

**University of Alaska Behavioral Health Workforce Summit – October 25, 2016**  
**Submitted by: Kathy Craft, Director, Alaska Health Workforce Coalition**

On October 25, 2016 UA President Jim Johnsen and Jeff Jessee, Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority CEO, convened a meeting of approximately one-hundred university faculty, staff and students; state government commissioners and staff; representatives for service members, veterans and their family members; tribal providers; researchers; and, behavioral health providers and practitioners to discuss Alaska's current and future behavioral health workforce. The meeting was video-streamed for those who wanted to participate but were unable to attend in person.

The University of Alaska is currently examining the role it plays in the behavioral health workforce pipeline and is searching for ways to strengthen the contribution made when developing a behavioral health workforce that is prepared to meet the needs of Alaskans. Goals of the meeting included:

- Confirm that Alaska's behavioral health workforce is a UA priority.
- Examine UA's role and search for ways to strengthen our contribution to developing Alaska's behavioral health workforce.
- Determine a sustainable, systemic way for improving Alaska's behavioral health workforce.
- Sharpen UA's vision regarding behavioral health workforce and refine a future list of priorities.
- Share information on trends, opportunities, challenges and initiatives in behavioral health workforce programming.
- Exchange ideas that lead to prioritizing critical behavioral health workforce areas as guidance for a strategic action plan.

Intended outcomes from the meeting focused on additional research, investigation and planning which will result in an updated vision and mission statement as well as a strategic action plan which addresses the educational, academic and continuing education pipeline for Alaska's behavioral health workforce for the next decade. Specifically, meeting outcomes included:

- Develop a comprehensive and executive summary report of the meeting.
- Identify the top UA behavioral health workforce priorities and opportunities.
- Based on the priorities identified, gather information and best practices for the preparing the workforce.
- Draft an updated vision and strategic action plan which will address the educational, academic, training, and continuing education pipeline for Alaska's behavioral health workforce.
- Request volunteers through the summit evaluation to continue to work which has been identified.
- Contract to have a national search conducted of educational institutions which have demonstrated innovations in areas and opportunities identified.

From the start of the meeting, it was important that participants work from the conceptual ideas needed to preserve what is working well; practicality in retooling existing efforts which require attention; and, innovation when trying to meet emerging trends and evidenced-based practices. Over time statewide stakeholders have made great improvements and enhanced our continuum of care allowing our future work to benefit from the existing strong partnerships and solid foundation.

The meeting consisted of morning sessions which concentrated on providing participants with an overview of Alaska's behavioral health systems transformation and specific data which informed the afternoon break-out sessions. Initial areas of focus included the following:

- ✓ Career Pathways, Apprenticeships, Experiential Learning and Credit
- ✓ Inter-professional Training/Education
- ✓ Financing & Flexibility in Education/Training
- ✓ Re-entry/Department of Corrections
- ✓ Cohort Model

More UA Behavioral Health Workforce Summit information can be found at the following website:

<https://www.uaa.alaska.edu/academics/college-of-health/departments/ACRHHW/dataandreportspages/2016-bh-workforce-summit.cshtml>

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