdiction.
- STOP grants to states are intended to improve and enhance victim services and perpetrator accountability by supporting law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and victim service organizations.
- Historically, Alaska receives approximately \$800,000 a year through state formula funding.
- State formula funds have 20 purpose areas. Alaska's purpose areas have historically and continue to heavily emphasize training within the DPS State Troopers, DOL Criminal Division, the Court System, support training through victim services, and legal representation through the Alaska Network on Domestic Violence Sexual Assault. Alaska has also historically supported two culturally-specific programs that work in the community to enhance culturally relevant services within those areas.
- In addition, the STOP grant has to follow 20 allocation areas, and it has specific funding allocations. Of the \$800,000 received annually, the distribution demands the following:
 - 25 percent of the award goes to prosecutors
 - 25 percent supports law enforcement efforts
 - 5 percent goes to courts
 - 30 percent goes to victim services
 - 10 percent set aside expressly for culturally specific programming
 - 15 percent for discretionary funds to support identified needs.
- OVW requires all states and territories to develop a coordinated plan every four years and identifies in statute the required outreach to stakeholders, which in Alaska includes specific outreach to all of Alaska's 229 federally recognized tribes

Ann Rausch reported that she and Karragh Arndt have been working to provide numerous opportunities for all stakeholders to review the existing plan and provide input through survey outreach, the development of a planning committee, and listening sessions for tribal governments. The staff is in a place of readiness. They have begun to write the plan, which will be presented to the board for review and approval, as well as following the regulatory requirements to public notice of the final draft and sending it to each of the 229 federally recognized tribes giving them two weeks to review and make any final response to the plan.

Ann Rausch reported that Alaska plans to continue the practice of non-compete for the OVW funds because the exhaustive statewide implementation planning process has served to identify needs, and the funding distribution is done through the approval of the Council board. OVW has the final say and acceptance of the plan. The approach has been to give priority to agencies able to provide statewide approaches to implementing projects funded through STOP dollars, agencies with infrastructure in place to travel within the state, to communicate with member organizations throughout the state, and to create or reproduce training and other materials best suited to reach most Alaskans.

Ann Rausch reported that CDVSA has funded tribal-specific organizations that receive funds through CDVSA's Batterers Intervention Programs (BIP) or through victim services so they can best enhance those small dollar amounts. There will be competing funds for the cultural set-aside portion and additional funding through the discretionary amount this year. The hope is that CDVSA can fund at least a three-quarter time if not full-time, position within the tribal agency to help coordinate culturally relevant and culturally specific programs with other funding partners through the DOL, DPS, the courts, and victim services to ensure training, support, and materials reach and are relevant to tribal communities.

Karragh Arndt shared highlights and trending data from the survey results as follows:

- VAWA STOP preliminary survey results:
 - The survey was sent to all stakeholders, including tribal leaders of all 229 Alaska Native tribes.
 - The survey was open from November 1, 2021 – February 28, 2022.
 - 195 people responded to the survey from many different community roles.
 - The survey had a significant law enforcement presence among respondents.
 - Staff will provide all survey results within the VAWA STOP Implementation Plan draft.
- Who filled out the survey:
 - Northern region, approximately 17%
 - Southeast region, approximately 20%
 - Anchorage, approximately 14%
 - Southcentral region, approximately 30%
 - Western region, approximately 17%

VAWA STOP requires asking all Alaska tribes about DV/SA needs in their communities. Seventeen survey respondents identified as Alaska Native, representing 9% of all survey respondents.

- Services: What services would your community like to have?
 - Mental health services (26)
 - More shelters, safe houses in every village (20)
 - More advocates (9)
 - Culturally responsive services (9)
 - Effective prosecution (7)

