

# **2021 CAPITOL CURRENTS**

*32<sup>nd</sup> Alaska State Legislature ~ 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session*

## **Status Report - Progress**

Once again, a deadline looms large. They are now well into the second half of the first 30 day special session. The operating budget is getting into shape but PFD matters remain in limbo.

We thought you might be interested in a HSS budget Conference Committee update:

## **Conference Committee Update: 6.13.2021**

### **Department of Health and Social Services**

The Conference Committee (CC) met on 6.11 and 6.12.21 to reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions of the DHSS operating budget. Some items are still open and await another meeting.

### **Here's the scoop:**

The CC adopted House intent language requiring Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) to prioritize identifying and implementing strategies to increase workplace safety and to submit a report on progress to the Co-Chairs of the Finance Committee and Legislative Finance by December 1, 2021.

Behavioral Health Treatment & Recovery Grants had funding source switches from GF/UGF to Marijuana Education & Treatment Funds and to Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Treatment Funds. The grants also received an increment when the CC accepted the House numbers of one million two hundred fifty thousand (\$1,250.0).

The CC rejected Senate decrements in Behavioral Health to eliminate grant and workshop support; and, to reduce the School of Social Work Coaching Reimbursable Service Agreement (RSA).

The CC accepted the Senate increase of \$3,500.0 of DISH funds (disproportionate share hospital funding) to support hospital-based mental health care.

The CC accepted the Senate change to switch the Chief Medical Officer from Public Health Administrative Services to the DHSS Commissioner's Office.

The House numbers (\$1,250.0) were accepted into nursing to partially restore funding cut from Public Health Nursing in previous years.

The CC reduced the cut from Medicaid Services by 50%-replacing \$17.5 million.

In Children's Services, they rejected Senate decrements to reduce the RSA with Public Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems; and to reduce the security guard hours in Kenai and Juneau in the Front Line Social Workers allocation.

Further in Children's Services they reduced the Circles of Support Social Services Block Grant by \$206.4. The CC kept the Valdez OCS office open and rejected the transfer of the position there to another office.

A \$3,400.0 increase is to be added to the FY21 level funding and distributed to the Alaska Native Tribes and Tribal Organizations participating in the Alaska Tribal Child Welfare Compact so that they may provide the services outlined in the Compact.

**Added \$1,220.0 in UGF with House Intent language in Children's Services to:**

- Establish a recruitment and retention incentive plan to include a termination of service agreement.
- Pay a retention bonus of \$3,000 to a case-carrying Protective Service Specialist I or II that completes 24 months of employment as a caseworker
- Allocate \$500.0 for reimbursement of Protective Service Specialists for professional education including use of SHARP 1-3

The CC took the House numbers in the Medicaid Services allocation increasing the Draw from the Individual Developmental Disabilities Waiver Waitlist from 50 to 70 new individuals to receive services in FY22.

They added intent language requiring DHSS to submit a waiver amendment to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to ensure costs for this increased draw will be matched with federal dollars.

The next 30-day Special Session is scheduled for August.