

THE Key Coalition of Alaska strongly supports and endorses the following recommendations:

- **Alaska Autism Resource Center** – The Alaska Autism Resource Center (AARC) is a resource to assist families who have a child with an autism spectrum disorder navigate their way through funding and treatment resources in order to best ensure the well-being of their child. Autism is only beginning to gain recognition in the United States as a treatable condition through early intervention practices, and treatment has shown to highly improve the quality of life of a child once he or she becomes an adult. Because of this new recognition of autism, funding sources are often difficult for families to locate, despite the necessity of treatment for a child with autism. More funds are needed to improve the quality of care this resource can provide. *The Key Coalition of Alaska supports the inclusion of \$100,000 in the Governor’s Budget through GF/MH for this project.*
- **Special Education Service Agency** – The Special Education Service Agency (SESA) provides no-charge services for low-incidence disabilities for 73 school districts in rural and remote locations throughout Alaska. Many of these districts have no method of guidance for assisting individuals with low-incidence disabilities. SESA sends knowledgeable staff members to give consultation to instructors and provides on-going consultation over the phone or in-person (if needed) after the initial service. *The Key Coalition of Alaska supports inclusion of \$100,000 through GF/MH to increase SESA’s ability to do more outreach.*
- **Disability Program Navigators** – The funding for the Disability Program Navigator will be used to help facilitate seamless, comprehensive services to one-stop job center customers with disabilities. In providing this easily understandable service, individuals with disabilities will be able to increase their self-sufficiency and employment opportunities significantly. *The Key Coalition of Alaska supports funding for the establishment of two full-time, permanent Disability Program Navigator positions, utilizing GF/MH funds in the amount of \$150,000.*
- **Supported Housing** – Support affordable supporting housing as provided in Alaska Housing Finance Corporation’s (AHFC) Homeless Assistance Program. This program funds several programs that provide support services for Alaskan’s experiencing homeless, including people with mental illness, Alzheimer’s and related dementia, developmental disabilities, brain injury and/or addiction disorders. Support housing services are key to continued and sustained recovery for many people. With an approach of maintaining affordability while offering outreach and support services, people with disabilities can afford housing that provides a safe and health environment. *The Key Coalition of Alaska supports the Homeless Assistance Program through the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation.*

- **Traumatic Brain Injury Coordinator** – This program works to lessen costs by lowering the number of emergency room visits and away-from-home care. It also readies the state for individuals who need vocational rehabilitation or employment. The Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Care Coordinator Program will expand the number of TBI care coordinators with specialized expertise in the state of Alaska from one to two. *The Key Coalition of Alaska supports the inclusion of \$200,000 in the Governor’s Budget through GF/MH funds for the addition of a Traumatic Brain Injury Coordinator.*
- **Coordinated Transportation** – Alaska is one of only two states in the US that does not currently have a state-funded community transportation system. Despite more people using community transportation systems, operating costs continue to rise; putting a burden on the local systems due to lack of compensation. *The Key Coalition of Alaska supports the inclusion of \$100,000 for operating costs for community transportation, as well as inclusion of \$3 million for extending the Transportation Task Force and continued operations.*
- **Rural Transition Services** – Rural Transition Services are an opportunity for students with disabilities who live in rural areas to transition from school to an active and efficient adult life. The project linked to this funding regarding the services has two important objectives. First, to spend a week of hands-on training with staff members to prepare them in the kinds of vocational and educational lifestyles that both rural students would seek to lead and that would bring benefit to their community. The second objective is to bring these services to other rural areas of the state, instead of focusing on urban areas that are difficult for their targeted audiences to access. The projected expansion of beneficiaries served by this project is from 400 to 525. *The Key Coalition of Alaska supports the inclusion of \$50,000 in GF/MH funds to provide training and services for successful transition from school to an active and efficient adult life.*
- **DSP Wage Increase** – The Direct Services Professional job is uncompetitive in local labor markets with a lack of qualified staff, high turnover and retention problems. Quality of care is compromised due to short staffing, unbalance workloads, and overtime; care hours are authorized, but not delivered; there is a greater need for backup and emergencies services; disincentives for providers to invest in training and retention. The solution is to increase wages for Direct Service Professionals. Now is the time to act. Other states are addressing low wages in a variety of ways. Approximately 24 states implemented wage increase pass-throughs. Some states provided enhanced rates to agencies, based on performance. The District of Columbia and 17 states set a minimum wage for the low-wage labor market. Twelve (12) states targeted expanded health care coverage. *The Key Coalition f Alaska supports an increase of \$2.00 per hour for Direct Service Personnel.*