- Suggestions for improving victim services:
 - Overall theme: More services are needed in each community so victims do not need to leave their home community to access services.
- Other themes:
 - Increase perpetrator accountability (26)
 - More behavioral health services (15)
 - More outreach/awareness (12)
 - Recruitment/retention of staff (9)
- Training:
 - Cultural responsiveness practice (71)
 - Trauma-informed practice (63)
 - DV/SA dynamics (45)
 - Mental health training (21)
 - SART/SANE (18)
 - Strangulation (12)
- Officers: Using your experience and knowledge, how can Alaskan law enforcement improve their responses to DV, SA, and/or stalking crimes moving forward?
 - More LE Officers are needed/LE in every village (18)
 - Increase community collaboration with agencies to foster relationships/trust (12)
 - Cultivating community relationships to encourage reporting and participation (8)
 - Trauma-informed practice/understanding of trauma (8)
 - More training on DV/SA-specific investigative techniques (8)
- Prosecution/Courts:
 - Perpetrators need to be held accountable in meaningful ways
 - Prosecute more DV/SA cases
 - Strengthen sentencing
 - Use fewer plea deals (no plea deals in strangulation cases or for repeat offenders)
 - Follow-up with victims and LE.
 - Courts failing to issue protective orders.
 - Prosecutors and judges should spend time in the rural communities they serve to fully understand what life is like and how their decisions impact the communities.
 - The use of restorative justice that coincides with tribal values and traditional practices.

Diane Casto noted that CDVSA would be using the survey results far beyond the STOP Plan. They will be sharing the rich data with their STOP partners, staff, and the board. They will make sure they utilize the information to create and develop programming and RFPs.

Laura Brooks commented that seeing mental health services was a common theme in urban and rural areas underscored the need and importance of having the Mental

Health Trust become a part of the CDVSA board. The Trust would have ready access to information involving the population they serve. Laura noted that DOC had done several pieces of training for trauma-informed care. When the Council is ready to implement strategies to address trauma-informed care, DOC would be willing to help facilitate activities. With regards to the teleservices, what DOC found during COVID-19 was that many places that previously did not have the opportunity to use teleservices now do because infrastructure had to be built during COVID-19 to do a host of other activities, and that may open doors for agencies to be able to take advantage of the newly built infrastructure to add telehealth services for communities.

Diane Casto shared that the board will have an opportunity to review the final draft plan and give their approval. Once the final draft is approved, the plan will go through the public notice process. As far as the timing of the board review, Diane proposed that CDVSA staff send the final draft of the document to all board members with a deadline for the review and comment. After that, staff would schedule a brief virtual meeting to discuss the feedback, or if preferred, conduct the review and comment electronically through e-mail. The board review will take place in early May.

OTHER:

Diane Casto expressed the Council's appreciation to the UAA Practicum students Karragh Arndt and Jen Anderson.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Kelly Howell, the special assistant to the Commissioner and the legislative liaison for the Department of Public Safety, joined the meeting and shared the following information related to the legislative session:

- The second regular session of the 32nd legislature began on January 18, 2022. April 17th, 2022 marks the statutory limit for the meeting of the legislature. There are 49 days left until the constitutional limit, which is May 19, 2022.
- Of the 699 bills introduced:
 - 302 are from the second regular session (198 House, 104 Senate)
 - Of the 198 House bills introduced: 12 have passed the House only
 - Of the 104 Senate bills introduced: 19 have passed the Senate only
 - Only three have passed both bodies

Kelly Howell and John Skidmore presented a legislative update. Among the bills in front of the legislature this session, CDVSA's watch list update included the following information:

Budget bills:

HB 281 APPROP: OPERATING BUDGET/LOANS/FUNDS

- \$3.5M in one-time funding for DV/SA victim services grants
- Two program coordinator positions to manage victim services and perpetrator intervention programs
- \$500K in one-time funding for the Alaska Family Justice Center model study.

HB 282 APPROP: MENTAL HEALTH BUDGET

- \$2M for CDVSA prevention funding
- \$80K each for the Alaska Police Standards Council and the Alaska State Troopers for Crisis Intervention Training for law enforcement.

Update:

- House Finance (HFIN) Subcommittee reduced the Family Justice Center Model Study funding to \$200K and transferred the \$300K to the grants line. Full HFIN committee added \$500K to CDVSA in the grants line for increased utility costs of programs. The bill passed HFIN and is in the Rules Committee. There's been a slight delay in the committee due to a spike in COVID-19 numbers and the death of Representative Don Young.

Crime Bills:

SB 187 / HB 319 CONSENT; SEX OFFENDERS & OFFENSES

- Change the definition of "without consent"
- Modifications in sex offender registration requirements
- Teaching certificates – permanent.

Update:

- Passed Senate Judiciary; in Senate Finance
- House referrals: State Affairs, Judiciary, Finance

SB 188 / HB 318 CRIM PROCEDURE; CHANGE OF NAME

- Name change
- Bail
- Use of hearsay at Grand Jury
- Plain error (having to do with appeal).

