



IMPLEMENT THE DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SHARED VISION

- ***Alaskans share a vision of a flexible system in which each person directs their own supports, based on their strengths and abilities, toward a meaningful life in their home, their job and their community. Our vision includes supported families, professional staff and services available throughout the state now and into the future.***
- SB174, sponsored by Senator Peter Micciche, placed this Developmental Disabilities (DD) Shared Vision’s aspirational language within state statute in 2018. However, Alaska still has a long way to go before the Shared Vision is a “guiding star” for policy and practice implementation
- For over five years, Key Coalition has advocated for cost savings and flexibility in options, that if implemented will help Alaska with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) truly live the shared vision. These options include:
 - ✓ ***Establishing a billing code (again) for semi-independent living (SL) which does not require 1:1 staff support.*** Current regulations no longer allow a SL residential option, which allows roommates to receive staff support at the same time, resulting in increased skill development and independence in apartment and community settings. Because this service is no longer available, many individuals receive more expensive assisted living home services where State of Alaska licensing mandates require close supervision and direction in their daily lives, which puts more pressure on a fragile workforce
 - ✓ ***Incorporating Companion Services as a support option.*** Day habilitation services are designed to assist individuals with acquiring, retaining or improving self-help, socialization and adaptive skills necessary to live successfully at home and in the community. A new service and less costly billing code for companion services would mean individuals would be able to participate in the community and practice skills without an emphasis on skill development. Again, not only does this provide a cost savings, but it is aligned with the Shared Vision.
 - ✓ ***Continuing to allow for technologies to reduce direct staff support.*** Ongoing development of “smart homes” and other electronic options can reduce the cost of direct staff support. Routine investment in low-tech and even high-tech options have the potential to dramatically drive the long-term costs of services, while aligning with the Shared Vision by providing more independence for individuals.
 - ✓ ***Developing an alternative approach to funding and providing supported employment services.*** Supported employment providers can only bill for services when working directly alongside an individual, such as would occur in an institution, thus not allowing for independent skill development. Individuals are not allowed to telework in residential settings even though thousands of people are working from home during the pandemic. In addition, needed supported employment services such as developing natural supports with co-workers are not reimbursed. As a result, providers have downsized or eliminated supported employment services. There is considerable evidence from other states that when people work, other costs such as health care (general Medicaid program) and food stamps decrease. In addition, the ability to use the natural supports of co-workers decrease the cost of training supported employees and increased the length of time they were employed.

RECOMMENDATION: That the State of Alaska implement these cost saving measures and at the same time, help Alaskans with IDD to live lives with meaning as outlined in the Shared Vision.