
From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2002 5:08 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Subject: Congratulations Jo Lynn!

Please join me in congratulating Jo Lynn Cagle upon her election as national NEW President.

What a wonderful professional achievement for Jo Lynn in addition to an opportunity for us in Alaska to benefit from her participation at the national level of the organization. During her term as President, Jo Lynn will see the association through two Training Conferences, Little Rock in 2001 and St. Paul in 2003. In addition she will be the official spokesperson for NEW in venues across the nation.

With Jo Lynn as national President and Gwen McCormick, Public Assistance Analyst in System Operations, who is also on the national NEW Board, Alaska has great opportunities for sharing information between states and our federal partners. NEW lobbies for improvements in much of our business from Food Stamp Program Simplification and Quality Control reform to a reasonable approach to TANF reauthorization. It's great to know our staffs' voices are being heard at that level.

Again, many congratulations, Jo Lynn, and we wish you a successful and productive tenure as NEW National President!

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. of HEALTH and SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION of PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

TONY KNOWLES, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110640

JUNEAU, AK 99811-0640

PHONE: (907) 465-3347 FAX: 465-5154

December 2001

Dear APA Recipient,

We are writing to pass on some very important information. Together with PRO-West, a company that works for Medicare to improve the quality of your health care, we are letting women know how important it is to get regular mammograms.

A mammogram is an x-ray of the breast that can detect breast cancer in its early stages, when it can more easily be treated, or even cured. The American Cancer Society recommends that women over 40 get a mammogram every year. Medicare or Medicaid will cover the cost of the mammogram.

The next time you go to a doctor, please ask about getting a mammogram. It may save your life.

Enclosed is a flyer that answers a few common questions about mammograms. Also enclosed is a list of places where you can get a mammogram. If you have any questions about mammograms or breast cancer, please call the Cancer Information Service's toll-free phone number at 800-422-6237.

If you already get mammograms regularly but know a woman who doesn't, please pass on this information. Thank you for helping to fight breast cancer.

Sincerely,

Jim Nordlund, Director
Division of Public Assistance

Thomas S. Nighswander, MD, MPH
Principal Clinical Coordinator
PRO-West

Memorandum

October 9, 2001

To: DPA Staff

From: Jim Nordlund, Director

Re: The 60-month limit

I wanted to write to you about an important issue that is of concern to all of us: the 60-month lifetime limit for Temporary Assistance recipients. As you know the federal and state welfare reform laws that established the Alaska Temporary Assistance Program require that cash benefits be limited to 60 months in a recipient's lifetime. Since the implementation of Temporary Assistance in 1997 we have seen thousands of families, over 40%, become employed and leave the program. However, there are also families who have not been successful at reaching self-sufficiency.

The first big wave of families will reach the limit in July of 2002. I want to reaffirm with you that the 60-month limit will be implemented and cash benefits for some families will end beginning in July. At the same time, the law does allow for exemptions to the limit and other families will be eligible for extended benefits. Our objective will be to maintain a safety net for truly needy families while enforcing the 60-month limit.

The law recognizes that it is not reasonable to expect that all families can be self-sufficient after 60-months, if ever. Exemptions exist for families with disabled parents or children, mental illness, victims of domestic violence and other hardships. It is the responsibility of DPA to clarify the criteria by which families may be eligible for exemptions and to determine on a case-by-case basis which families will qualify.

We have a big job to do in the next few months. Of the 12,263 families that were on Temporary Assistance when the program began in July of 1997, an estimated 235 families will have received 60 consecutive months, and their time will run out next July. In August, an additional 154 families will reach the limit, followed by 74 families in September and 71 families in October. After October the number flattens out to an average of 46 families into the foreseeable future. Our challenge will be to make case-by-case benefit extension determinations for the "bubble" of 534 families that will reach the limit from July through October next year. Nearly 72% of these families are in the Central Region.

For the past few months Policy and Field Services staff have been developing a set of policies and procedures necessary to make objective determinations of which families will meet the criteria for exemption. The fundamental component of the procedure is a review panel, also known as a "staffing", which will conduct a comprehensive review of the case on or about the 58th month to determine if the family is eligible for an extension of benefits. Notice the change in vocabulary. While the family may be eligible for an *exemption*, the commitment will be to only *extend* benefits for a certain time, and then the case will be reviewed again. In the meantime, the recipient will be required to continue pursuing their family self-sufficiency plan. This review, know as an "extension review", will become part of a suite of reviews which also includes a "service review" on or about the 36th month and a "time-limit review" on or about the 48th month.

