

Overview

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority Beneficiary Projects Initiative Focus Area supports and funds grassroots, beneficiary-driven, peer-to-peer programs and a grants program that directly improves the lives of Trust beneficiaries. Trust beneficiaries include people with mental illness, alcoholism and other substance related disorders, developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, and traumatic brain injury.

Paralleling a growing national movement, Trust beneficiaries are working together to make changes in their lives, in the health care system and in society. Peer-based service models of care are based on the principle of mutual support, have been tested in multiple environments and are grounded in the values of community and relationship.

Strengthening Community

- Increasing peer-based recovery support programs and peer workforce to provide support to others with similar experiences and to enhance Alaska's continuum of care for beneficiaries.
- Developing community-based peer support and other forms of peer-based recovery management programs to help prevent the need for more expensive, intensive levels of service, including hospitalization and/or incarceration.
- Sustaining recovery support for persons with high severity and complex social and behavioral health issues who do not fare well in traditional services.¹

Budget priorities for FY14

- Foster evidence-based models of peer support, e.g., criminal justice² and addiction recovery.
- Develop peer support programming in new regions across Alaska and across beneficiary groups.
- Develop the peer workforce and competencies for peer support specialist positions.
- Integrate peer support into community health and behavior health programs statewide.

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¹ White, W. Boyle, M. and Loveland, D. (2003) *Recovery Management: Transcending the Limitations of Addiction Treatment*. Behavioral Health Management 23(3):38-44.

² Davidson, L., & Rowe, M. (2008). *Peer support within criminal justice settings: The role of forensic peer specialists*. Delmar, NY: CMHS National GAINS Center.