

A History of the Council's Major Accomplishments

- 1975** Published the **De-Institutionalization Action Plan**, adopted by the Department of Health and Social Services to establish community-based services.
- 1981** Drafted a model law to reform **guardianship** procedures, passed by the Alaska legislature.
- 1984** Adopted **service principles** still guiding developmental disability services.
- 1986** Created the **Special Education Service Agency (SESA)** for rural students with developmental disabilities.
- 1986** Led a statewide plan for early intervention services for infants and toddlers, adopted in 1991 to serve as the **Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC)**.
- 1986** Successfully advocated for coverage of **Personal Care Assistance Services** for people with severe or multiple disabilities to the Medicaid Option's list.
- 1987** Initiated the collaboration of beneficiary groups forming the **Alaska Mental Health Lands Trust Coalition** to resolve a long-standing legal issue.
- 1988** The Council's **Residential Services Task Force** conducted a study leading to the Department of Health and Social Service's rapid depopulation of Harborview Developmental Center and no-admissions policy.
- 1989** Organized the first **Pathways Conference** for parents and professionals to collaborate achieving a 15-year-old vision from the Council's former Executive Director Dot Truan.
- 1991** Collaborated with the Older Alaskans Commission to the creation of **Medicaid Waivers** for home and community-based supports and the **TEFRA Option**, which provided families with Medicaid-funded medical services for their children.
- 1994** Drafted regulations **promoting inclusion in public schools**, allowing special education funding based on the intensity student needs.
- 1996** Secured a **moratorium** on new nursing home licenses, supporting long-term care development. A working group produced a report with recommendations impacting future development of long-term care.
- 1997** Planned the first **Disability Summit** with the State Independent Living Council, Governor's Committee on Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities.
- 1997** Closure of Harborview Developmental Center voluntary and de-certification of Hope Cottages' ICF/MR facilities (now Hope Community Resources), making Alaska the **first state without public or private institutions for people with disabilities**.

- 1997** Secured funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Rehabilitation Services Administration (1998), and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (2000) to boost employment rates for Alaskans with severe disabilities. Additional funding from the Department of Labor and Social Security Administration in 2000 helped integrate these efforts into the broader **Alaska Works Initiative**.
- 1998** Worked with People First of Anchorage, the Center for Human Development, and the Disability Law Center to plan and coordinate the **International People First Self-Advocacy Conference** in Anchorage for over 1,000 people from 18 countries.
- 1998** With the State Independent Living Council, successfully advocated for the **assistive technology lemon law** and **puppy guide dog bill**.
- 1998** The Council, State Independent Living Council, Governor's Committee on the Employment and Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, and Disability Law Center successfully advocated and passed the **Medicaid buy-in law for working people with disabilities**, the first state to pass such legislation.
- 1998** Secured funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to implement **core services** for people waiting for developmental disabilities services.
- 1998** Reviewed and recommended improvements to the **two DD Waiver programs**.
- 1999** Secured funding from the Alaska Mental Health Trust for the Center for Human Development's **Learn as You Earn** program to provide distance education for direct service workers.
- 1999** Successfully advocated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and legislature for funding to improve the **quality and safety** of DD services.
- 2000** Successfully advocated for and passed a law requiring the Department of Health and Social Services to **establish a waiting list** and **annual report** for state-funded developmental disabilities services.
- 2000** Secured funding from the from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority for the Division of Public Health, Section on Maternal, Child and Family Health for a **behavioral health initiative for children** under eight.
- 2000** Secured funding to from the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to improve **recruitment and retention of direct service workers** who provide services to IDD.
- 2001** Successfully advocated for **\$700,000 increment** to reduce the Early Intervention and Infant Learning Program waitlist.
- 2001** Co-sponsored and helped plan a one-day workshop on Transportation Funding for the annual Transit Conference, resulting in the **formation of the Alaska Mobility Coalition**.