The procedures will be implemented by a review staffing panel that will most likely include the case manager, eligibility technician or eligibility supervisor, a social worker and the assistant regional manager. Decision and tracking documents as well as computer system changes are being developed to assist with these reviews. In order to hone the staffing procedures in the early going, the panels will be joined by representatives from Field Services and Policy. Approximately 27 families will reach the 60-month limit before July of 2002 since they received benefits in another state where the clock began earlier than Alaska. Reviews for these relatively few "early families" will be conducted during the months of October, November and December this year and will allow us to test the procedures before we tackle the "bubble".

The challenge of making these critically important reviews is compounded by the fact that we will have little experience before we must conduct reviews on the "bubble". Given that we will still be perfecting the process at a time when the largest group of families will reach the limit, we are bound to make some mistakes. With the greater likelihood for error during this period, we must give the benefit of doubt to the family. If we do not have enough information or if flaws become apparent in the review process, we will err on the side of extending benefits. We will maintain this fail-safe because there is just too much at stake for these families to err on the side of stopping their benefits. If we have made a mistake in extending benefits, it will be discovered in the follow-up review that happens a few months later.

At the same time the 60-month limit is very real and will be enforced for families who fail to meet the criteria. We expect that many families will find other sources of income, while some may have to rely on other forms of support. However, based on surveys we have done on clients reaching 60 months, we estimate that as many as 80% will meet the statutory exemption criteria. Most of these families are likely to receive an extension that will be reviewed on a regular basis as long as the family remains on Temporary Assistance. The 80% figure might seem high unless you consider how much the caseload has been reduced and the relatively few families that will reach 60 months. In 1996, the year before Temporary Assistance began, the AFDC caseload averaged 12,096 families. We estimate that 903 families will reach the 60-month limit in the first year. Of these, an estimated 722 will have benefits extended. The 722 figure is only 6% of the caseload when the program began.

In the next few days, Policy and Field Services staff will be sending out more detail on the procedures and tools to be used during the review staffings, as well as a timetable to complete the staffings. A concerted effort to tackle the "bubble" will begin in January. A specific schedule of which families will be reviewed, the month, day and time of their review, and the specific members of the staffing panels will be developed by December 1st. Most of the first reviews conducted will be the 58-month "extension reviews", but a few of the 48 month "time limit reviews" will be blended in. The first 36-month "service reviews" will begin next July.

The next few months will be a challenging time for DPA staff who work with Temporary Assistance clients, as well as for our case management grantees and contractors, (a message nearly identical to this will be sent to the grantees and contractors). If you have any questions or concerns about our plans for the 60-month limit, please feel free to email or call me. I am completely confident that we will rise to the challenge as we have done so often in the past. We will have some very hard decisions to make about families on public assistance, and I know that we will work diligently to maintain a safety net for the truly needy while maintaining the integrity of the 60-month limit

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, September 19, 2001 10:38 AM
To: ALL DPA Division Managers; ALL DPA Field Managers; George, Dean
Subject: T & H Retrocession News

Hello Folks.

We received official word yesterday from President Thomas of Tlingit and Haida that they are withdrawing their notice of intent to retrocede the TANF program to the State. T&H will continue to operate the program for Native families in Southeast Alaska. President Thomas sends thanks to our staff who provided assistance during this period of decision. We will continue to work together with T&H and other Native programs toward continuous improvement efforts to simplify and streamline processes.

I would like to offer my special appreciation to Ellie Fitzjarrald, Bonnie Toleman, Linda Dawson, Randy Moore and Dean George for their work on this issue over the last 6 weeks.

Thanks.

Chris

From: Nordlund, Jim
Sent: Tuesday, October 09, 2001 4:35 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Subject: Change in Leadership

Hi Everyone,

As you know, yesterday was Karen Perdue's last day as Commissioner. Jay Livey takes over as Commissioner today.

Karen was a great Commissioner for our department. She was (is) an inspiring leader, a skilled administrator and has deep compassion for the less fortunate people that we serve. She made tremendous strides in advancing the mission of DHSS as well as DPA. I personally will miss her leadership and her friendship. I hope you join me in wishing her the best.

We are very fortunate that Jay was appointed to be the new Commissioner. He has been our Deputy Commissioner for years and is skilled, knowledgeable and very supportive of DPA. I ask that you will all join me in supporting Jay in his challenging new position so that he can continue to support the good work we do for our clients.