Update:

- First hearing in Senate State Affairs; referred to Senate Judiciary
- House referrals: State Affairs, Judiciary, Finance.

SB 189 / HB 317 CRIME OF SEX/HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- More clearly define sex trafficking and human trafficking
- Create/improve tools to address the demand side of the problem
- Patron of a sex trafficking victim
- Increased penalties for "johns" of prostitution
- Vacation of judgment for victims of sex trafficking
- Potential amendment for CDVSA to provide services to victims of sex trafficking.

Update:

- In Senate Judiciary expected to pass out next week; referred to Senate Finance
- House referrals: State Affairs, Judiciary, Finance
- Note: Workgroup on sex trafficking created by Governor looking at whether or not there should be an entity to provide services for sex trafficking.

HB 005 SEXUAL ASSAULT; DEFINITION OF CONSENT

- Amends sexual assault in the first and second degrees by adding sexual penetration/sexual contact by fraud (identity of the offender)
- Increases penalty for sexual abuse of minor when ten-year age gap instead of four-year age gap (class B felony to Unclassified felony for penetration, and Class C felony to B felony for contact). Also adds victims 16 or 17 years of age for ten-year age gap.
- Rewrites the definition of consent under AS 11.41.445 (general provisions)
- Requires sexual assault examination kits to be tested within six months.

Update:

- The House Judiciary has had three hearings, and another hearing has not been scheduled.

John Skidmore **MOVED** that the Council endorse support for the passage of all three of the Governor's crime bills, **SECONDED** by Angela Garay. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED. (7/0)**

John Skidmore **MOVED** that the Council endorse support for the passage of HB 5, **SECONDED** by Angela Garay. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED. (7/0)**

John Skidmore asked Diane Casto to write and submit a letter of support on behalf of the Council.

BILLS ON THE MOVE:

HB 291 EXTENDING COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- Extends the termination date of the council to June 30, 2028
- Adds two additional members to the council – one public member who is a member of an Alaska Native organization, and the CEO of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
- Adds the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center as an organization the Governor may consult with when appointing public members.

Update:

- Has two committee referrals (STA, FIN)
- Currently in HFIN.

SB 81 VILLAGE PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICER GRANTS

- Rewrite of the VPSO program statutes to implement recommendations of the joint legislative VPSO working group's 2020 report.

Update:

- SB 81 had three committee referrals (CRA, STA, FIN)
- It has passed out of all and is in the Rules Committee awaiting scheduling for the Senate Floor.

SB 124 / HB 172 MENTAL HEALTH FACILITIES & MEDS

- Creates a “no wrong door” approach to providing medical care to a person experiencing a mental health crisis
- Expands the types of facilities a peace officer may deliver a person to as an alternative to arrest.

Update:

- SB 124 - three committees of referral (HSS, JUD, FIN), still in HSS
- HB 172 - three committees of referral (JUD, HSS, FIN), passed out of HSS on 03/22/22.

SB 182 INTERFERENCE WITH EMERGENCY SERVICES

- Creates the crime of interference with emergency communications
- Class A misdemeanor
- Class C felony if the interference results in serious physical injury or death of a person.

Update:

- Has passed the Senate
- Two committees of referral on the House side (STA, JUD)
- No hearings in House yet.

OTHER LEGISLATION:

HB 325, Domestic violence

- Expands the definition of a "crime involving domestic violence" under AS 18.66.990(3) to include the harassment in the second degree under AS 11.61.120(a)(6); publishing or distributing electronic or printed photographs, pictures, or films that show the genitals, anus, or female breast of the other person or show that person engaged in a sexual act.

Update:

- Attempt to address technology-facilitated abuse (revenge porn)
- Has one committee of referral (HJUD)
- Has had one hearing on 02/25/22.

SB 211 MISSING/MURDERED INDIGENOUS WOMEN; REPORT

- Requires the Attorney General to create a panel to review the investigation and prosecution of homicides and case management practices of law enforcement agencies
- Requires the Department of Public Safety to hire staff, conduct audits, establish and require agencies to use standardized investigative methods, and create a Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit Person Review Commission.

Update:

- Similar bill in House is HB 38
- Has three committees of referral (HSS, STA, FIN)

Kelly Howell noted that there are other bills that relate to protective orders, workplace violence protective orders, and firearm protective orders. Those bills were introduced

early last session and have not had hearings. As the session continues, the Council will keep the board apprised of what bills pass and the impacts.

