

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING QUARTERLY MEETING

February 10 – 12, 2026

Location:

Hybrid Meeting
350 Main Street, 10th Floor Conference Room
Juneau, AK 99801

Commissioners Present:

Paula Pawlowski, Acting Chair; Bob Pawlowski; Kori Mateaki; Vivian Stiver;
Art Delaune; Jennifer Stoehr; Christine Saling; Sara Chambers, ex-officio; Director
Anthony Newman, ex-officio; Chair Bob Sivertsen

Commissioners Absent:

None.

Guests:

Brenda Shelden, Mat-Su Council on Aging; Cheryl Howdysshell; Jeanne Larson, SDS;
Jessica Vasquez; Kim Trevino, Southcentral Foundation; Kelda Barstad, AMHTA;
Jacqueline Summers; Nicole Wery-Tagaban, SDS; Jim McCall, AHFC; Stephanie
Wheeler, OLTCO; Darlene Supplee, Fairbanks Senior Center; Rita Gray, DVR, MASST;
Alison Miller, SDS

Staff:

Martin Lange, Executive Director
Yasmin Radbod, Program Coordinator 2
Angela Jackson, UAA Intern

Minutes Prepared by: Paula DiPaolo, Peninsula Reporting

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – 9:01 a.m.

Roll was called, and a quorum was present to conduct business.

ETHICS DISCLOSURES

No Commissioners had any conflicts of interest to disclose.

TELECONFERENCE ETIQUETTE

Marty Lange welcomed attendees and provided teleconference etiquette.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INTRODUCTIONS

Acting Chair Pawlowski recognized Darlene Supplee in attendance and thanked her for her service to the Commission in the provider seat. Darlene remarked that it has been an honor serving with everyone.

Vivian Stiver shared that she attended the second hearing in the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee regarding HB 255, the raffle bill. It sounds like the committee is in favor, but they are looking for a committee substitute.

ADOPTION OF THE FEBRUARY 10, 2026 AGENDA

Acting Chair Pawlowski suggested an amendment to the agenda by moving the chair's report to later in the meeting once Chair Sivertsen arrives.

Art Delaune **MOVED** to approve the agenda as amended, **SECONDED** by Jennifer Stoehr. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

ADOPTION OF THE PREVIOUS MINUTES, DECEMBER 2, 2025

Director Anthony Newman **MOVED** to adopt the December 2, 2025 minutes as presented, **SECONDED** by Bob Pawlowski. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**.

Bob Pawlowski suggested putting the minutes and public testimony transcript in a separate packet to reduce the overall size of the main packet.

VICE CHAIR REPORT

Paula Pawlowski shared that she has worked nonstop since the last ACoA meeting. They have been working on the annual report, the Senior Snapshot, agenda for this meeting, and the Senior Summit.

WELCOME NEW ACoA COMMISSIONER CHRISTINE SALING

Christine Saling introduced herself to members of the Commission. She shared that she is a member of Tlingit-Haida Indian Tribe from the Southeast Region and is currently living in Anchorage. She is a care coordinator focused on supporting seniors, individuals with disabilities, and families as they navigate Alaska's long-term care and home and community-based service systems. She is currently engaged in system-wide senior discharge barriers. In addition, she is the founder of AK Afterglow, a non-profit organization to ensure families are not left alone to navigate grief, logistics, and financial burdens after the death of a child. She asked that the Commission entertain a discussion about forming a systems committee.

Director Newman clarified that Christine is public member, and Marty Lange confirmed she does not occupy the provider seat.

SDS REPORT

Nicole Wery-Tagaban shared the FY'26 expenditures to date, which are tracking at roughly 50% expended. She also shared the FY'26 budget.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

Director Newman reported that Caroline Hogan has recently become SDS's deputy director. Erik Peterson has assumed the role of chief of programs that oversees nursing facility level of care (NFLOC) waivers, central intake reporting system, care coordination liaison, and NFLOC review team.

Director Newman shared the SDS Continuum of Care document to remind everyone of the breadth of responsibilities of the division. It begins with grant services and ends with institutional services. He noted the slide doesn't include everything SDS does such as Adult Protective Services; Infant Learning Program; policy, quality assurance, and research and analysis teams; or the Medicare Information Office.

Current SDS initiatives include:

Implementation of interRAI

The hope is that this tool will eliminate the Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (IDD) waiver wait list and possibly add self-directed services. It will also open a pathway to adding companion services. There will be three tools: Individuals with IDD, adults; Individuals with IDD, children; and Home Care. They are on track to launch the Home Care version of the tool by the end of the calendar year. They have signed a contract with Mon Ami as the vendor to help the State develop the software platform and provide technical assistance.

Waiver Renewal

This is the renewal period for four of the five home and community-based (HCBS) waivers. The waivers are renewed every five years. Public comment concluded January 30th. The finalized waiver applications need to be submitted by April to be finalized and implemented by July 1st.

Methodology Review

Guidehouse completed a methodology review for the Department of Health. There was a hearing held in the legislature that the deputy commissioner attended and answered many questions. There will be another hearing today, and Guidehouse will present to the Senate. The report is public, and advocates are talking to legislators about it. If all the recommendations in the SDS report were to be adopted, it would add a fiscal need of \$50M.

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding

SDS is winding down some funding received through ARPA in 2021 to develop and pilot new and innovative initiatives to improve the system.

- Most of the funding went toward providing providers with direct support professional (DSP) recruitment and retention incentive funds. SDS made one-time funding available to providers to help them gain and maintain workforce.
- SDS also started a program in collaboration with the Alaska Training Cooperative to establish a DSP training and certification program. SDS was able to transition this program to a Medicaid supported service, so the program will be able to continue indefinitely.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Some of the funding was used for complex care work such as reducing the wait list for people on the Complex Behavioral Collaborative and a fund for assisted living homes for environmental modifications aimed at people with complex needs.

Bob Pawlowski asked Director Newman to discuss the definition or standards for complex needs. Director Newman stated that in terms of SDS, it's people whose needs cross divisions such as Behavioral Health, Corrections, Juvenile Justice, child protection, or Pioneer Homes. Dementia is considered a complex care need. SDS has been working to strengthen the systems that assist people who have complex care needs. They have created different options for accessing acuity add-on payments, and they have extended group home services to people 16 and 17 years old under certain conditions.

Kori Mateaki asked if people needed to have a behavioral diagnosis as primary with a co-occurring nursing diagnosis or if people can have a stand-alone skilled nursing diagnosis to get complex care. Director Newman addressed the Complex Care Residential Home bill and stated that the bill creates a new license type for a home that is intended to be multidisciplinary. The bill does not specify who exactly would be eligible for services in these homes. Director Newman consulted with Dr. Lawrence, who confirmed that residents of these homes would not necessarily need to have multiple diagnoses, rather the home itself would be equipped to serve people whose needs are currently so complex that the only places they can be served are a hospital or Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API). The bill establishes the license type only; it does not spell out what specific services will be provided. Sara Chambers asked if the service details will be coming out in the conforming regulations. Director Newman said that yes, regulations will be developed once the bill passes. He also noted that this bill will address situations he encounters on a weekly basis.

Kori Mateaki raised a concern about inconsistencies in the Guidehouse study's approach to transportation. When Guidehouse studied Anchor Rides, they used 70% productivity, which accounted for real-world factors like cancellations, wheelchair securement, and stop-and-go travel. However, when they studied T2003, they applied 100% productivity without accounting for those same factors. She believes this methodology difference explains why the T2003 rate appears dramatically higher even though both services are being provided to the same population with the same documentation requirements. Director Newman noted that Guidehouse is also doing a focused look at transportation as a Medicaid service. He asked that Kori write down her specific concerns so he can share them with Guidehouse.

Director Newman continued on his report as follows:

American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Funding, Continued

- SDS just started a behavioral health telehealth service with the vendor RingMD to be available for people on the IDD or Individualized Supports Waiver (ISW).
- SDS is working with the Alaska Training Cooperative and Alzheimer's Resource Agency to establish a statewide dementia training initiative.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- With the final dollars, they plan to create a direct care workforce marketing campaign. He asked for the Commission's help recruiting seniors who would be willing to participate in the campaign.