Jim

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2001 5:04 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff; ALL DPA State Associates
Subject: ProBudgeting 2001 Update

**PROBUDGETING 2001 BROADCAST MESSAGE
TO ALL DPA STAFF and STATE ASSOCIATES
From the ProBudgeting 2001 Project Staff**

We are only days away from full implementation of prospective budgeting and change reporting. Most staff have completed training and as a result of those sessions we have received some very good questions. Many of those questions have been posted as FAQ's on the ProBudgeting web site, so be sure to check them out at

[<http://dpa.liminis.net/probudget/faq.php>](http://dpa.liminis.net/probudget/faq.php)

This memo provides some information to assist you in the transition. Please continue to call or write with your questions or concerns, and let us know if any other areas of specific guidance are needed.

MEDICAID POLICY REMINDER

Conversion Factors - Important Note! Family Medicaid and related eligibility categories (Under-21 and Denali KidCare) *cannot* adopt the use of conversion factors for estimating income.

This means that if a conversion factor is used to estimate income for Temporary Assistance or Food Stamps and this causes an individual to be ineligible for Medicaid, eligibility for Medicaid must be redetermined using the actual number of checks the individual expects to receive in the benefit month. For these Medicaid redeterminations, disregard 3rd and 5th paychecks for individuals who are paid bi-weekly or weekly.

We do not expect this to impact many cases, but it is important that this policy be correctly and consistently applied to prevent incorrect Medicaid denials and closures.

CONVERSION INFORMATION

EIS Conversion: EIS will be running the conversion with month end "roll over" the end of the month. Systems Operations will be sending a broadcast to you on September 1 that explains the EIS changes. Be sure to review it before you start processing October benefits.

Notice Of Change In Benefits: Use of the new policies for anticipating income may result in changes in benefit amounts. When working cases in September, you may need to send timely or adequate notice of change in benefits due to this reason. Remember, benefit decreases require timely notice of adverse action and benefit increases require adequate notice.

Conversion notices are being developed to explain changes in benefits due to the new policies. An EIS broadcast will be issued when the new notices are ready for use.

ACTING ON CHANGES - REMINDERS

Once a case is opened and authorized into the current system month, EIS will automatically issue benefits until the end of review or recertification period.

- If a change is reported that needs more information before it can be acted on, send a notice to the household and request the additional information. The household must be given at least 10 days to provide the necessary information and verification.
- Set an EIS alert to monitor for receipt of the information or to take further action.
- **Do not place the case into “pend” status on EIS** or deauthorize or delay the issuance of benefits while waiting for the information.
- If the needed information is not provided by the requested date, send the family a timely notice of adverse action for failure to provide information.
- Generally, *a 10-day timely notice of adverse action* must be provided whenever a change occurs that will decrease or end assistance. The practical effect of this is that a household may receive an additional month of benefits before a reported change becomes effective, or in some cases that a corrective payment will need to be done.

FEE AGENT NOTIFICATION

A letter explaining the upcoming changes will be sent to all fee agents within the next week along with a packet of forms. The information in the letter is standardized, but thanks to the electronic age, will actually be signed and sent by local or regional people with whom the fee agents usually communicate.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

August 15 The Final MRF was sent to all open Temporary Assistance and monthly reporting Food Stamp households, along with the second announcement that informs clients about the new changes.

August 24 Letter and information packets begin going out to all Fee Agents.

August 31 Migration of EIS changes, moving all open cases into prospective budgeting for October, and setting Temporary Assistance review dates. This will also implement the annual changes to Food Stamp income, allotment and deduction standards. System Operations will issue a broadcast with more details of the changes that are made.

September 1 Manual changes will begin arriving in your office for Temporary Assistance, Adult Public Assistance, Food Stamp, Administrative Procedures, and PFD-Hold Harmless. Broadcast will be sent explaining EIS changes.

September 20 (appx) Mass mailing of the new Reporting Changes pamphlet (Gen #93) and the Reporting Changes form (Gen #55) to all Temporary Assistance, Food Stamp, Adult Public Assistance, and most Medicaid cases. This mailing will not go to Denali Kid Care cases.

October 1 Evaluation of the changes in policy, workflow processes, and EIS begins. We will also be evaluating our project planning process. Stay tuned for this as we will be soliciting your feedback about what’s working and what’s not, and what improvements you would like to see.

That's it for now. Thanks to many, many staff for the all-out effort put the pieces together to make this happen - Policy, Sys Ops, Field Services Support Unit, Field User Groups (absolutely essential!) and our wonderful Staff Development and Training. We are very lucky to work with such dedicated and talented folks!