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS, Chair and Vice-Chair

Diane Casto shared the results of the nominations received via e-mail prior to the meeting. Angela Garay was nominated for the chair of the Council with Blaze Bell as the vice-chair. Both accepted the nomination.

Diane Casto opened the floor for other nominations for chair and vice-chair. Hearing none, nominations closed.

Lydia Heyward **MOVED** to elect Angela Garay as chair and Blaze Bell as vice-chair of the Council, **SECONDED** by Kami Moore. During discussion, Diane Casto stated that newly elected officers will assume the positions at the end of the meeting. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED. (8/0)**

COMMENTS AND CLOSING REMARKS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Laura Brooks requested further discussion regarding the SB 9 letter of support. Diane Casto stated that within SB 9, the revision of alcohol regulations, one piece is related to keeping the current controls for the number of outlets based on population. The letter is from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, which took the lead in 2012 to work with the industry to update the regulations. The letter includes two paragraphs on the connection of interpersonal violence to access to alcohol. The Council has been asked to sign the letter of support for passing SB 9 in its current form. After a brief discussion, the board determined that without understanding the intricacies of the bill, they would prefer to abstain from signing the letter of support.

Jillian Gellings remarked that the meeting was efficient and had good conversation. She commended the Network for the great work they have been doing and appreciated their collaboration with the Council.

John Skidmore echoed Jillian Gellings. He expressed his appreciation to the CDVSA leadership and staff for their efforts.

Kami Moore thanked Diane Casto and the CDVSA staff for their work. She remarked that she appreciates Angela Garay and Blaze Bell stepping up as board leaders.

Angela Garay commented that she is looking forward to meeting in person. She noted that she was excited about the Network's work and thanked Brenda Stanfill for the presentation. She also thanked John Skidmore and Kelly Howell for the legislative update.

Ryon Turley echoed the sentiments of other board members and stated that he is impressed with the Council and the hard work they do.

Blaze Bell remarked that she was grateful to be able to attend her first meeting, and she appreciated presentations.

Lydia Heyward remarked that it was a great meeting with a lot of information. She congratulated Angela Garay and Blaze Bell for accepting leadership roles on the Council.

Diane Casto expressed the Council's appreciation to all the board members. She appreciated Lydia Heyward stepping into the interim chair role for the meeting and John Skidmore and Kelly Howell for their legislative presentation. Diane congratulated Angela Garay and Blaze Bell as chair and vice-chair of the board and looks forward to working with them. She thanked the CDVSA staff and practicum students for their work, and she thanked the Network and Brenda Stanfill for their support.

Update On Quarter 4 Rural Outreach Meeting

Diane Casto polled the board to ensure that they were comfortable with an in-person meeting on June 15th – 16th, 2022. The board members indicated their support. Staff will continue to work with partners in Ketchikan and will let the board know the outcome in mid-May.

ADJOURNMENT

Lydia Heyward **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by John Skidmore. Hearing no opposition, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 12:21 p.m.

COUNCIL ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
AND SEXUAL ASSAULT

HOST LOCATION:

State of Alaska Department of Public Safety
Council on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
150 3rd Street, Suite 201
Juneau, Alaska

PUBLIC COMMENT

Thursday, March 30, 2022
11:45 a.m.

ROUGH DRAFT TRANSCRIPT

Pages 1 - 14, inclusive

Council Board Members Present:

Lydia Heyward, Interim Chair
Laura Brooks
John Skidmore
Angela Garay
Ryon Turley
Kami Moore
Jillian Gellings
Commissioner Cockrell
Blaze Bell

Reported by: Sheila Garrant, Peninsula Reporting

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 LYDIA HEYWARD: Anybody online that is
3 going to make a public comment who might want to go a
4 little early?

5 ROWENA PALOMAR: This is Rowena Palomar
6 from Advocates for Victims of Violence, and I would
7 like to be counted in public comment, please.

8 LYDIA HEYWARD: Okay. Thank you. If no
9 other members have no problem, you can go ahead and
10 start with this lady here.

11 ROWENA PALOMAR: Good morning,
12 everybody. My name is Rowen Palomar, and I'm the
13 executive director of Advocates for Victims of
14 Violence. Thank you for this opportunity.

15 It is true that this fiscal year has
16 been very challenging for programs, both with staffing
17 and the way we provide services to victims. AVV from
18 Valdez is not an exemption. During this period, we
19 have provided more services, housed survivors --
20 victims and survivors longer at the shelter than the
21 normal 45 days that we were supposed to, and have
22 responded to more crisis line more than ever.