Medicare Information Office

Jeanne Larson, program coordinator for the Medicare Information Office (MIO), reported that she has accepted the manager position for the MIO. The MIO is an office of three staff located in Anchorage housed in the Department of Health (DOH), SDS. They operate a busy statewide health line that provides free, unbiased, confidential help with everything related to Medicare. Calls that come into the MIO help line are entered into a call queue. Most of the calls can be answered immediately by the office assistant, but if someone has a more in-depth question, they are entered in to the queue so that certified Medicare counselors statewide can return their phone calls as soon as possible. The MIO also offers in-person and Zoom Medicare help by appointment.

The MIO team is responsible for the administration of three federal grants:

1. State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) – Free, unbiased, one-on-one Medicare and health insurance counseling to Medicare beneficiaries, their authorized representatives, and their caregivers. They also offer community outreach and group education to the public about Medicare.
2. Senior Medicare Patrol (SMP) – Helps to empower and assist Medicare beneficiaries, their families, and caregivers to prevent, detect, and report healthcare fraud, errors, and abuse. This is done through outreach, counseling, and education.
3. Medicare Improvement for Patients and Providers Act (MIPPA) – Funding that helps Medicare beneficiaries that have limited income and limited resources in applying for assistance programs that can help with their Medicare costs.

All three of these grants depend heavily on recruiting and training volunteers. The State of Alaska funds three grantee agencies that house certified Medicare counselors through the Medicare Counseling and Outreach grant. Currently these providers include the Anchorage Senior Activity Center, Kenai Independent Living Center, and Soldotna Area Senior Center. The MIO also partners with statewide organizations who have a vested interest in providing accurate and authoritative Medicare information to their community. There are about six volunteers in the community who are not paid by the MIO or a partner organization. The other 16 counselors who are currently reporting data for the program are through the grantee agencies and other organizations. The MIO partners very heavily with the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRCs) across Alaska as well as tribal health organizations in the smaller communities.

According to the CMS Data Medicare Enrollment Dashboard, as of October 2025 there is 121,911 Alaskans enrolled in Medicare. In calendar year 2025, the MIO averaged about 332 calls per month. The peak months include open enrollment, October, November, and December, where they focus on helping people navigate Part D, prescription drug plan changes, enrollment, or dropping coverage. About 68% of Alaskans on Medicare are also enrolled in a Part D prescription plan.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

For more information about the MIO, please view ACoA's Alaska Wisdom & Wellness podcast.

Yasmin Radbod shared her appreciation for Jeanne's help in updating ACoA's Medicare Alaska page in their Senior Snapshot. Yasmin also noted that last week Congress passed an extension on telehealth through Medicare, and she emphasized that it seems to be an ongoing issue that makes it very difficult for providers to plan and accept Medicare folks. She asked Jeanne to share what the top Medicare issues are for seniors. Jeanne said that telehealth is always a concern among their beneficiaries because there may not be a doctor or specialist in their area. The MIO received a lot of questions about that, and they are happy to see the temporary extension of the telehealth benefits through December 31, 2026 [sic] unless Congress moves to enhance that Medicare benefit permanently.

Jeanne said that the other concerns for Alaskans are not having access to dental, vision, and audiological services through traditional Medicare Part A and Part B, which are the only two options available to Alaskans for their Medicare. Other states offer a Part C, Medicare Advantage. These Part C plans are very popular because they get to offer additional benefits that A and B do not such as access to a food card, dental, routine vision, hearing, transportation, and caregiver services. Alaskans are very interested in receiving these services, but Part C hasn't caught on in Alaska because they can't build a network of doctors and facilities that the Advantage plans heavily depend on. CMS has specific rules about how these plans are to be administered with a certain number of doctors, specialists, and hospitals in a certain mile radius to meet Medicare's adequate network requirements. Many Alaskans feel discriminated against because they don't have the same opportunity to get those plans like the rest of the country.

Vivian Stiver said that AARP has an advantage plan, and she wondered if there are programs on the market that are called "advantage plans" that are not attached to Medicare. Jeanne Larson said that there are some Medicare Advantage plans in Alaska, but they are offered to retirees through employer-sponsored groups. These plans are not available to the general Medicare population. Alaska also has an option called Medigap, which is coverage for gaps in traditional Medicare Parts A and B. It is not the same as a Medicare Advantage plan. It only works with traditional A and B Medicare and acts as a supplement. It steps in and covers the difference after Medicare A and B pay its portion. It is something that is available to the Medicare population, and anyone who is interested in more information about this can contact the MIO.

Acting Chair Pawlowski suggested the Commission do a more in-depth presentation on Medicare during their September meeting before open enrollment.

Yasmin Radbod suggested adding to Thursday's agenda under "U.S. Congress Bills to Review" to discuss advocacy on Medicare issues with the congressional delegation.

PIONEER HOMES REPORT

Bob Pawlowski offered some highlights of the fact sheets contained in the meeting packet as follows:

- The Veterans Pioneer Home is a state VA home, and the VA picks up a substantial amount of the cost for that home. The problematic roof has been fixed as of this last year. Challenges include strong winter storms in the Valley.
- A common challenge faced by each of the Pioneer Homes is the level of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias (ARD) residents. At a minimum, 54% of the Homes' populations have ARD.
- Anchorage Pioneer Home has the most access to employable people.
- Alaska Board of Nursing approved a CNA to LPN internship program. Pioneer Homes will work with technical education centers to allow staff the educational opportunity while they continue to work in the Homes.
- Each of the Pioneer Homes is supported by a nonprofit foundation. These foundations can provide support and resources to the Homes that the State itself cannot facilitate, and they offer a way for residents' families to make donations, endowments, or memorial gifts in honor of a loved one, something the State is not able to accept directly but the foundations can.
- The Fairbanks Pioneer Home is having extreme difficulty with staffing CNAs, assisted living aides, and nurses, more so than the other Pioneer Homes, although they all struggle with staffing.
- There is an interest in increasing care for veterans in the Fairbanks and Juneau Homes. There is an opportunity for a pilot program with the new Elizabeth Dole Homecare Act that will allow each of the Homes to have up to 100% coverage for nursing care for veterans. This will be in addition to what the VA is doing at the Palmer home.
- Juneau Pioneer Home had a successful courtyard reconstruction last year.
- The Ketchikan Pioneer Home is one of the most stable homes in the whole area, and they have great community support. They also have a great connection with University of Alaska Southeast to be able to get CNAs trained. Staff are currently being trained in dementia care.
- The Sitka Pioneer Home has a major recruiting problem because of a hospital in the area that is offering substantial hiring bonuses plus a \$10,000 moving allowance.

Bob Pawlowski noted that he will no longer be on ACoA as of July because he will be leaving his position as chair of the Alaska Pioneer Home Advisory Board.

Director Newman asked if there were any Homes operating below capacity because of staffing. Bob Pawlowski said that Fairbanks has been for over a year. He also noted that the Homes have not received a cost-of-living increase to their funding.

Vivian Stiver shared that the rates for the different levels of care at the Pioneer Homes is as follows:

- Level I - \$3,450 per month

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Level II - \$6,292 per month
- Level III - \$9,111 per month
- Level IV - \$10,883 per month
- Level V - \$16,305 per month

Kori Mateaki noted that there is a huge cost disparity between community services and institutional services for the exact same care. She believes that fighting for appropriate rates is imperative. Community rates are half of what they need to be, and the Guidehouse study is very important to look at.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

- **Executive Committee** – Bob Sivertsen – Chair
 - Executive Committee has approved multiple letters of support that are contained in the packet. They meet in between quarterly meetings as needed. They approve quarterly meeting agendas, and they are also assisting to streamline office duties.
- **Bylaws Committee** – Paula Pawlowski – Chair
 - Due to unforeseen circumstances, activities of this committee have been neglected this last quarter.
 - Sara Chambers has sent suggested amendments to the bylaws to Marty Lange, and the committee should reconvene to review the amendments.
 - Amended bylaws will need to go out for public comment.
- **Legislative Committee** – Vivian Stiver – Chair
 - Kori Mateaki and Christine Saling have been appointed to this committee.
- **Senior Summit Ad Hoc Committee** – Summit scheduled for October 15 – 17, 2026 – Kori Mateaki – Chair
 - The venue is still being discussed. Turnagain Social Club may be the best place for the event at the moment because they haven't been able to find a venue that is larger and available on those dates. Yasmin Radbod updated the Commission on activities as follows:
 - Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) has agreed to be the fiscal agent for any grants and donations and will be advertising on their website.
 - Eventbrite will facilitate the registration and coordination.
 - ADvancing States is providing different tiered quotes to review.
 - Grateful for funding from the Trust, AARP, Chronic Disease Prevention, and AHFC. Jennifer Stoehr will help to apply for additional grants.
 - There is a proposal for a partnership with Adult Protective Services. They have \$100,000 of an Administration for Community Living (ACL) grant to spend by the end of March, and Yasmin has been exploring using this for travel costs for tribal organizations and others across the state.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- The outcome of the summit will be recommendations, action items, and reports on data collected. Marty suggests convening a committee to track those and bring key stakeholders together after the summit to review next steps.

Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that the data collected from the summit will help to inform their next State Plan for Senior Services.

Director Newman asked about the status of coordinating this conference with the existing Aging and Disability Summit. Yasmin stated that the core planning team for the Aging and Disability Summit is part of the Senior Summit planning committee, and they have morphed into one event. They have suggested some wonderful topics about aging with IDD that they hope to focus on.

Kori Mateaki said that they have been exploring continuing education credits for this conference, but they are having difficulty figuring it out. Acting Chair Pawlowski stated that Lisa Cauble from the Alaska Training Cooperative (AKTC) will be helpful with this. Yasmin stated that the AKTC will only be working on CEHs but not things like recertifications or certificates that care coordinators get when they attend Full Lives in April. Director Newman will connect them with Kara Thrasher-Livingston.

Additional Ad Hoc Committee

Christine Saling **MOVED** that the Alaska Commission on Aging establish a systems committee to review how aging-related systems operate and coordinate in Alaska and to report recommendations back to the full Commission, **SECONDED** by Vivian Stiver.

Discussion:

Vivian Stiver clarified that the purpose is to look at how the system actually delivers directly to the senior population they serve as well as glitches for providers and seniors themselves. Christine Saling agreed.

Director Newman asked if they intend to explore the full range of services from SDS grants to Pioneer Homes to nursing facilities and everything in between. Kori Mateaki believes it is a beginning conversation to see what they can do and work from there. She and Christine are well versed in waiver services from the ground level, and once those conversations begin, they would be open to shifting as opportunities present themselves.

Sara Chambers is in support of this ad hoc committee and feels it is much needed to codify the spiderweb of funding and services to see where there might be redundancy and gaps. That would lead to discussions of greater efficiency, which would be core to what this commission is here for.

A vote was taken with all in favor. The motion **PASSED**. Christine Saling has volunteered to chair this committee.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

ACoA MARCH LUNCH & LEARN DISCUSSION

Vivian Stiver shared that the Lunch & Learn will focus on how seniors actually benefit from in-home care services and showcase how Meals on Wheels benefit people at home. She believes people are always surprised that part of Meals on Wheels is a welfare check. Home care services are wide ranging and assist people to remain in their homes longer, particularly those seniors with invisible disabilities. This Lunch & Learn is an opportunity to demonstrate the needs to legislators and staffers. They can also highlight that transportation remains an issue even for regions that have senior transportation.

Director Newman asked who would be presenting, and Vivian said that the Commission has skilled providers that can drive home what it means to a senior, and they could possibly bring a senior to give it a personal touch. They can also invite other guests to speak, such as Beth from ADRC.

Commissioners shared personal stories about the subtle changes they have seen in their own lives as they have aged. Vivian acknowledged that aging is universal and everyone is affected.

Vivian Stiver will work on sponsorship. Marty Lange stated that he has not found funding yet, but he will continue to explore that. Bob Pawlowski suggested contacting Senator Kawasaki's office to see if staff would help to champion it. Acting Chair Pawlowski asked Vivian to keep the Executive Committee informed, and she asked Commissioners to share any ideas with Vivian.

Marty also noted that they were supposed to be discussing the dementia Lunch & Learn, but that has been postponed until February 25th. That Lunch & Learn is a collaboration between Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska, Alzheimer's Association, AARP, the Long-Term Care Ombudsman, and ACoA.

ALASKA WORKFORCE ALLIANCE

Jacqueline Summers – Workforce Development Program Manager

Jacqueline Summers stated that she is working to relaunch the Alaska Health Workforce Coalition and she presented to the Commission as follows:

What is a Coalition?

A coalition brings together individuals from different organizations who share common goals, build trusted relationships, and solve shared problems.

There is a lot of good work happening in health workforce development throughout Alaska, but a mutual convening space is missing. A group coming together can work on systemic issues that are hampering everyone's development such as licensing, background checks, or needed regulation changes. One of the main reasons to convene as a coalition is to focus and ensure that their combined efforts move those changes forward much more quickly.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

New vs. Old Discussion

- The 2008 coalition was highly effective and brought together key people to look systematically at where health workforce needed to happen throughout Alaska.
- Now that they are relaunching, Jacqueline has anchored this new effort to the Alaska Safety Alliance (ASA), which is an established non-profit that works in workforce development and safety.
- Tying in to the existing ASA operation, financial capabilities, and bylaws will help give the new coalition structure and permanence.
- ASA is a membership organization, and people who are in the healthcare industry need to be invited to join the ASA and serve on the board.
- They are working on a charter and a strategic plan, and a key for success is developing an action agenda with a scorecard.

Steering Committee

- 13-member advisory group
- Any suggestions of people or organizations that should know more about this coalition would be appreciated. Commissioners suggested:
 - Someone from licensing, particularly the Board of Nursing.
 - *Alaska Hospital and Healthcare Association (AHHA) is working on a specific nurse workforce center, and they are a partner.*
 - Native health corporations – particularly rural communities.
 - Is the steering committee looking at the nurse licensure compact?
 - *AHHA is a strong partner, and they are leading an effort to try to work through that.*
 - Someone devoted to the topic of seniors and the aging of the population, and not only their healthcare needs being met but the potential for seniors to be working in the healthcare realm.
 - Anyone who wants to join a convening of the steering committee as a representative for the aging population would be very welcome. The first one is scheduled for May 15th in Anchorage in person at the BP Energy Center, and the second one will be in the fall.
 - Rita Gray noted that right now is a good time to reach out to the Alaska Workforce Investment Board, because this is the timeframe for updating the State Employment Plan.

Starting Purpose and Tagline

The Alaska Health Workforce Coalition is working to address health workforce shortages and expand career opportunities for Alaskans, thereby improving health access in communities throughout the state. By creating a neutral, collaborative space for entities to work together and address priorities and overcome barriers, AHCWC will bring people together and make systematic changes. “Growing Alaska’s Health Workforce, Together.”

AHCWC Activities

- Convene participants
- Neutral, agnostic space

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Health workforce data: gather, aggregate, and share
- Update the Alaska Healthcare Workforce Plan; coordinate with Alaska Workforce Investment Board
- Work with the Department of Labor & Workforce Development to update Healthcare Hot Jobs report.

Alaska's Workforce Future – 6 Shared Goals

1. Enhance career awareness and pathways
2. Develop a skilled and qualified workforce
3. Retain Alaskans and attract new Alaskans
4. Improve infrastructure and access to support services
5. Foster regional workforce development
6. Ensure sustainability and continuity of workforce development efforts.

What does success look like?

Commissioner brainstorming session:

- Fully staffed Pioneer Homes
 - Is there a reason why Pioneer Homes require a CNA and not a PCA?
 - Work with Alaska Military Youth Academy for entry-level positions
- More in-home care with better trained staff
- More locally grown and educated workforce
- WWAMI program brought back to Fairbanks
- Employment for rural PCAs has major barriers. Looking at the conditions of participation and training requirements for waiver would help keep the workforce.

COMMISSIONER ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

Commissioners engaged in an icebreaker activity since there are so many new members and they aren't able to meet together face to face.

REVIEW COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Alaska Native Settlement Trust Eligibility Act

Yasmin Radbod noted that a recent hot topic has been the Alaska Native Settlement Trust Eligibility Act. She asked Christine Sailing to share her perspective on how that's been working since it passed in July.