From: Van Kirk, Pam
Sent: Friday, August 03, 2001 11:34 AM
To: Rogers, Mary; Aaltonen, Karen; Horner, Valerie; Nash, Margo; Rikken-Ver, Mary; Dalman, Jim; Hotchkiss, Anna; Ostrander, Jaime; Ruiz, Sandra; Fulsaas, Camille; Lewis, Tanya; Perko, Lori; Williams, Dora; Bobbi Fuller; Clendaniel, Sharon; Ingraham, Sharon; Hall, Shannon; Bryan, Shirley; Sullivan, Tom
Cc: Soza, Jason; Ashenbrenner, Chris
Subject: Eliminating Social Security Number from Travel Payments.

Please pass this info on to any staff that prepare travel authorizations.

-----Original Message-----

From: Moore, Randy
Sent: Friday, August 03, 2001 10:41 AM
To: Van Kirk, Pam
Subject: FW: Eliminating Social Security Number from Travel Payments.

Pam,
FYI and distribution
Thanks

-----Original Message-----

From: Gutschmidt, Bryon
Sent: Wednesday, August 01, 2001 11:24 AM
To: Taylor, Susan; Cherian, Tom; Stonkus, Virginia; Donek, Chris; Abel, Betty; Brinkley, Sarah E; Moore, Randy; Lowe, Sharon
Subject: Eliminating Social Security Number from Travel Payments.

Yesterday, DHSS received a memo from the Department of Administration Division of Finance stating:

"Effective immediately, SSN should not be included on any travel payment transaction.

- The field on the travel authorization should be removed or left blank.
- No SSN reference should be included on the AKSAS payment transaction."

You will still need to provide the SSN for an add vendor request related to non-state employees. However, you should leave the SSN field on the TA form blank.

Please instruct staff responsible for generating travel authorization forms to leave the SSN field blank.

Fiscal staff responsible for travel related AKSAS payment transactions are being instructed in the proper use of reference data.

I will discuss this issue with Orlando when he returns to the office on August 13th and further instructions may follow.

Bryon Gutschmidt, Accountant IV
Department of Health and Social Services
Division of Administrative Services
Phone: (907) 465-1878
Fax: (907) 465-3184
Email: bryon_gutschmidt@health.state.ak.us

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From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Thursday, August 02, 2001 11:00 AM
To: DPA Sitka Staff; DPA Ketchikan Staff; DPA Juneau Wildmeadow Staff; DPA SERO Staff
Cc: ALL DPA Division Managers; DPA JNU-AOB Staff
Subject: Important Announcement on T&H Native Program

Attached is an memo to staff from Jim Nordlund and Edward Thomas, T&H President announcing that the state will be taking back the Southeast Native TANF program. The Director's office and SERO staff will be working to plan with T&H for an orderly transition and to provide for sufficient staff to support the program when it comes back to us. As this announcement is quite new, we are just beginning the planning. You will see in the memo the target date is November 30, 2001. (The memo is dated July 31, but it was actually signed Aug. 1 at the very end of the day.)

Please know that the contributions of all Southeast staff who have worked hard to support this effort are greatly appreciated, both by the Department and by T&H. This decision was based more on financial reasons and was not due to lack of effort from either you or T&H staff. We will be working on a transition plan as a top priority and will keep you involved and informed as we move forward. Thanks once again for all everything you've done (and will be doing) to help with this effort.

July 31, 2001

To Staff of Tlingit & Haida and the Division of Public Assistance:

We are announcing that Tlingit & Haida will cease administration of the TANF program and will be turning it back to the Division of Public Assistance. The effective date of the retrocession is November 30, 2001. Official notice of retrocession was sent today to DPA and to the Federal Administration for Children and Families. The official notification fulfills federal regulatory requirements regarding notice before relinquishment of the program may commence. DPA will work closely with T&H to ensure that an orderly transition is accomplished by the effective date.

T&H regrets having to make this decision since there has been a large investment of time and energy to build a successful TANF program. It was determined, however, that the financial demands of the program placed too great a burden on the organization. DPA also regrets that T&H has decided to relinquish the TANF program. The T&H TANF program was supported by T&H management, expertly administered and demonstrated a commitment to quality services for clients. For its part, DPA did all it could to assist in the establishment of the T&H program and will do all it can to ensure an orderly retrocession.

T&H and DPA each possess traditional strengths that offer the opportunity to improve the overall delivery of services to TANF clients. The strength of T&H is in the delivery of employment and training related services. DPA has strength in its eligibility determination and benefit issuance structure, particularly through the Quest card electronic benefit system.

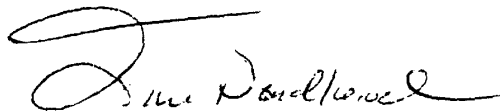
It is the goal of both the DPA and T&H to utilize those strengths through a contracting arrangement for welfare to work case management services for Native TANF clients in Southeast to T&H, as was done previous to assuming the full fledged management of the TANF program; and for DPA to resume eligibility determination and benefit issuance. DPA encourages any T&H eligibility technicians that will be laid off to apply for state positions. These applicants will be given the highest consideration due to their experience and knowledge of TANF program policies.

