

550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1820
Anchorage, AK 99501
Phone (907) 269-7960
Fax (907) 269-7966
Email jjessee@mhtrust.org



December 3, 2000

Ron Adler, Alaska Community Mental Health Services Association
Dr. Jim Allen, UAF
Dr. Jim Berner, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium
Dr. Christiane Brems, UAA
Dr. Gary Hughes, University Affiliated Program
Dr. Mark Johnson, UAA
Loren Jones, Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
Katsumi Kenaston, Alaska Mental Health Consumer Web
Beth LaCrosse, NAMI Alaska
Walter Majoros, Alaska Mental Health Board
Dr. Spero Manson, University of Colorado
Jan McGillivray, Mental Health Association in Alaska
Dr. Gerald Mohatt, UAF
Cynthia Navarrette, Alaska Native Health Board

Commissioner Karen Perdue, DHSS
John Pugh, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority
Richard Rainery, Alaska Mental Health Board
Jill Ramsey, NAMI Alaska
Millie Ryan, Governor's Council on Disabilities & Special Education
Dr. Brian Saylor, UAA
Anne Schultz, Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse
Dr. Bernard Segal, UAA
Dr. Kim Shore, Alaska Pacific University
Jean M. Steele, Alaska Advocates for the Mentally Ill
Dr. Shelley Theno, UAS
Doug Veit, Rural Mental Health Providers Association
Pam Watts, Advisory Board on Alcoholism & Drug Abuse
Dick Wilson, Alaska Young Family Network

Dear colleagues,

Thank you for participating in the Mental Health Research Steering Committee convened by the Trust on September 15, 2000. We held a lively discussion on how to bring together research, policy, and practice to better improve services to Alaskans with mental illness. The purpose of a mental health research agenda is to assist researchers in prioritizing their projects and to assist funders in understanding where research proposals fit into Alaska's priorities. We are on the right track, but there is some work to do.

Meeting participants agreed that a smaller group would develop a framing document to define the problem of developing best research-based practice and frame some issues. The framing document would include a statement of purpose for Alaska's mental health research agenda. It would also outline a way to establish and prioritize Alaska's mental health research needs, ways to identify and refine research questions, skills and functional requirements to conduct necessary research, identify existing resources, identify projects that could be tailored to available funding, and identify mental health research stakeholders.

I expect that a work group would meet up to 4 times by teleconference over the next couple of months, and bring a document back to the Mental Health Research Steering Committee in March.

I will be contacting these individuals or representatives from their organizations to participate in the work group:

Dr. Gary Hughes	Ron Adler	Cynthia Navarrette
Dr. Jerry Mohatt	Doug Veit	Richard Rainey
Dr. Shelley Theno	Katsumi Kenaston	Millie Ryan
Dr. Shore	Beth LaCrosse	Anne Schultz
Dr. Spero Manson	Jean Steele	Jane Demmert
Dr. Leonard Abel	Dick Wilson	

I have enclosed a copy of the minutes from that meeting to refresh your memory of our conversations and to share with your colleagues.

Thank you for your work on behalf of Alaskans with mental illness.

Sincerely,

/s/

Jeff Jessee
Executive Director

Cc: Trustees
Karl Brimmer, Division of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities
Dr. Donna Burgess
Liz Connell, Office of Senator Stevens
Dr. Denny DeGross
Jane Demmert, Alaska Commission on Aging
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