Christine stated that many seniors who get Native corporation distributions end up having to give some of that money to service providers through cost-of-care calculations. She's been watching how the act is being implemented and how recipients are told about it and found out there's no clear plan or communications yet. An internal memo went out in October, but nothing else has been shared with recipients or decision-makers. Cost-of-care calculations are still being done and collected with no guidance on what to do with the distributions or how they affect Social Security or other programs. There should be clear communications about which funds aren't counted anymore, how people can use the funds, and explanations of any program implications.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

Any distribution from a corporation requires a change-of-income report to DPA, and amounts over \$2,000 are subject to cost-of-care calculations. DPA caseworkers determine these calculations, and recipients may have to pay. There's talk of rechecking calculations when they touch cases in the future and possibly having assisted living providers repay recipients. Providers don't want this responsibility.

Director Newman explained that this is a typical part of how DPA helps determine Medicaid eligibility and required cost-of-care contributions. The overall process is very complex and involves multiple agencies: DPA, Health Care Services, and SDS. It's not clear where the responsibility should lie or what providers should do right now, especially if federal guidance is directing DPA's actions.

Christine felt that the first step is to inform people about what data and funds are no longer subject to notification and how Native distribution recipients can move or track those funds, such as into a Native dividend account. She feels it's problematic that there has been no broad communication to the public or stakeholders. She isn't blaming DPA, but she believes the agencies owe participants better implementation details tied to the new law.

Acting Chair Pawlowski felt like this needs to be an ongoing conversation.

Bob Pawlowski appreciated Director Newman's remarks on multiple agencies being involved, and not only is it on the state level, but the federal level as well. People need to be aware that each level that gets involved is another level of complexity and possible delay.

Senior Benefits Reduction

Yasmin Radbod stated that the meeting packet contains a mention about a senior benefits reduction. Staff received correspondence from DPA that they are reversing that decision. Any seniors who received any notification letter stating that there would be a reduction beginning February 1st will be refunded their money.

HB 255 – Senior Raffle

Yasmin said that if the legislation passes, the SDS Grants Unit will implement a distribution protocol. ACoA staff have been working with the Grants Unit to outline how the funds will be used and to ensure both Title III and Title VI grantees can apply.

Commission Business

Sara Chambers noted that Chair Sivertsen and Vice Chair Pawlowski's terms are ending December 1st, and she recommended a summer meeting to talk about eligibility for reappointment; and if not, start advocating for people to apply for seats on ACoA and discuss succession plans. Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that her term ends December 2027, and she will not be reappointed.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

Acting Chair Pawlowski suggested convening a meeting with new members Jennifer Stoehr, Kori Mateaki, Christine Saling, and herself to answer any questions they may have since they all live in Anchorage. Marty Lange asked that he be informed 10 days in advance because that has to be publicly noticed.

Marty Lange asked if Bob Pawlowski's position as the representative of the Pioneer Homes Advisory Board will be filled with the next Advisory Board chair. Acting Chair Pawlowski confirmed that is correct.

Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that the ACoA service provider seat is currently vacant.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comment was heard, and a full transcript was prepared.

SDS GRANTS UNIT UPDATE

Erik Peterson stated that the Grants Unit focuses on getting funding to agencies such as community-based, tribal, non-profit organizations as well as local governments to provide non-Medicaid home and community-based services. Most of the grants come from Alaska state general funds and some others are federal. The primary goal of the Grants Unit is to ensure services are available to all Alaskans through a wide variety of mechanisms.

One of the primary grants they manage is the Title III programs in the Older Americans Act (OAA), and a big part of the ACoA/SDS partnership is the Title III grants.

Grants Unit Updates

- Received a \$2.5M increase to community-based grants. The Grants Unit is optimistic they will see that increment continue in forthcoming years. As grantees are submitting their quarter 2 reports that were due January 30th, grantees are getting their regularly scheduled payment as well as the entirety of the increase to their annual award.
- Ariel Berg will be in acting status with Erik's promotion, and she will be one of the primary contacts for ACoA. Alison Miller is the newest member of the Grants Unit, and she will be taking over the newest grants to the division. Those grants are infrastructure grants that provide for essential equipment and maintenance for providers, home modifications similar to the waiver e-mod program but funded by grants and not Medicaid, and the assistive technology grant.
 - Part of Alison's role will be digging deep into the home modification portion. SDS has received a lot of feedback from community stakeholders that e-mods need work. This position will be instrumental in ensuring that services are delivered effectively and seeing what, if any, improvements SDS can make.

Bob Pawlowski asked if there were age limits to apply for any of these grants. Erik stated that there is a wide variety of eligibility requirements, and it would depend on the

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

specific grant. For more information, people would need to look at the requests for proposals and then the resulting grant agreements that results from those.

Christine Saling feels that the lack of environmental modification providers and their inefficiency is a huge barrier to seniors aging in place. People are feeling like they are forced to leave the environment of their choice because of that. She would be happy to give her time towards anything e-mod related.

Nicole Wery-Tagaban added that RFPs are going out. SDS has worked hard with the Grants and Contracts Unit this year to roll out the RFPs, which will be more staggered than in the past. This will make it a lot easier on program managers and grant administrators. RFPs will start to be noticed in the next week or two for the 2027 awards. Other activities of the Department of Health include regulations, and the Grants Unit is paying attention to it because of the large number of grantees they serve.

Vice Chair Pawlowski wondered if the Grants Unit needs new technology to handle things more efficiently. Erik Peterson stated that SDS uses the Department of Health's GEMS system that is based on an older database framework. If the Department is pursuing a new replacement for GEMS, he isn't aware. Nicole stated that last year there was a discussion about the implementation of a statewide type of grant system, but they haven't heard anything else since then. Given the current state of the State's fiscal situation, she doesn't anticipate anything new in the foreseeable future.

Marty Lange asked Alison Miller to introduce herself. Alison shared that in her previous role, she managed and distributed a lot of federal funding. The grants landscape is very familiar to her.

Yasmin Radbod asked when the next RFP will be going out for home modifications. Erik stated that it is in process with the Grants and Contracts team now, so it will be in the near future. Nicole added that they are waiting for Alison to get on board so that she can take it over.

STAFF REPORTS

Marty Lange presented to the Commission as follows:

Commission Meetings

- Quarterly Commission meeting preparations
- Work on legislative priorities
 - Worked on letters of support and final priorities
 - Prepared legislative packets
- Monthly Commission meeting
 - One-hour meetings once a month to discuss current activities
 - One meeting has been held, and it was a good opportunity to get more feedback and more direction from the Commission
- Member additions and subtractions
 - Christine Saling filled Nona Safra's seat, and she brings a lot of experience to the seat.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Darlene Supplee did not renew for another term for the provider seat. The Governor's office has been alerted.
- Worked with Boards and Commissions on a compliance issue, which has been resolved.

Office Activities

- Annual Report
 - They now have printed annual reports available
 - Thank you to Yasmin Radbod and the Department's Communications Team for all their work.
- Senior Snapshot
 - The Snapshot is finished and copies are in the packets for legislators. Once the final printed Snapshots are complete on February 24th, they will be hand delivered to legislators and staff.
- Grants Unit Check-in
 - Very helpful back and forth communications.

Interagency Cooperation

- Senior Summit Committee
 - This has been a tremendous opportunity to work with other organizations.
 - Summit is October 15 – 17, 2026 in Anchorage.
- Pioneer Homes – Kern McGinley
 - Made an introductory call to Director McGinley to discuss how Pioneer Homes and ACoA can work together.
- Dementia Lunch & Learn
 - Has been postponed to February 24th.
- Alaska Mental Health Trust presentation
 - Grandparents raising grandchildren.
- In-person visit with Lisa Sauder and Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska staff.
- Letters of support supporting other organizations and legislation that aligns with ACoA's priorities.

ACoA Representation

- Alaska Dementia Action Collaborative (ADAC)
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority weekly legislative calls
- Southeast Region Elder Care
- Alaska Mental Health Trust Advisory Group.