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- 2001** Collaborated with the Department of Education and Early Development, Disability Law Center, PARENTS, INC, and other advocacy groups to amend the **High School Graduation Qualifying Exam** legislation. These changes allow students with disabilities to earn a diploma by successfully completing an alternative assessment program.
- 2001** Appointed by the Governor to a **starter grant for long-term care reform**, resulting in two federal grants in 2001: one for transitioning people from nursing homes and another to expand consumer control of personal assistance. In 2002, the Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities received a grant to implement self-directed services and develop consumer-driven care coordination.
- 2002** Co-sponsored the **Autism Summit**, resulting in funding for an in-state **Autism Resource Center** from the Commissioner of the Department of Education & Early Development.
- 2002** Co-sponsored the first **Full Lives Conference** for direct service staff, with over 350 attendees.
- 2002** Supported the passage of **SB345**, allowing school districts to seek Medicaid payments for services to eligible children with disabilities.
- 2003** Co-organized the **2nd Disability Policy Summit**, securing commitments from the administration on disability recommendations.
- 2003** Led the steering committee for the **Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process** in early intervention and special education.
- 2003** The Early Intervention and Education Committees launched a **parent training collaborative**, providing parents with a monthly email list of learning opportunities and an online discussion group on early intervention and special education practices.
- 2003** Due to the Council's advocacy, Alaska ranks **first in the nation** with 99% of individuals with developmental disabilities living in publicly funded out-of-home settings for six or fewer people.
- 2003** The Alaska Mobility Coalition secured state and federal funds for **coordinated community transportation**, enabling six communities to plan systems, start operations, purchase vehicles, or launch shuttle and taxi voucher services.
- 2004** The Council, with partners, sponsored **Wrights Law "Boot Camp" on Special Education Law Advocacy**, offering parents and professionals guidance on rights under IDEA and No Child Left Behind. The training drew 339 attendees (100 in Juneau, 239 in Anchorage).
- 2004** Developed a training package on parent-professional collaboration and family support through the **Far North Family Support** project.
- 2004** Successfully advocated for the **re-authorization of SESA** through June 30, 2013.

- 2004** Through the Council's leadership of the Alaska Works Initiative, **key programs and policies were implemented**, including statewide benefits counseling, changes to Vocational Rehabilitation's self-employment policies, Social Security local contacts, expanded access to job centers, Alaska's first Individual Development Account pilot, and inclusion of disability in diversity training.
- 2004** The Council received a two-year **Department of Justice grant** to train service providers, women with disabilities, and families on increasing awareness and appropriate responses to sexual or physical assault and stalking against women with disabilities.
- 2004** The Council co-sponsored the 2004 **Transition Policy Summit**, where over 50 participants developed strategies to ensure all youth with disabilities have the means and support to achieve the American dream.
- 2004** The Council co-sponsored the 2004 **Disability Policy Summit**, where participants reviewed 2003 Summit results, recommending addressing six life domains: community participation, education, employment, health care, housing, and transportation.
- 2005** The Council collaborated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Mental Health Board, Commission on Aging, and Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse to create a **strategic communications plan** aimed at promoting support for services and reducing stigma, using print, radio, and television media.
- 2005** Over 70 people contributed to a new five-year strategic plan for the Alaska Works Initiative, aiming to ensure **Alaskans with disabilities are employed at rates comparable to the general population**.
- 2005** Co-sponsored the in-state **Alliance for Full Participation** and supported 32 Alaskans at the national summit in Washington, D.C., where they developed a state plan to grow leaders, engage communities, foster self-determination, and ensure a quality workforce.
- 2006** The Council actively led the development of **Early Learning Guidelines** with over 60 participants, covering outcomes for infants and toddlers, preschool guidelines in five domains, and standards for K-2 children.
- 2006** The **Ad Hoc Committee on the DD Waitlist** provided 17 recommendations to improve management of the developmental disability services waitlist securing \$3 million in state funds and \$4.1 million in federal funds was secured from the legislature.
- 2006** After years of advocacy, the legislature passed the **Newborn Hearing Screening Bill**.
- 2006** As a result of leadership from the Trust and advocacy from the Council and stakeholders, the legislature funded **preventive and restorative dental care, including dentures, for adults on Medicaid**.
- 2006** The **Statutory Reference Disabilities bill (HB357)** was signed into law by the Governor.