23 I have been here at AVV for more than 18
24 years, and this is one of the years that really -- we
25 have put so much effort in providing services to

1 victims and survivors, not only because of the
2 financial crisis, but also because of COVID. And
3 really, staffing is a big challenge for me, because of
4 staff that have been tested positive or have been
5 exposed with COVID.

6 AVV has been creative in delivering
7 services and made sure that we were able to meet the
8 needs of victims and survivors and their family. Our
9 shelter has been full to its capacity on top of the
10 people that we helped place at the hotels. So we are
11 doing both ways, not just having people at the hotel,
12 but also we have people at the shelter. So basically,
13 we cannot just say, "No, our shelter is full." We
14 cannot do that. That's the reason why we are here.

15 On top of that, we were able to provide
16 prevention and education outreach and community
17 engagement to the school and the community for Dating
18 Violence Awareness Month. For this month, AVV helped
19 plan several events for Child Abuse Prevention Month
20 and Sexual Assault Awareness Month.

21 One of the programs that we would be
22 providing would be the Walk a Mile in Her Shoes. Of
23 course, we have presentations at the school, but AVV
24 has been noted to have the most red shoes. I have
25 over 100 red shoes for men to use during Walk a Mile.

1 We here at AVV are doing our very best
2 to provide the utmost service to victims and
3 survivors. With the current budget, we have to be --
4 I have to be very, very careful in spending our funds.
5 I have to cut some items that we really do not have,
6 or I have to encourage the people that are staying
7 here to use food stamps, or we encourage them to apply
8 for whatever funding they can so that they would be
9 able to have funds for themselves also and not to
10 utilize all the fundings that we have here. So we
11 help them, they help themselves. It's just a matter
12 of we just don't provide them fish, but we help them
13 help the fish.

14 With the high cost of utilities and the
15 high prices of commodities, I guess it's not just here
16 in Valdez but all over, we are really having a hard
17 time. Valdez, coming from a very small community, it
18 is just a struggle for us.

19 Our fundraising has been stopped because
20 of COVID. I cannot receive as much donations as we
21 used to, because I am also being careful, because we
22 don't know where those things are coming from, and
23 just for health purposes, I just tried to minimize.
24 And not that I don't want to, but I am just being
25 careful as well as my staff.

1 I couldn't agree with you more, Diane,
2 when you said programs can advocate with -- can talk
3 with our legislators and see where we are coming from,
4 what the core services, what do you need from us. I
5 am willing to do that. My staff and the people that
6 we serve are willing to do that, you just tell us what
7 to do.

8 And this is a partnership. You provide
9 us with funding, we provide the services. I think
10 this is just a good partnership that we have here
11 going, and also us being a member of ANDVSA.

12 So again, I would like to take this
13 opportunity to say thank you to everybody who have
14 been providing support to all the shelter programs, to
15 the 35 programs that you guys are funding. And to
16 Blaze, welcome, hope to meet you sometime. I wasn't
17 able to go to Juneau last month, but hopefully next
18 time. So again, thank you everybody.

19 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you, Ro. Thank
20 you.

21 Is there anyone else in the public who
22 would like to make a statement or comment?

23 EILEEN ARNOLD: This is Eileen. Could
24 I?

25 LYDIA HEYWARD: Yes, ma'am.

1 EILEEN ARNOLD: All right. Hi, my name
2 is Eileen Arnold, I'm the executive director of the
3 Tundra Women's Coalition in Bethel, and I just wanted
4 to identify an issue that I've been talking a lot
5 about in my biannual reports to the Council about
6 adults with disabilities.

7 We seem to be being overwhelmed with
8 them right now in a way that I've never really seen
9 before. Since the pandemic began, we expected this,
10 that there was going to be more interpersonal violence
11 and also that more people who are already vulnerable,
12 especially adults with disabilities, might be seeking
13 services a little bit more. So it's great that people
14 are seeking services, and we are being completely
15 inundated.

16 More and more have been trickling in
17 over these last two years of the pandemic, but like
18 right now, we have six to seven adults with
19 disabilities in our shelter right now, which is more
20 at one time than I've ever been aware of. And they
21 are sort of visible disabilities as opposed to those
22 hidden disabilities that, you know, the shelter always
23 has. It's a lot for us. There's, like, six to seven
24 adults and, like, two children as well. The children
25 aren't so complicated, because they at least have

1 parents. It seems like we're getting inundated with
2 adults who don't have another adult in their life who
3 can be responsible or is willing to be responsible to
4 do things like guardianship or SSI or whatever.