Yasmin Radbod updated the Commission as follows:

- Participated in Southcentral Foundation (SCF) Elders Christmas Party:
 - Over 100 elders attended
 - Live entertainment and traditional foods
 - SCF Elder Program does weekly walk-in appointments with a doctor onsite at their lunch program.
- Senior Voice

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Ever since the September centenarian celebration, they have continued to highlight an Alaskan centenarian monthly in the Senior Voice.
- Weekly E-Blast:
 - Delivery Metrics – Details 2/6/26:
 - 1,730 e-mails sent
 - 1,703 delivered
 - 1688 subscribers as of 2/4/26
 - GovDelivery is weeding out 20-30 bounce-backs per week
 - People are reading and sharing
 - This is the busiest time of year
 - Shorter blasts focused on Alaska issues and legislative session
 - Highlighting HB 255 and the Senior Benefits Program update.
- Facebook Update:
 - Social Security webinar post saw 2,400 views. 90% of them were non-followers, and it got 9 or 10 shares.
 - Number of followers continues to grow.
 - Community organizations and partners are grateful for ACoA sharing Senior Benefits Program and Rural Health Transformation updates.
- Social Security 101 Webinar:
 - Regional public affairs specialist Nathan Cole presented.
 - Attended by professionals, senior centers, ADRCs, and administrators.
 - Excellent feedback.
 - Will continue to host these due to popular demand.
 - Next webinar will be April 7th from 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.
- Aging in Alaska Webinar:
 - Presented to the National Association of Social Workers, Alaska Chapter.
 - Over 60 people in attendance statewide.
 - Received good feedback.
- Safe Discharges & Acuity:
 - New monthly meeting among providers, Residential Licensing, AHHA, OLTCO, and ACoA.
 - What is acuity and what barriers exist?
 - An add-on staffing ratio tied to 1:1 dedicated staff for 8/16/24-hour blocks based on a high bar in regulations with heavy documentation.
 - Upcoming regulations are drafted but paused by the Governor's freeze.
 - There are very few seniors who receive these services of having 1:1 staff. Actively listening to providers who are sharing their concerns and need support and guidance.
- Healthy Aging Checklist
 - Has been revamped and includes Pioneer Homes wait list information.
 - Legislators will receive a copy in their packets this week.
 - Includes a new elder justice resource.
- Final Notes:
 - Thanks to everyone who attended the Advocacy Master Workshop with Teri Tibbett.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Worked very hard to make the Snapshot comprehensive this year.
- Making huge progress on the Senior Summit.
- Hosting the next Older Person's Action Group breakfast March 11th.
- Ninth Annual Older Adult Mental Health Awareness Day Symposium on Thursday May 7, 2026. Free, all-day virtual event hosted by the National Council on Aging and sponsored by the Administration for Community Living focuses on raising awareness to better address the issues of older adult mental health and substance use disorders and highlight resources, evidence-based programs, case studies, and initiatives available to practitioners working with adults age 50+ living in the community.
 - Yasmin Radbod will be representing Alaska on the Senior Suicide Prevention panel.

Bob Pawlowski asked if the Assisted Living Homes Association (ALHA) creates a wait list or vacancy opportunity for their members. Yasmin stated that she can present that idea. Christine Saling stated that there is currently a method to pull a list of homes that are accepting recipients based upon their license type. Sometimes the list is not always up to date, and some providers need to contact SDS directly to have them switch their occupancy in the Harmony system.

Vivian Stiver asked for 20 copies of the Senior Snapshot as well as some of the Aging is Universal pins. She likes to distribute them in person to her local government.

Sara Chambers noted that the Commission only received their packets on Friday, which does not allow much time for Commissioners to review the information before the meeting. Receiving them at least two weeks ahead of time would give Commissioners an opportunity to read through the packet, which she believes is a best practice.

ADVOCACY PACKETS AND PROTOCOL DISCUSSION

Marty Lange reviewed the legislative packets and meeting protocol.

2026 Legislative Priorities

- Senior Grant Services Increase
- Alaska Housing Finance Corporation Senior Citizens Housing Development Fund
- SB 190 – Guardianship/Conservatorship
- HB 255 – Senior Citizen Grants Dividend Raffle
- SB 124/HB 131 – Nursing Licensure Compact
- Review Proposed Guidehouse Rate Increases

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** to approve the above legislative priorities as a slate, **SECONDED** by Kori Mateaki.

Marty Lange read aloud each priority and ask. He also noted the list of letters of support requested from ACoA that are contained in the packet after ACoA's priorities:

- HB 244 – CNA Dementia Training Joint Letter

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- HB 73/SB 76 – Complex Care Residential Homes
- HB 131/SB 124 – Nursing Licensure Compact
- HB 133 – Prompt Payment Parity
- HB 78 – Public Retirement Optional Defined Pension Plan
- SB 21 – Alaska Work and Save Program
- HB 173/SB – 172 Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact
- HB 110 – Social Work Licensure Compact
- HB 241 – Psychology Interstate Compact

Marty noted that as a part of the Rural Health Transformation Fund, the state is supposed to have several compacts passed.

Sara Chambers recalled the Commission voting on the six priorities at a previous meeting. She wondered when they voted on the letters of support and whether or not she missed a meeting. Yasmin Radbod noted that the draft letters of support were supposed to be addressed during the Legislative Committee report.

Sara Chambers recommended they vote on the six priorities, and then they can look at the letters of support in a separate series of motions.

A vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED** unanimously.

Letters of Support

Acting Chair Pawlowski shared that the Executive Committee has discussed some of the letters of support, but not all of them.

Yasmin Radbod explained that each one of these letters is a topic that partners such as AARP have asked for, and all of them benefit seniors. She also shared that she understood from an earlier meeting that the Commission is in support of all licensure compact legislation.

Vivian Striver shared her hesitation on rushing through these letters without having looked at this. She wondered if there was any issue in holding off on a vote. Acting Chair Pawlowski stated that all of the letters fall within the discussions they have had as Executive and Legislative Committees.

Bob Pawlowski felt that adding these letters of support to the package of six priorities may dilute the discussion. He doesn't think the letters of support will benefit the presentation of the six priorities. Vivian Stiver agreed and stated that a letter of support can go anytime. Sara Chambers agreed and suggested they continue this discussion on Thursday.

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** that the Commission amend the agenda and move to Thursday letters of support that have not previously been brought forth, **SECONDED** by Bob Pawlowski. A vote was taken, and the motion **PASSED** unanimously.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

Acting Chair Pawlowski further reviewed legislative meeting protocol with Commissioners.

RECESS

Acting Chair Pawlowski recessed the meeting at 1:47 p.m. for Commissioners to attend legislative visits.

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Commissioners engaged in legislative visits followed by a reception with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education at the Governor's Mansion.

Thursday, February 12, 2026

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL – 8:01 a.m.

Roll was called, and a quorum was present to conduct business with the following members in attendance: Acting Chair Paula Pawlowski, Vivian Stiver, Jennifer Stoehr, Art Delaune, Christine Saling, Bob Pawlowski, Director Anthony Newman. Chair Bob Sivertsen and Sara Chambers joined after roll call.

APPROVAL OF AMENDED AGENDA

Agenda amendments were proposed to discuss approving letters of support as well as including a presentation by Guidehouse.

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** to approve the agenda as amended, **SECONDED** by Art Delaune. A vote was taken with all in favor and none opposed. The motion **PASSED**.

DEBRIEF AND DISCUSSION OF CAPITOL HILL VISITS

Christine Saling

- Met with every person on their schedule.
- Visits were great with a lot of open conversations.
- The most discussion surrounded:
 - Nurse licensure compact – no one seemed to be opposed
 - Senior raffle.
- The remainder of the discussions focused on lessening the increased budget.
- Met with legislators and staffers in both the scheduled meetings and in the hallways.
- Took notes on questions to bring back to staff.

Jennifer Stoehr

- Visits had similar themes to Christine's meetings.
- On the whole people were supportive but similar budget concerns.

Yasmin Radbod

- Kudos to Jennifer, Christine, and Kori Mateaki for pulling everything off.
- Several legislators asked why unions are blocking the nurse licensure compact. One legislator tried to put it in as an amendment to the social work licensure

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

compact, and it came close to passing. Senator Giessel is opposed and many other legislators asked why. Yasmin explained that the Alaska Nursing Association is now supporting the compact because of the Rural Health Transformation Funding. The passage of the nurse licensure compact was written in to the application for the Rural Health Transformation application.