It will be the highest goal of both T&H and DPA to minimize any disruption that retrocession may have on TANF clients. We will ensure that this essential safety net program for poor families stays intact, and that we continue to assist clients on their journey from welfare to work.

Sincerely,



Edward Thomas, President, Central Council
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska



Jim Nordlund, Director
Division of Public Assistance

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Friday, July 20, 2001 4:35 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Cc: Livey, Jay A.; Perdue, Karen
Subject: Friday Appreciation for You

Speaking of appreciations this week, I think we probably all appreciate that it's Friday - especially in rainy Southeast where we are having a rare sunny streak (2 days and going for 3). Putting these appreciation messages together has been the highlight of my week. I am once again overwhelmed by the testaments to the positive impacts of the work done by DPA staff at all levels and within all functions of our organization. I received many, many more than could be shared without overwhelming you. I'm determined to find a way to share this information more frequently and broadly. I was already able to pull out a couple quotes for the Commissioner to include when she testifies in Washington D.C. next week. We also have many of the quotes posted here in our Juneau office building. Here's some more expressions of appreciations:

"My heartfelt thanks to all of you for your kindness and your cheerfulness directed towards me. Whether it be a question or an interview I am always treated with respect. It is very hard for me to apply for Public Assistance and it is not by choice but merely by circumstances to do so. Thank you for making me feel as a human being and to retain my dignity." (for ET Debbie Burns and the clerical staff at Mat-Su)

"I would like to express my thanks to Diane Brooks for being an extremely dedicated and compassionate employee of the Division of Public Assistance." (Muldoon Job Center)

"Thanks for the patience and professional manner you treat me with. We didn't want to apply for APA, but it was our only choice and you let me keep my dignity." (for Kari Evanoff, Kenai Job Center)

"You probably never hear the heartfelt thanks that people feel when you send the approval, but thanks I really appreciate it. God bless you and your work!" (for Debra Schiefer, Denali KidCare)

"A special thanks to my co-workers, all the site local troubleshooters for performing server tape backup changes, to all the staff who manage to keep the size of their mailbox and network files in check and Shirley in Field Services. Shirley, your organization charts and supervisors lists are one of most valued timesaving tools." (from Karen Hickling, Network Services)

"I just wanted to write you a small thank you letter for all the help you have given me these last five years. You have been a great help and friend to me, I could have not done it without you!" (for Beth Stohl-Reiland, Muldoon Job Center)

"Thank you for being so kind to our family during our time of loss of a family member. God bless you." (for Deanne Spencer, Coastal Field Unit)

"A special thank you for Yvis. Yvis is a joy to work with and she always responds right away. (for Yvis Welsh from a Juneau co-worker)

"I just wanted to say thank you to all of the DPA staff for all your help and training. It has been a pleasure to work with you all. A special thanks to Dan, Mary, Diane, and Steve for answering my calls of help." (to Bethel staff from an AVCP staff person)

"I just wanted to thank SysOps one more time for being so responsive to last minute requests. Even given a full plate you and your staff are always ready to go the extra mile.... (from Ron Kreher)

"Pam is the glue that holds the Director's office, and sometimes the Division, together. I really appreciate her knowledge and willingness to pitch in until the job is done." (for Pam Van Kirk, Director's Secretary)

Congratulations to David Masuo who so impressed a client with his kindness and positive attitude that she named her baby after him!

**And last, but not least, my personal appreciation for you all, every day, all the time.
Have a wonderful weekend!**

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Thursday, July 19, 2001 5:04 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Cc: Perdue, Karen; Livey, Jay A.
Subject: Gambell Appreciations

Hi folks - here's some of the wonderful appreciations received from customers of our Gambell Job Center in Anchorage. The Gambell office is our largest and has by far the greatest single impact on customers of any office the state. These are but of few of the thanks received over the last year. Thanks, Gambell staff for doing such a tremendous job!

