

REDUCE THE WAITLIST FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES SERVICES **TALKING POINTS**

- Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS) waivers under Medicaid help Alaskans with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) live at home in their local communities.
- Medicaid allows States to maintain waiting lists for home and community-based waiver services when demand exceeds resources.
- In Alaska, only individuals with IDD are impacted by the waitlist – a population with some of the most significant needs.
- In FY16, SDS cut the number of annual selections (draws) from the waitlist from 200 to 50. As a result:
 - The waitlist has increased from 535 in FY16 to 629 in FY17 to 739 in FY18 and now it's risen to 982 as of January 2, 2019.
 - The number of individuals receiving institutional level of services from much more expensive out-of-state institutions or at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API) has grown.
- The longer people sit on the waitlist, the more costs increase.
 - Young people sit at home and lose the skills they developed from school.
 - Family members neglect their own health and forego income trying to “do it all”.
- Individuals and families are not asking for a handout; by the nature of their disabilities, individuals with IDD require individualized, comprehensive and life-long services in order to live successfully in the community.
 - Families contribute to the cost of care for their children with IDD – far beyond what they contribute to the care of their children without a disability.
- Return on Investment: Federal law requires states to provide costly institutional services if requested by the individual and/or family.
 - Cost per person ranges from \$37,330-96,093 for 84% of those served through the IDD home and community-based waiver compared to \$164,234 in nursing homes, \$201,663 in out-of-state institutions and Alaska Psychiatric Institute average cost per person is \$531,312 (Office of Rate Review – Oct. 2017).
- Offsets and Cost Savings Recommendations:
 - Using technology to reduce the need for direct staff support.
 - Establishing a Medicaid waiver billing code for companion services which is less costly than habilitative services.

- Establishing a billing code for the semi-independent living option that does not require 1:1 staff supports.
- Developing an alternative approach to funding supported employment services.
- Fully implementing the Durable Medical Equipment Re-Use Program of which recycles used medical equipment for use by recipients who lack the resources or funding for new equipment.
- **ABLE Program:** A savings account for people diagnosed with a qualified disability prior to the age of 26 who wants to have a savings account to save money up to \$15,000 per year to use for their disability and special needs. The savings account will not impact the recipient's benefits if all regulations are complied with.
- **RECOMMENDATION:** Increase the number of annual selections (draws) from the Developmental Disabilities Registry (waitlist) from 50 to 100, which will result in long-term cost savings to the State of Alaska by providing services early on and allow people to stay in their home communities rather than be forced into costly out-of-state institutions or the Alaska Psychiatric Institute.