- Vivian Stiver remarked that concerns were over fraudulent licensing from other states as well as how Alaska will grow our own nurses. UAA has modified their program to get more nurses in, and Sen. Giessel's office was waiting on the report from UAA about how that program is working.
- Legislators are interested and eager to understand what is going on in terms of the Guidehouse recommendations. Guidehouse commented in a legislative committee hearing that they had to sacrifice accuracy for expediency, and there were only 30% of providers included in the study.
- They unfortunately missed the meeting with Senator Giessel, but they may be able to schedule a brief Zoom call with her staff.
 - Vivian Stiver volunteered to participate in a Zoom call with staff.
- Bob Pawlowski noted that Pioneer Homes are interested in the CNA to LPN internship program that the Board of Nursing has signed off on, and they are hoping that will increase the number of nurses. He also requested a list of everyone that was met with so they can follow up with them.

Martin Lange

- Every appointment he had started out talking about the increase in the grant for senior services and acknowledging that when funds can be made available, the need is \$9.3M.
- Many of the people he talked to said they were against gambling when they discussed the senior raffle.
- Very powerful that the Commission has two nurses as Commissioners that are not working as nurses.

Angela Jackson

- People were also opposed to the raffle because of how people don't have much disposable income to spend on a raffle.
- Some legislators were not for the nurse licensure compact.

GUIDEHOUSE PRESENTATION

Poorna Suresh came before the Commission to discuss the report Guidehouse has published regarding long-term services and supports (LTSS) as follows:

What is a Rate Evaluation?

A comprehensive review of rates, rate structures, and rate methodologies based on actual costs, service delivery processes, and policy objectives associated with individual services. The impact is to support data-driven decisions for the effective allocation of Medicaid dollars. A big part of this evaluation was to get rates from providers to get insight into the cost of providing services. The information derived is to be able to develop a sustainable, standardized and transparent rate setting methodology based on

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

reasonable provider costs, stakeholder input, and industry best practices. It's also a starting point to identify and inform priorities based on available resources and other timing considerations.

Engagement Scope and Phase 1 Service Categories

Work Streams:

- Behavioral Health
 - Community behavioral health
 - Applied behavior analysis
 - Crisis services
 - Adult and children's residential
- Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS)
 - Home and community-based waiver services
 - Personal care services
 - Community First Choice services
 - LTSS targeted case management
 - Intermediate care facilities for individuals with intellectual disabilities
- Federally Qualified Health Centers
 - Prospective payment system
 - Alternative payment methodology
- Medical Transportation
 - Ground and air ambulance
 - Taxi
 - Paratransit services
 - Accommodation services

On-Site Stakeholder Engagement

Guidehouse visited providers and associations across the state. They visited each region to understand differences in city, rural hub, and village service infrastructure. They met with providers representing service provision across all four work streams.

Approach to Rate Building

Independent model approach – An approach using state-specific data sources to develop the estimates for each cost component for each service.

- Employs assumptions of:
 - Wages
 - Types of employees
 - Staffing ratios
 - Employee benefits
 - Other provider costs
 - Service utilization
- Consideration of participants' specific needs (team dynamics, staffing ratios)
- Recognizes the costs of services with service-specific variations

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Assumptions can be derived from state, national, or industry-standard data.

Broad LTSS Rate Evaluation Findings

1. With a few exceptions, service rates kept pace with Guidehouse-benchmarked rates, but LTSS methodologies still offer opportunities to adopt more responsive acuity-adjusted rates.
2. Personal care services remain essential to LTSS programs, yet reimbursement appears too low to sustain the workforce, and current cost reporting processes are unlikely to meet CMS Access Rule requirements if federal rules take effect.
3. Current LTSS geographic rate differentials rely on a methodology nearly 20 years old, and updating the data would better reflect current regional cost differences.
4. Indirect costs as a proportion of total LTSS costs are substantially higher than indirect cost ratios typically observed in other states, even when accounting for Alaska's overall higher costs. They are calculated to be 30 to 40 percent, particularly in LTSS and Behavioral Health.

LTSS Rate Evaluation Recommendations

- Rate adequacy and transparency:
 - Methodology transition and rate recalibration
 - Hold harmless or other risk corridors – keep the adequate rates where they are temporarily until they catch up with inflation rather than decreasing them.
- Methodological improvements:
 - Geographic adjustment
 - Tiered rates for select services
 - Acuity-adjusted residential reimbursement – possible with a new assessment process
 - Organized Health Care Delivery System (OHCDs) administrative fees and policies
 - Brokerage impacts on waiver non-medical transportation.
 - Recommendation will be coming soon from a separate Guidehouse report not yet published
- Administrative processes:
 - Cost reporting system – enhance existing system to capture additional data points as it relates to caregiver wages and indirect costs
 - Annual administrative rate updates
 - Medicaid LTSS for tribal members.

Acting Chair Pawlowski asked if military care was included in the study. Poorna stated that their scope for this work was specific programs and providers, and the VA was specifically not part of the scope of work. Acting Chair Pawlowski noted that 15 years ago, Elmendorf/JBER decided that they would continue to care for people 65 and over, but if they do not have a facility in the medical system on base, individuals are sent to

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

providers off base. She wondered if there was a big cost difference between what they can get on base as opposed to community providers, and she also wonders how that adds to state costs when these individuals receiving community care have military health care benefits. Bob Pawlowski added that it's not just military care, it's also the VA as well, which is 22,000 individuals at varying levels of care.

Christine Saling appreciated all the time that went into the study. She asked how many certified providers there are and how many of that percentage participated in this study. Poorna stated that there were multiple forms of engagement. A survey was rolled out, and all LTSS providers were invited to participate. 42% of all providers participated in the survey, and this included a mix of different sizes and types of providers. Beyond the survey they also had a standing LTSS rate workgroup, which had a mix of 15 providers and provider associations that participated on a monthly or bi-monthly basis to provide feedback over the course of the process. They also had care coordination focus groups because there were a lot of solo care coordinators who may not have been in a position to respond to a survey but could provide feedback. They also did phone calls with small providers to help them respond to the survey or just provide feedback.

Christine further asked how people were selected to participate in those workgroups or focus groups and if that was made available to all providers and care coordinators. Poorna stated they worked closely with the Department to get the word out that the study is happening and worked with the Department and relevant LTSS associations to nominate people for the workgroup. There was also an e-alert that went out to all providers to let them know the study was happening, and if they were interested in participating, they should get in touch. There was a similar process with the care coordinator focus groups. It was care coordinators themselves who suggested creating a focus group. Guidehouse worked with the Department for a list of care coordinators, and they selected a mix of solo and organizational care coordinators.

Christine Saling asked why the Guidehouse study produced such a large difference in rates between MV transportation and waiver-based transportation, specifically why waiver-based transportation was treated as 100% productive while MV transportation was treated as 70% productive for what appears to be the same service. Poorna acknowledged the question is technical in nature and explained that the 100% productivity assumption is not quite as straightforward as it appears. Rather than showing up as a distinct line item labeled "productivity," the concept is built into the rate model in a different way, typically through an occupancy adjustment. This adjustment accounts for the reality that clients may not always show up on a given day, but the home still has to operate and staff still have to come in. She noted that if Christine or other providers have very specific technical questions about how the model works, they are welcome to work directly with the Division for a more detailed walkthrough. She also clarified that she didn't want to cite specific numbers without having access to the relevant data in front of her.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

Director Newman said that anyone with further questions about the study should send them to him at SDS.

Director Newman noted the finding of higher administrative costs in LTSS and Behavioral Health. He asked how providers justified that to Guidehouse. Poorna stated that when they saw the numbers, they followed up with some of the providers to get a better understanding that they were reading the costs right and to validate the findings. The results varied from region to region, but on an aggregate level there were a couple of items that really stood out. Utilities were a factor in many parts of the state, as were transportation costs and travel. There were also other reasons that were unique to individual providers. She noted that administrative costs are typically 20 to 25 percent in other states, where in Alaska it ranges from 30 to 40 percent. Poorna added that some states put caps on administrative costs.

TRIP CLOSURE FORMS

Nicole Wery-Tagaban instructed Commissioners on the travel forms. Yasmin thanked Nicole and her team for assisting with all the logistics for this meeting.

GOOD OF THE ORDER

Yasmin Radbod remarked that Angela Jackson didn't provide a staff report yesterday, but she wanted Commissioners to know that Angela scheduled two-thirds of all legislative visits, which was a large task.