"I would like to take some time to just say Thank You. I realize that you say things like "Oh That's just my job", but I want you to know that I didn't feel that you were making me & my family just your job. You really made us feel like you cared. And that is just so important in helping people succeed. Thanks again." (for JoEllen Hill)

"Thank you for everything you have done for our family. Because of you I made it through the tough times, you're a wonderful, caring person. Thanks Again." (for Tammy Allam)

"I am writing to inform you that I would like my ATAP cash benefits closed. I feel that my family is no longer in need of this specific assistance. I greatly appreciate all the help and support you have been giving me and my family." (from a 2-Parent Family's request for closure to Michelle Moore)

"Thank you for all of your help and understanding. You truly are in a position to make lives easier and to help people. You're appreciated! Thanks." (for Joan Oehler)

"You have always been helpful when I had a question or needed something. I just wanted to let you know that I appreciate what you do. Even when it is not your responsibility you still help!" (for Mark Armstrong)

"Thank you so much for assisting my son and myself to reach my goal: a career that from now on will provide for both of us. Now I will serve with my new skills our community and my son and I will have a promising future. Thank you always." (for Alison Hoke)

"He takes care of people in a very professional way but you still feel like you can talk to him.Thanks for all your help Kevin." (for Kevin Gallager)

"Jeanne helped me to see many strengths in myself that I had somehow overlooked. One of the biggest things was that she never let me lose sight of my accomplishments, no matter how small they were. This truly helped me to keep going.... ... I am grateful that I was assigned to her. She has truly been an asset in helping me rebuild my life." (for Jeanne Becker)

"I wanted to say thanks for everything. You were not only my case manager but a friend. I will be missing you." (for Christine King)

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me & just to encourage me. I know God works thru people so from one Texan to another - God Bless You. (for Kathryn Rhinehart)

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, July 18, 2001 1:33 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Cc: Perdue, Karen; Livey, Jay A.
Subject: You Are Great!

Here's some more expressions of appreciation for DPA Staff.

"Thanks for all your patience with us who are not used to the system, but hope to have a better handle on things now." (For Bob Morgan at Mat-Su)

"I have just recently worked myself off of assistance and feel real good about it. I could not have done this, or it would have been a lot harder if it weren't for the dedicated, hard work and willingness to help from Julia Marshall." (Juneau)

"She would be an excellent judge; being thorough, insightful, intelligent, and fair." (Juneau client complimenting Stacy DePriest, Mat-Su ET)

"Marilee and her staff were very responsive, providing the MCAC with information and answering many questions. I don't know how they could have done a better job." (from the Medical Care Advisory Committee for Marilee Roberts and Fairbanks staff)

"Nicole uses her power for good, not evil." (for Nicole Whitesides, Ketchikan Admin Clerk III)

"Cynthia (Salazar) helps me a lot. She keeps helping me when I mess up. She is really patient." (Juneau APA)

'Joan (Chase) is accessible and she responds quickly to policy questions. Joan is inspiring because she is respectful of her job duties and all the people she affects." (FS Policy)

"Lee has been amazingly patient and good-humored even in the face of the most complex, difficult cases we throw her way. In this department, we kid about needing to retire when Lee does because we don't know how we will do our jobs without her." (for Southeast Long Term Care ET Lee Lewis from Bartlett Regional Hospital staff)

"I take this time to thank you, Deborah Burns, for being a nice, pleasant, efficient professional case worker. I appreciate you very much." (Mat-Su ET)

"The two Chrises are wonderful. They gave me really good service and helped me out a lot." (for Chris Judson and Chrissie Loob in Southeast APA and Specialized Medicaid Unit)

"She was very kind and treated me with respect and concern for my medical emergency. I just wanted to say thank you." (For Terry Willard, ET at Mat-Su)

"Thank you for your professional style, energy, and time that you devoted to the Central Region. It is wonderful that you are still a part of DPA and in the training area." (for Amy Yardley)

"I just wanted to say thank you for all the help you have given us through these difficult times. I really appreciated it. I don't know how we could have gotten through otherwise." (for Kathleen Wendt, Ketchikan ET)

That's it for today. Stay tuned more tomorrow and Friday. Have a great afternoon!

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"She was very kind and treated me with respect and concern for my medical emergency. I just wanted to say thank you." (For Terry Willard, ET at Mat-Su)

"Thank you for your professional style, energy, and time that you devoted to the Central Region. It is wonderful that you are still a part of DPA and in the training area." (for Amy Yardley)

"I just wanted to say thank you for all the help you have given us through these difficult times. I really appreciated it. I don't know how we could have gotten through otherwise." (for Kathleen Wendt, Ketchikan ET)

That's it for today. Stay tuned more tomorrow and Friday. Have a great afternoon!

From: Perdue, Karen
Sent: Wednesday, July 18, 2001 1:05 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Subject: Many Thanks to All DPA Staff

I am proud to celebrate Public Assistance Worker Appreciation Week with you and to acknowledge the hard work DPA staff do to serve Alaska's families.

It's not often a single division has such a great impact on so many lives. The safety net services you provide help families make it through hard times, and give them a chance to plan for a better future. The work you do every day strengthens our communities and brings hope to those who need it most.