- 2006** The Council commissioned a **State of the State Report** detailing the lives of Alaskans with developmental disabilities and their perspectives on community inclusion.
- 2006** The Council received a **three-year grant to increase self-employment among Alaskans with disabilities** from the Office of Disability Employment Policy.
- 2007** Successfully advocated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust to secure funding for **Early Childhood Comprehensive System Grants** (\$100,000) and **Positive Supports Training for Young Children** (\$80,000) in FY08 under the Bring/Keep the Kids Home Initiative.
- 2007** The **Ad Hoc Committee on Autism's** recommendations led to a \$500,000 appropriation in the FY08 budget for expanded autism diagnostic clinics, with \$250,000 from the Trust and \$250,000 in state funds.
- 2007** The legislature approved a **\$300,000 increase** for early intervention and infant learning program services.
- 2007** The **Medicaid buy-in program for working individuals with disabilities** was updated to allow savings of up to \$10,000 for individuals (previously \$2,000) and \$15,000 for couples (previously \$3,000) without losing Medicaid eligibility.
- 2007** The Council received a **three-year grant from the Department of Justice, Office on Violence Against Women**, to build collaborative networks between the disability and victim services communities.
- 2007** Conducted a **Provider Rate Freeze Survey** to assess the Medicaid rate freeze's impact on providers and a **Family Survey** to evaluate its effect on recipients and their families.
- 2008** Co-sponsored the **Disability Employment Policy Summit** with the Governor's Office to secure state agency commitments to: 1) make the state a model employer for people with disabilities, 2) support asset-building, and 3) improve service integration.
- 2008** Successfully advocated for a **\$250,000 increase** (\$125,000 state funds, \$125,000 Trust) for autism workforce development.
- 2008** The legislature provided a 4% increase in funding for **Medicaid home and community-based waiver rates**.
- 2008** The Governor signed **HB 272**, increasing Base Student Allocation, adjusting district cost factors, and raising funding for pupil transportation and students with intensive needs.
- 2008** The legislature allocated **\$1.1 million for coordinated transportation** (\$800,000 general fund, \$300,000 Trust), marking the first use of state general funds for this purpose.
- 2009** The Council's **five-part autism initiative** advanced with FY10 diagnostic funding shifting to 100% state funds (\$500,000). An additional \$125,000 was secured for workforce development, and \$150,000 for the Alaska Autism Resource Center for the first time.

- 2009** The Council led the **Alaska's Kids Can't Wait** campaign, resulting in the legislature approving \$1 million for early intervention and infant learning services, and \$300,000 for workforce development.
- 2009** The Council successfully advocated for a **\$150,000 increase** for rural transition services.
- 2009** The Council and stakeholders successfully advocated for the passage of **HB26**, permanently reauthorizing the Medicaid dental program for adults.
- 2009** Secured Trust funding for a **Residential Services Summit**, where 125 participants explored new technologies and approaches, providing implementation priorities.
- 2009** Advocated for the authorization of **Advanced Nurse Practitioners** to diagnose autism, adopted 6/12/09 by the State Board of Education & Early Development.
- 2009** The Council provided public comment and coordinated testimony from People First members to advocate for regulations to **replace 'MR' with 'Cognitive Impairment'**, adopted 9/9/09 by the State Board of Education & Early Development.
- 2010** The legislature passed **Traumatic Brain Injury Program/Medicaid (SB 219)**, establishing a **traumatic brain injury program** with the Department of Health & Social Services.
- 2010** A 2002 and 2010 survey comparison by the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority shows a **significant shift in perceptions of Alaskans with developmental disabilities**: comfort level (79.4% to 82.1%), ability to hold a job (31.8% to 53%), and belief that services improve quality of life (58.9% to 73.4%).
- 2011** The Council helped establish three new Project SEARCH sites to **improve employment outcomes** for youth with developmental disabilities.
- 2011** \$1 million was allocated for **Public Transit Programs State Match** to help fund federal match requirements for senior and disability transportation providers.
- 2011** Secured \$325.0 OTI increment (half-year funding) for the Complex Behaviors Hub.
- 2012** Helped pass the **Autism Insurance Reform Bill (SB 74)**, passed on the last day of session.
- 2012** Successfully advocated for a **\$100,000 increase for Project SEARCH**.
- 2012** Job centers began accepting **Tickets-to-Work from Social Security beneficiaries** on SSI or SSDI, expanding employment options for people with disabilities.
- 2012** Collaborated with the Division of Public Health, Section on Women, Children & Family Health, to secure a **health promotion grant** from the Center for Disease Control (CDC).
- 2012** Secured a **5-year grant to increase employment for youth with IDD** from the Federal Administration on Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities.