DEBRIEF AND DISCUSSION OF CAPITOL HILL VISITS, Continued

Chair Sivertsen reopened the discussion of legislative visits.

Yasmine Radbod

- They may have potential sponsors for the March Lunch & Learn. If any Commissioners think they know of a legislator that would be interested in hosting, please let staff know. Please keep Vivian Stiver in the loop as chair of the Legislative Committee.
- Legislators were very interested in the Senior Summit, and some said they will try to come.
- Rep. Story's chief of staff asked for PDFs of all the outreach resource guides.
- Vivian Stiver called in during the visit with Rep. Holland's office, and there was a question about the endowment fund with the PFD raffle bill.
 - Vivian added that there is a lot of confusion about an endowment, and she was able to explain it to the staffer. Vivian noted other criticisms of the bill such as a raffle being gambling, and she wondered why the education raffle hasn't been discontinued if that were the case. She found it interesting that they are receiving feedback they didn't anticipate.

Paula Pawlowski suggested the Commission follow up with AGENet and AARP to see how their Hill visits went.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

Chair Sivertsen asked for copies of the Lunch & Learn documents to share with legislators as they are looking for sponsorship.

Chair Sivertsen stated that he was talking to a lobbyist today who said that things are pretty chaotic on the Hill, and legislators are very busy.

Marty Lange reported that the Commission went to the Governor's Mansion last night for a combined reception with the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the Alaska Deaf Council. It was a very warm reception with the Lt. Governor, and Marty was able to hand her ACoA's annual report that contained a tab for recommendations for the Office of the Governor.

Marty also noted that the Lt. Governor stopped him during his presentation about the contribution of Alaska seniors to the state's economy because she was flabbergasted by the number. He believes it's a powerful number that needs to be shared more widely to help policymakers consider the impact seniors have in the state. Yasmin Radbod stated that they are waiting for quotes from the Institute for Social and Economic Research (ISER) at UAA to create an actual publication on the economic impact of seniors. This may be an opportunity to partner with AARC and other groups to get that done, but the numbers are currently in the Snapshot.

LETTERS OF SUPPORT DISCUSSION

Yasmin Radbod reintroduced the topic, noting that the Commission's legislative priorities packet had traditionally included a list of letters of support at the end per the request of the Commission. She recognizes that this placement is confusing and suggested it could be reorganized in future packets.

Marty Lange screen shared the letter of support for HB 244. Chair Sivertsen explained that letters of support normally come before the full Commission for approval, and some letters in the current packet had already been approved in prior years. He noted that letters of support typically originate from other agencies, and the Commission's signature shows support for those issues.

Sara Chambers shared her concerns with the Commission:

- Commissioners received the meeting packet on Friday but had no chance to review it before Tuesday's meeting. She believes Commissioners need at least a week of lead time prior to quarterly meetings.
- Because the letters hadn't been formally voted on by the current Commission, they shouldn't be distributed as representing the Commission's position.
- Including them in the legislative packet risks distracting from the six core priorities the Commission had carefully developed, especially since some letters touch on politically sensitive topics.
- As a representative of the Department of Commerce, she needs to run decisions through her own leadership before voting, and she requested to be marked as an abstention on letters not yet voted on.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- She specifically discussed the letter for HB 244, noting it appeared to have already been signed by partners. She questioned whether it had been distributed or was still a draft. Marty Lange noted that this is a copy of a letter of support that had been approved for the same issue in 2024 but just updated to have his name instead of the former executive director's. Sara pointed out that this 2024 letter supporting a similar bill was actually a different bill entirely, and the current Commission hadn't reviewed any differences or budget implications. The fact that a prior Commission supported it does not mean the current Commission does.
- She also noted that CNAs are not nurses and are regulated by the Board of Nursing, but they are not part of the nurse licensure compact.

Paula Pawlowski shared that the discussion on Tuesday didn't have as much to do with the content of the letters as it was the process. Questions that need to be answered include:

- When a request for a letter of support comes in, who does it go to?
- Who decides that the Commission needs to write it?
- When do the Commissioners get a copy of it?

Bob Pawlowski echoed Sara's concerns, adding that when speaking with legislators, Commissioners can always clarify that the Commission hasn't voted on something and share their own personal views separately

Chair Sivertsen noted that in the past, the Legislative Committee has approved letters of support. He doesn't think they need to be included in the legislative packets noting that the entities requesting the letters will be doing the advocacy themselves.

Vivian Stiver agreed with Sara's concerns about sensitive topics and scope and asked to delay the vote until the next monthly meeting to allow more time for review. Chair Sivertsen felt that they can make this a regular part of their monthly meetings as they go through the legislative session.

Jennifer Stoehr felt that policy and procedure work needs to be done for staff around this process.

Art Delaune agreed with Sara and Vivian but did note that during the legislative session, letters are sometimes needed quickly because a bill is in committee. Any future procedures need to account for time-sensitive situations. When Vivian suggested allowing e-mail votes for urgent situations, Sara Chambers cautioned against it citing the Open Meetings Act and the fact that the public has a right to observe the Commission's deliberations on policy matters.

Marty Lange took responsibility for the mix up and asked to work with Sara to better understand how this works so they can develop a process to follow in the future.

Yasmin Radbod stated that AARP had presented to the Commission twice on their legislative priorities, which is why the pension plan and Work and Save program letters

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

were included. The Commission had also previously expressed general support for all compact legislation, so staff drafted letters for each compact bill. She clarified that staff never intended to hand out printed copies of the letters. Only a summary list was going to appear in the packet.

Chair Sivertsen proposed that when an urgent letter is needed, Executive Committee members could gather feedback from Commissioners via e-mail, and the Executive Committee could then convene and vote on it. Sara Chambers said she'd like time to explore that idea with Paula Pawlowski and Vivian Stiver, and she suggested either forming an ad hoc group or folding the work into the Executive Committee's policy manual effort. She would be happy to join in the effort as needed.

Sara did note that the Commission has already voted on the nursing licensure compact, so she doesn't believe they need to vote on that letter today.

The letters of support were discussed, and prior approval or general support was indicated as follows:

- **HB 244 – CNA Dementia Training Joint Letter**
 - *Discussed above.*
- **HB 73/SB 76 – Complex Care Residential Homes**
 - *Commission has already approved.*
- **HB 131/SB 124 – Nursing Licensure Compact**
 - *Commission has already approved.*
- **HB 133 – Prompt Payment Parity**
 - *ACoA was aligned with AGEnet about Seniors Centers being paid promptly by the State.*
- **HB 78 – Public Retirement Optional Defined Pension Plan**
 - *ACoA received two presentations about this from AARP.*
- **SB 21 – Alaska Work and Save Program**
 - *ACoA received two presentations about this from AARP.*
- **HB 173/SB – 172 Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact**
 - *ACoA previously expressed a desire to support all compact legislation.*
- **HB 110 – Social Work Licensure Compact**
 - *ACoA previously expressed a desire to support all compact legislation.*
- **HB 241 – Psychology Interstate Compact**
 - *ACoA previously expressed a desire to support all compact legislation.*

Vivian Stiver **MOVED** to support HB 244, HB 73/SB 76, HB 131/SB 124, and HB 133 and continue with support letters, **SECONDED** by Bob and Paula Pawlowski. Hearing no further discussion, the motion **PASSED** with one abstention (Sara Chambers).

FEEDBACK ON SFY'25 ANNUAL REPORT AND SENIOR SNAPSHOT 2025

Discussion was tabled until the March meeting. Acting Chair Pawlowski asked Commissioners to review the electronic copy of the Senior Snapshot before the March

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

meeting to determine if there is anything that should be added to it or cut from it for next year. By March, they will also know what it costs to put the Senior Snapshot out.

U.S. CONGRESS BILLS TO REVIEW

Yasmin Radbod began a discussion of the following legislation pending in Congress:

1. Ensuring Excellence in Mental Health Act (S. 3402)
2. BRIDGE for Young Onset Alzheimer's Disease Act (H.R. 6799)

Alaska's Congressional delegation has an opportunity to support these bills that directly benefit seniors in Alaska. Yasmin stated that she can draft a general letter of support for review in March.