Welfare reform and other major initiatives have kept us on our toes. It is amazing how well you have consistently delivered quality service under ever-changing conditions. We can now say that welfare reform has been a success and the future continues to look bright. In the past four years, you have helped thousands of Alaskans move from welfare to work, reduced the caseload by more than a third, and saved the State tens of millions of dollars in the process. This success has allowed us to invest like never before in childcare and other supportive services. That's great news for the families we serve.

You play an important role in the goals our department strives toward every day. Your work personifies our department mission to "promote and protect the health and well-being of Alaskans." Each day, you give Alaskan families the tools they need to build a brighter future. That is a special calling and one of which you should be proud.

Thank you for the high level of service and dedication you've shown to helping Alaska's families. Keep up the good work, and have a great time during Public Assistance Worker Appreciation Week.

Karen Perdue
Commissioner

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 17, 2001 2:40 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Cc: Livey, Jay A.; Perdue, Karen
Subject: More Appreciation

This is a message to all DPA staff from Chris Ashenbrenner, Deputy Director.

Here are some more complements and expressions of appreciation for what you do every day.

"I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciate Jack (O'Brien). Sometimes you feel like you just hit brick walls all day. Then you deal with Jack and he handles everything instantly. He makes my job so much easier." (Jack is our EBT guru)

"I just wanted to thank you for your help with my case. To let you know that your support, compassion and understanding are very much appreciated. Yours is a pretty thankless job I know, but there are those of us who think you're a gem. Again, thanks for your hard work and terrific help." (for Dave Wolfe, Anchorage APA)

"We can only hope that other people in such ordeals as ours have the wonderful blessing to have such a person as you on their side and to know you as we have come to greatly appreciate your truly wonderful and selfless acts of dedication and sincere kindness." (for Helen Scollen, Anchorage APA)

We really appreciate all of the help the QA Unit has given to the Juneau office this past year. Your staff are always generous with their time and expertise."

"I couldn't have come this far without the help from Dawn Carlson and Shannon-Mahonney-Irish." (for staff in Kenai from a domestic violence victim with multiple barriers who is now working full time)

"Thanks to Ellie Fitzjarrald for all the work she's done with Native TANF."

"I appreciate your warm, sympathetic, non-judgmental and understanding manner while you dealt with my problem." (for Gloria Easaw with Fraud)

"Thanks for your help on my Social Security problem. It is nice to talk to someone who makes me feel like they are listening, and not just treating me as another client with a complaint." (for Trish Cole, The Claims Unit)

You made my day! It's good to know that you can count on some people to go the extra mile... Thank you so much Tammy for getting me up and running! You really saved the day! (again)" (for Tammie Rivera at Network Services)

I would like to acknowledge and express my appreciation in Kathy's (Brooks) assistance with a case that needed immediate and critical care. She worked with Georgia Pyner, WDS, in helping a family gather information and contacts in order to comply with requirements." (Kathy works for Fraud and Georgia for Kenai District Office at the Kenai Job Center)

Once again, we want to congratulate Alaska on the phenomenal improvement in (Food Stamp) payment accuracy from FFY99 to FFY00. (letter to Jim Nordlund from Dennis Steward, FNS - a.k.a. Food Stamp feds)

"In closing I would like to express my appreciate and sincere gratitude to the entire staff at the State of Alaska AJCN. From the bottom of my heart I thank each and every one of you." (for staff at the Kenai Job Center)

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Monday, July 16, 2001 3:53 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Cc: Perdue, Karen; Livey, Jay A.
Subject: You are Appreciated!

This is a message to all DPA staff from Jim Nordlund, Director and Chris Ashenbrenner, Deputy Director.

Congratulations to all of you for your superlative service to Alaskans who come to us through many doors and with many different needs. Your outstanding work to improve our Food Stamp accuracy and move families from Temporary Assistance to employment and self-sufficiency has resulted in tremendous positive outcomes.

These successes are the direct result of what you do every day. And your efforts are greatly appreciated - by the Governor as stated in his Executive Proclamation designating July 15 to 21 as "Public Assistance Worker Appreciation Week", and also by your customers, whether they be internal or public.

Here are a few of the many comments people have made in appreciation of you.

"I want to underscore what I said on the phone about how much I appreciate your excellent service. You're accessible, knowledgeable, courteous, an outstanding public servant." (for Rick Searles in Fairbanks)

"I feel you have all the trust in me that I can do it. I never would have believed I could have gotten so far. Again, I THANK YOU for everything, it is well appreciated and I speak to you with my heart in my hands." (for Teresa Quakenbush, Fairbanks)

"Whenever I spoke with you I felt you have kept a care for the people you are helping and didn't just think of me as another 'case number'."