5 And those are really complicated
6 systems. You know, APS can't do very much if a person
7 isn't oriented to space and time. Just like any other
8 adult, an adult with disabilities is allowed to make
9 poor decisions and unsafe decisions if they want to.

10 And in Bethel, we don't have an Aging
11 and Disability Resource Center, although we do have a
12 Developmental Disability Resource Center through our
13 local hospital, YKHC. They have one staff person, and
14 in the four or five referrals we've made to them this
15 past month, they straight up referred us to an
16 Anchorage program and said that they just couldn't
17 help us right now, which, I don't know, was shocking
18 to me, and discouraging as well.

19 So we're -- now we're sort of working
20 with the Anchorage program, which is hard, because
21 they're remote. And I -- this is hard, you know.
22 We're not going to kick them out of shelter, because
23 they're vulnerable people, and also we know from our
24 history they're going to just keep cycling through our
25 shelter. So we are attempting to try to get a couple

1 of staff SOAR certified, which is also long and
2 complicated.

3 I'm looking into -- I hear that there's
4 going to be funding for an additional Aging and
5 Disability Resource Center in the state of Alaska this
6 year, so maybe I will try for TWC to get that and host
7 it off campus or something like that. I'm not sure.

8 But it's really hard. It's really
9 challenging. These systems are really challenging, as
10 I'm sure everybody knows. I mean, I'm sure we've all
11 said, like, I can't believe how difficult this system
12 is. Like, adults without disabilities can hardly
13 navigate it, surely adults with disabilities are not
14 going to be successful navigating it. I don't think
15 we've really been successful either.

16 And in the meantime, people are in our
17 shelters for a very long time, and it's very
18 complicated because group living is complicated to
19 begin with, and it just, like, massively ups the
20 stress.

21 So I'm sort of -- I understand, but I'm
22 disappointed at the lack of resources in my region,
23 and I'm sort of disappointed in the lack of response
24 statewide also. I'm not sure what the solutions are,
25 but it's really taking up a lot of our time, and I

1 just wanted the Council to be aware of it.

2 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you, Eileen.

3 DIANE CASTO: Lydia, may I just ask
4 Eileen a question?

5 LYDIA HEYWARD: Yes, Diane.

6 DIANE CASTO: Have you worked at all
7 with the Center for Human Development at UAA? You
8 know, they run the DART program that we do fund. And
9 I know, I don't believe Bethel has a DART program.

10 EILEEN ARNOLD: No, but I have looked at
11 it. What I would like first -- what I would like
12 first are people to help us navigate for the people
13 who need services right now and need to get going on
14 that.

15 Kind of the last thing that I want is to
16 facilitate more meetings, especially if we don't have
17 people here in the region who will attend the
18 meetings. And if it's just going to be us doing the
19 work anyway, which it seems like that's what's
20 happening, the last thing I want to do is add a
21 meeting on top of it.

22 So I have looked at those, I've
23 researched them, I don't think it's enough money to
24 make it worth our time right now. What we need are
25 people who can help the six or seven people we have in

1 shelter right now. And if it's going to be us, then
2 it's going to be us, but I'm not going to look into
3 DART until we have the response on the ground that we
4 need.

5 DIANE CASTO: Yeah. And that's what I
6 was thinking, not for this immediate. I know that --
7 just another comment is that I had a meeting a couple
8 of weeks ago with the Council on Aging, and they are
9 really starting to recognize the higher rates of abuse
10 among their population. And so it certainly is
11 something that people are thinking about and looking
12 at. And I know the Governor's Council on Disabilities
13 is also aware of it, but obviously not as many
14 services as we need.

15 So I will keep at least having some
16 conversations and seeing if there's anything that
17 might assist all of our programs, but particularly
18 you.

19 EILEEN ARNOLD: What I have found is
20 that it seems like people, at least in my region, are
21 not even aware of Aging and Disability Resource
22 Centers. When we were in Juneau recently, I spoke to
23 all of my legislators about it, and none of them had
24 heard about it, and I think that's because there isn't
25 one in Bethel. However, there is supposed to be

1 statewide coverage, but the one that covers Bethel is
2 located in Dillingham, which seems to me crazy. And
3 of course, I've reached out to them as well, but, you
4 know, two staff working in Dillingham is not going to
5 be much help to Bethel, I think.