Commissioners discussed the protocol for ACoA to support federal legislation. Acting Chair Pawlowski stated that ACoA should recommend support to the Governor's office rather than directly contacting the federal delegation, though Commissioners can write letters of support as private individuals. Sara Chambers explained that state boards and commissions typically coordinate with the departmental legislative liaison and the Governor's office to align with the administration's messaging. She suggested the Commission vote to forward the matter through the DOH legislative liaison and collaborate with the Governor's office on crafting a message.

Acting Chair Pawlowski emphasized ACoA's responsibility to advocate for seniors and asked Yasmin to start the process. Yasmin requested from Bob Pawlowski a copy of a letter from Pioneer Homes to use as a model. Sara Chambers recommended that Marty Lange work with the DOH legislative liaison to establish proper procedures for engaging the Governor's office. Vivian Stiver reminded the group that Commissioners serve at the Governor's pleasure, and they should be cautious about straying from state interests, though they can advocate individually.

Yasmin will provide a list of sponsors and supporters of the legislation, which Bob Pawlowski said is necessary before approaching the Governor's office. Sara Chambers suggested creating a formal process with a template for such actions. Jennifer Stoehr mentioned that the Governor's Council might already have written procedures that ACoA could use. Christine Saling expressed interest in seeing policies, procedures, and bylaws and offered to assist where needed.

COMMISSIONER UPDATES AND FINAL COMMENTS

- Director Newman offered a member of SDS leadership to provide technical assistance by participating in the Systems Ad Hoc Committee. He was very impressed by Vivian Stiver's presentation on the HB 255 bill and all the work she's done for it.
- Bob Pawlowski volunteered to help set up a template for any state or legislative items. He will share the draft Pioneer Homes letter with Yasmin. He shared that he will be leaving the Commission the first of July, and he appreciated today's meeting. When the Snapshot comes out and is ready to be delivered to legislators, he suggested delivering them with accompanying thank-you notes.

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

- Vivian Stiver appreciated all the hard work and communication. She is looking forward to having a template. She suggested taking time in an upcoming meeting to go over how to sign up to get information about a bill that will come to people's e-mail when there is movement. Appreciate Yasmin and Marty putting these meetings together.
 - Acting Chair Pawlowski suggested Vivian present on how to use BASIS at the next Legislative Committee meeting.
 - Sara Chambers has instructions written down, and she will send those to Vivian to use if she wishes.
- Art Delaune shared his regrets for not being in person. He appreciates people on the Commission who have attended legislative visits in his place. He really appreciates the amount of work Marty and Yasmin put into the packets. ACoA has the most thorough board packet he has seen.
- Sara Chambers appreciated the hard work of Marty and Yasmin. They are an excellent and thorough team that have really augmented information and communication with seniors across the state in many areas. She also gave kudos to the Senior Summit planning team. She is very excited about that opportunity and will be proposing to her leadership that she have a trip to Anchorage during that time to be able to attend.
- Acting Chair Pawlowski also shared her regrets for being unable to attend in person. She appreciated all the work of Angela, Yasmin, and Marty. She reminded everyone to follow up with the information on who went to which visits so they can keep track of that in the Legislative Committee. She's looking forward to seeing the final print of the Senior Snapshot.
- Christine Saling thanked the staff and said she felt very welcomed and educated. It has been really enlightening getting to participate in this meeting. She will continue to read through the materials staff put together. She would like to be able to join the Lunch & Learn. She remarked that public comment closed in January for the personal needs allowance, and there hasn't been any update on that. She asked for protocol suggestions on how to ask for that information. She believes that the personal needs allowance and cost of care are two of the biggest reasons seniors can't age in place.
 - Marty believes those requests should go through Marty to then put together a conversation.
- Jennifer Stoehr was glad to have been able to spend time with people in person. It was a small but mighty group. It's interesting being on this side of a board rather than in a support position.
- Angela Jackson really appreciated the opportunity to come to Juneau for the legislative session. Making the legislative appointments was time consuming, but it was nice to be able to visit with the staffers and get information from them on legislation they are working on.
- Yasmin Radbod was very impressed with the group. She feels like they get better every day in their teamwork and advocacy.
- Martin Lange really enjoyed visiting with legislators and their staff noting that the staff really carry a lot of the load. He feels like he will be more prepared next year when visiting particular legislators. Getting ready for this meeting was a huge challenge because they were also working on the Senior Snapshot and the

DRAFT UNREVIEWED

annual report. They also only had nine weeks between the last quarterly meeting and this one. He would prefer in the future to have a full quarter between the quarterly meetings. He appreciates the Commission working with him as he continues to learn.

NEXT STEPS, MEETING DATES AND TIMES

- Next quarterly meeting – Zoom – Wednesday, May 27, 2026.
- Next monthly meeting – Zoom
 - March 3, 2026 – 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.
 - April 8, 2026 – 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.
- Senior Summit Ad Hoc Meeting – Mondays twice a month.
 - Monday, February 16, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
 - Monday, March 2, 2026, 2:00 p.m.
- Legislative Committee – Meets at least once a month, more if necessary. Next meeting TBD.
- Bylaws Committee pre-meeting with Sara Chambers – February 27th.
- Bylaws Committee (including policies and procedures) – Zoom – March 6 at 1:00 p.m. to include Art, Sara, Kori, Jennifer, and Christine.
- Systems Ad Hoc Committee – Wednesday, March 11, 2026 at 1:00.
- Executive Committee – One month before quarterly meeting – April 10, 2026 – 1:00 p.m.

ADJOURN

Bob Pawlowski **MOVED** to adjourn, **SECONDED** by Sara Chambers. Hearing no objection, the motion **PASSED**, and the meeting adjourned at 10:33 a.m.

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

QUARTERLY MEETING

Videoconference

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Public Testimony

Pages 1 - 3, inclusive

Commissioners:

Paula Pawlowski, Acting Chair

Bob Pawlowski

Kori Mateaki

Vivian Stiver

Art Delaune

Jennifer Stoehr

Christine Saling

Sara Chambers, ex-officio

Director Anthony Newman, ex-officio

Staff:

Martin Lange, Executive Director

Yasmin Radbod, Program Coordinator 2

Angela Jackson, UAA Intern

Transcribed by: Paula DiPaolo, Notary Public

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

2 MARTIN LANGE: We're back at 12:30.

3 Paula, can you do that introduction again? I had
4 forgotten to take it off of recording. And we do have
5 Brenda Shelden.

6 PAULA PAWLOWSKI: Okay, do you want me
7 to go through that whole thing again?

8 MARTIN LANGE: Yes, please.

9 PAULA PAWLOWSKI: Oh, okay. For the
10 third time, two on mute, I'd like to welcome you back
11 to the quarterly meeting of the Commission on Aging.
12 It's 12:30, and we'd like to open the meeting to
13 public input.

14 And I see Brenda has her hand up.
15 Brenda.

16 BRENDA SHELDEN: Thank you, Paula. I
17 would like to mention today that the Mat-Su Council on
18 Aging, along with AGenet, was in Juneau was last week
19 doing advocacy. And we want to recognize and thank
20 the Alaska Commission on Aging for working on your
21 priorities and being in Juneau this week. Thank you
22 for that.

23 We would like to stress that there is
24 value in the non-profits that serve older Alaskans.
25 They work very hard, and our state would be a much

1 different place if we didn't have our non-profits. So
2 we ask that everyone continues to recognize them and
3 work on their behalf in Juneau.

4 I'll just mention that at 1:00 I'm going
5 to be jumping off because I need to be on the Rural
6 Health Transformation on Zoom that they're having at
7 1:00.

8 So again, I'll just thank everyone for
9 what they're doing on behalf of our senior non-profits
10 and let you know that I will be logging off at about
11 1:00.

12 PAULA PAWLOWSKI: Thank you, Brenda, and
13 thank you for working with that. That's very exciting
14 to have a voice there.

15 Any other person online for public
16 comment? Anybody present that wants time for public
17 comment? I'm sorry, I can't see you. Too far away.

18 Okay, seeing none, we're going to keep
19 the mic open until 12:30, but in the meantime, I'd
20 like to circle back for -- at 11:45 we were supposed
21 to do review comments and questions.

22 (Pause)

23 (Public comment closed at 12:45 p.m.)

24

25