"Thank you so much for the generous grant for Energy - I'll spend it wisely. I do a lot of work with the Civil Air Patrol (volunteer) so the system will get it back..." (to Trini Ollila at Heating Assistance)

"I really appreciated the heating grant during the very cold weather. Can't wait 'til the weather starts warming-up in May. Again, Quyan/Thank You!!!" (from Shishmaref)

"Thanks so much for helping so many. Your kindness is appreciated! (for Heating Assistance)

"I just wanted to thank you for taking time...to provide an overview of the special needs child care changes. Your support and willingness to go the extra mile to ensure that we understand the process is much appreciated!" (for Mary Lorence)

"The staff really enjoyed the chance to discuss policies with Jim (Steele) and appreciated a policy person taking the time to come out to meet with them."

"Just thought you might like to know how reliable Jason (Soza) is and how much we depend on him in the Contract/Grant business!"

These are just a few of the many, many expressions of appreciation your customers have taken time to send in. Please know that there are hundreds more who feel like this but, like many of us, don't actually put pen to paper to write it down. The work you do to provide basic services to people in need is some of the most important and meaningful work in state government (or perhaps anywhere). Thank you for everything you do every day.

Jay Caputo, New AJCN Coordinator

On July 11, 2001, Jim Nordlund announced on behalf of ESD Director Ron Hull, DVR Director Duane French and himself, that the three Divisions of Employment Security, Vocational Rehabilitation and Public Assistance have hired **Jay Caputo into the position of AJCN Coordinator**. Jay has excellent qualifications, we are very pleased to have him. The AJCN Coordinator position is somewhat unique in that it is jointly funded and will be supervised by us, the Directors of the three agencies.

The creation of Jay's position is the product of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Balance of State Workforce Investment Board and the AJCN partners. This MOA also establishes the AJCN Operations Council, composed of we three Directors, and the AJCN Coordinator reports to us and serves as a point of contact between us and the Balance of State WIB. Since we three Directors also have responsibility for our staffs in the Anchorage/Mat-Su job centers we also want to make Jay available to assist with operational concerns in those job centers.

Jay has experience as a job center partner in the Juneau and Ketchikan Job Centers. He has been in the AJCN Coordinator job now for a couple weeks and has been adding to his knowledge about the programs and operations of the three agencies, the BoS WIB, the AHRIC, AJCN history and the Workforce Investment Act. The three of us will meet with Jay for the first time next week to line out a set of tasks for him. We also want to clarify the often confusing lines of communication within and between our three agencies, our partners, WIA programs and the WIBs.

Jay will strive to understand and value the mission and goals of all three divisions equally. Whether you work for Employment Security, Vocational Rehabilitation or Public Assistance you should consider Jay a fellow employee and give him your full cooperation in his efforts to assist us. If you are a non-State partner agency, Jay's position is designed to foster cooperation and collaboration between all AJCN partners, so we trust his work will lead to even better

service for our mutual customers. Please join me in welcoming Jay aboard.

From: Ashenbrenner, Chris
Sent: Tuesday, July 03, 2001 2:21 PM
To: ALL DPA Statewide Staff
Cc: Olson, Jo E.; Livey, Jay A.; Clarke, Janet E.
Subject: Social Worker Job Class

This is a message to all DPA Staff from Chris Ashenbrenner, Deputy Director

Hello All and Happy 4th of July Week.

In response to the new law requiring all Social Workers hired after July 1, 2001, to hold a Social Worker License issued by the State of Alaska, the State has revised the Social Worker class specifications resulting in an upgrade for Social Workers working for DPA in Field Services.

DPA Field Services currently has 16 Social Worker II's who provide case management services to some of our most challenged families. All of these positions became Range 16's on July 1, 2001. Individuals who are currently in these positions are considered "grandfathered" and will retain the position title, even if they do not hold a bachelor's degree or license. However, if the position becomes vacant, the Social Worker recruitment will require the degree and license.

This upgrade is timely as we approach the 60-month Temporary Assistance time limit. We are currently creating and implementing processes to provide additional services or referrals for families meeting the time limit. Our Social Workers are being called upon to provide more intensive services to our long-term, more challenged Temporary Assistance families. Welfare-to-Work strategies are becoming more sophisticated for these families and more social services connections are required. This activity is expected to increase as we implement the newly funded Social Services Partnership strategies. We will be calling on Social Workers even more to assist these families toward self-sufficiency.

Congratulations to our Social Workers - and have a great holiday!