- 2013** Successfully advocated for the **Respectful Language Bill (HB 88)**, resulting in the elimination of the "R" word.
- 2013** Collaborated with the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority to launch the **Trust Beneficiary Employment and Engagement Initiative**, securing 5 years of funding at over \$1 million annually to improve employment outcomes for beneficiaries.
- 2013** Successfully advocated for a \$25,000 increment for the **Trust Microenterprise Grant**.
- 2014** Passed the **Employment First Bill (HB 211)**, unanimously in both houses. ensuring Employment First applies to both individuals receiving transition services and adults.
- 2014** Passed the **Safe Student Act (HB 210)** requiring crisis intervention training for school staff to safely manage disruptive and aggressive student behavior.
- 2014** The **Alaska's Education Opportunity Act (HB 278)** repealed the High School Graduation Qualifying Exam (HSGQE), which included a retroactive provision.
- 2014** Successfully advocated for the inclusion of **\$450.0 GF/MH base funding** for the Complex Behavior Collaborative in the SFY15 budget.
- 2014** Alaska Association for People Supporting Employment First (APSE) Chapter was created.
- 2015** The **Medicaid Used Durable Medical Equipment Bill (HB 161)** was passed.
- 2016** The **Alaska ABLE Act (HB 188)**, establishing financial accounts for individuals with disabilities providing opportunities for increased independence and employment.
- 2017** The **Disability Training and ID Bill (HB 16)** was signed into law, promoting better interactions between people with disabilities and law enforcement through training and an optional disability mark on IDs.
- 2018** The **Developmental Disability (DD) Shared Vision Bill (SB 174)** was signed into law, adding aspirational language to state statute to guide services toward meaningful lives for individuals with DD.
- 2018** The **Supported Decision-Making Agreements Bill (HB336)** was signed into law, providing an alternative to guardianship by allowing adults and supporters to create written agreements for making life decisions.
- 2018** The Council was awarded a **5-year \$1.96 million Living Well Grant** from the federal Administration on Community Living to implement the Alaska Shared DD Vision.
- 2019** The Council co-led the **Alaska Work Matters Taskforce** to improve employment outcomes for people with disabilities with Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.
- 2021** Successfully advocated for the **reauthorization of SESA** through June 30, 2029.

- 2021** The **Assisted Living Homes: House Rules (SB 89)** was signed into law, addressing residents' rights, including visitation, and ensuring compliance with federal law.
- 2022** The Governor signed the **Minimum Wage Exemption (SB 185)**, eliminating subminimum wage exemptions ensuring equal pay when job performance matches that of others.
- 2022** The **ABLE Act (HB 133)**, was passed, aligning Alaska with federal updates and keeping ABLE under the Department of Revenue instead of the Council.
- 2023** The **Adult Home Care and Medicaid Assistance Act (SB 57)**, was passed, allowing individuals to be licensed for adult care homes and receive Medicaid payments for assisted living services. It also permits payment to family caregivers for some services.
- 2023** The Council, in partnership with the Department of Education and Early Development, was awarded the **DEED Grant** to improve employment outcomes for Alaskan youth with disabilities.