6 So that's why I'm considering if that
7 RFP comes out for Aging and Disability Resource Center
8 to just go for it ourselves. But, yeah, it seems to
9 me like these are massive gaps for extremely
10 vulnerable people.

11 DIANE CASTO: Thank you, Eileen.

12 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you, Eileen.

13 Is there anyone else who would like to
14 speak?

15 DIANE CASTO: And just so you know,
16 public comment does go until 12:15, so, I mean, if no
17 one else joins, we can go ahead and do business, but
18 then if someone else joins and wants to make a public
19 comment, then we would stop and do that.

20 Can I just -- actually I noticed
21 Stephanie Hopkins with the -- I'm just blanking, I'm
22 sorry -- the Mental Health Board and Advisory Board on
23 Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, she put a message in the
24 chat box and I saw it pop up when I was talking, but
25 I'm not -- I'm not skilled enough to talk and read at

1 the same time.

2 So I just read your comment and maybe
3 this would be an opportunity for you to just say what
4 you said in your chat to the group.

5 STEPHANIE HOPKINS: Yeah. Hi. Thank
6 you. I was just trying to find my unmute button there
7 to jump in. I am not prepared for public comments, so
8 apologies if I'm a little scattered here.

9 But I'm a planner with the Alaska Mental
10 Health Board/Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug
11 Abuse. I've attended, I think, one other CDVSA
12 meeting in the past. This is an area that's really
13 close to my heart. I'm a survivor of DV, and I worked
14 for a DV agency before I came to Alaska, so I really
15 appreciate the work that you guys do, and I like to
16 follow along.

17 And as mentioned before in relation to
18 the Trust, we have a lot of overlap in the people that
19 we serve. So we would absolutely love to partner with
20 you guys and be more connected and see how we can kind
21 of serve some of those same folks that are hitting
22 both of our boxes.

23 And then just on the note that I put in
24 the chat, we have weekly teleconference, it's the
25 Trust Joint Advocacy effort. We talk about the bills

1 and budget items that concern Trust beneficiaries, so
2 that's the mental health, substance use, disabilities
3 and aging populations. And I think I might be
4 forgetting one as well. But one of those bills --

5 DIANE CASTO: Traumatic brain injury?

6 STEPHANIE HOPKINS: Yes, that's the one.
7 Thank you. I've got really bad pregnancy brain this
8 week, I'm all over the place, so apologies.

9 But one of the bills that we are
10 tracking is HB 291 for the Council on Domestic
11 Violence and Sexual Assault, and we did write a letter
12 of support to ask that the Council be continued. So
13 we're tracking that, we're following along. I didn't
14 have time for the hearing yesterday, but I'm going to
15 catch up and see. Hopefully we get that through this
16 session.

17 And anything that you need, if there's
18 additional comments to try and move that, get it past
19 the fence post before the end of session, we'd love to
20 be of help there.

21 DIANE CASTO: Thank you so much,
22 Stephanie. Thank you to the board for your letter of
23 support.

24 And I think -- I don't know if you were
25 here when we first talked about that one of the

1 pieces, as you probably know, in the HB 291 is to add
2 someone from the Mental Health Trust Authority onto
3 our board of directors, which I think would create
4 that better partnership. You know, I certainly have
5 worked with the boards over the years, but there can
6 always be a better relationship and better
7 coordination of efforts. And I think having the
8 Mental Health Trust as part of our Council board will
9 help increase our ability and our connection with all
10 of you as well as the Governor's Council on
11 Disabilities, and Aging, and Traumatic Brain Injury,
12 which is another critical piece of the work that we
13 do. So, thank you.

14 STEPHANIE HOPKINS: Absolutely. Thank
15 you.

16 LYDIA HEYWARD: Thank you, Stephanie.
17 Do we have anyone else who would like to
18 speak?

19 DIANE CASTO: If not, Lydia, we could --
20 like I said, we could go ahead and do the next item on
21 our agenda, and then if anyone else joins and would
22 like to make public comment, we can stop and do that.
23 But if we go ahead and take care of that next
24 business, then we might even be able to leave 15
25 minutes early.

1 LYDIA HEYWARD: Okay. So we'll pause on
2 the public comment and come back to that.

3 (End of public comment)

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