

**United Way of Anchorage
Board Meeting
September 15, 2021, 4-5:30 p.m.
Via Teams**

Members Present (11): Walt Bass, Charles Fedullo, Mike Huston, Dick Mandsager, Alex McKay, Rachel Norman, Susan Parkes, Natasha Pope, Veronica Reem, Ed Ulman, David Wight

RSVP Regrets (8): Belinda Breaux, Laurie Butcher, Greg Deal, Mike Dunn, Bill Falsey, Jordan Marshall, Daniel Mitchell, Beth Stuart

Call to Order: Natasha Pope called the meeting to order at 4:04 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

Susan Parkes moved to accept the consent agenda (August meeting minutes) as presented, David Wight seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

AGENDA ITEMS

Executive Committee Report:

Natasha Pope extended kudos to:

- Belinda Breaux, Walt Bass, and Alex McKay for their work in support of the Strategic Planning Committee
- Alex McKay for hosting the Community Campaign Kickoff
- Mike Huston and Ed Ulman for serving on the Campaign Cabinet
- Alex McKay for working with UWA on a possible new location for its offices

There is no finance report this month – since the Board discussed budget in detail at the last meeting, it wasn't feasible for the committee to get together; financials will be presented at the next meeting. Equity training will be virtual; it is a UWW membership requirement, and UWA is very fortunate to have a great partner in First Alaskans Institute.

Campaign Cabinet is up and running. This is UWA's kickoff Unite to Thrive week. There was a great presentation at Make It Monday forum about campaign and UWA's work. There was also a kickoff event at ConocoPhillips; kudos to Walt Bass for presenting and spreading a great message. Day of Caring had a great turnout, with projects still ongoing. Friday is the Food Drive; donations can be made at midtown mall.

The Committee is working on the first year CEO review; Clark Halvorson has been in his position over a year now, and it has been an incredible year. UWA is looking forward to strategic planning that is currently underway.

Health Care Navigators Program Update:

June Sobocinski shared that UWA has been a healthcare navigator grantee since 2013. Thousands of Alaskans' lives have improved because of this program – health navigators have provided

education, assistance, and support to families, often in desperate situations, to help them access services and address health concerns. It benefits their physical health, their mental health, and their financial situation. On August 27, UWA was notified that it will once again be the sole navigator grantee – serving the entire state of Alaska – and was awarded \$1M; this is the entire amount available to the state.

UWA will work through year one to meet its performance goals and then apply for two more years, both at a grant amount of \$1M each. UWA is in this position because of the hard work of many people: Sue Brogan who shepherded this work from the beginning; Jane Straight, the project director, who has been involved for the last 6 years; Becky Hallstrom, UWA’s extraordinary Lead Navigator; and UWA staff in finance, communications, and 2-1-1.

Jane Straight shared that health insurance navigation is much more than completing forms; navigators see it as access to quality healthcare, with Alaska 2-1-1 as a gateway. UWA has hired a team of 10 navigators, across the state, who will provide both online and in person help in four regions: Anchorage, Mat Su, Kenai Peninsula, and Fairbanks. Navigators ensure that individuals and families who need the most support enroll in coverage, stay insured, overcome barriers to accessing care, and connect to community resources that address the social conditions impacting their health.

Over the last grant year (2020-2021), there were 544 Qualified Health Plan enrollments, 829 Medicaid/Denali KidCare referrals or enrollments, and 2,471 one-on-one navigator to consumer interactions. 2021-2022 goals are: 1,200 Qualified Health Plan enrollments, 2,500 Medicaid/Denali KidCare referrals or enrollments, and 8,000 one-on-one navigator to consumer interactions.

Becky Halstrom shared several client stories, noting a wide range of calls that come in. This past year has been interesting due to COVID-19 – the funding was greatly increased on April 1, so a lot higher incomes are now eligible. People who are already in the program got the good news that their premiums are going down. The program went virtual back in 2019, so everything was already set up for online assistance.

Clark Halvorson noted that UWA has been running this grant with \$100,000, and now there is \$1M available. It really is a statewide effort that involves leveraging Alaska 2-1-1. It wouldn’t have been possible if it wasn’t for an excellent track record of the Alaska 2-1-1 team.

President’s Report:

Clark Halvorson reported that this is UWA’s campaign kickoff Unite to Thrive week. It’s been a really hard year, and UWA and Anchorage in general have seen unimaginable challenges, but here is what the team was able to accomplish:

- Over 7,000 families kept their homes through rent, mortgage, and utilities assistance
- 1,411 people got enrolled in health insurance or Medicaid by UWA navigators, protecting both their health and financial stability
- 70,436 calls answered by Alaska 2-1-1 last year; 54% of the callers were seeking help with basic needs
- 65 students most at risk of dropping out graduated against long odds to face a brighter future

This year's campaign chair is John Sims, President of ENSTAR Natural Gas Company; John has been doing an amazing job spearheading the campaign. Mayor Dave Bronson proclaimed September 13-17 UWA's Unite to Thrive week. Campaign kickoff on September 15 registered 250 attendees.

UWA is a recipient of healthy communities grant to assist with removing barriers to COVID-19 testing and vaccination usage. The funding includes a focus on health equity to help those who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Activities and outcomes include increasing access to testing in the community, increasing access to COVID-19 vaccinations, and implementing strategies to decrease health inequities. UWA did a big push to bring in folks doing this work.

UWA received \$175,000 in HUD funding authorized by the CARES Act for landlord liaison project, for a period covering March 1, 2021 through September 30, 2022. Goals include engagement and connection to property owners or managers; centralized online portal for property owners and managers to list open units; coordination with social service providers and a housing incentive/risk pool; and incentivizing property owners to help "Hard to House" persons exiting homelessness through the program.

UWA is also administering childcare COVID-19 relief grant. In 2020, UWA distributed \$10,185,000 in CARES Act Childcare Provider Relief Funds in partnership with Anchorage Health Department/Municipality of Anchorage; in 2021, \$4,736,000 got distributed. UWA supported approximately 185 agencies operating 240 program sites, both home-based and center-based; gathered feedback, enrollment, and staffing information to gain insight into the needs and challenges of this important sector of Anchorage's economy; and connected with partners including thread Alaska, Anchorage School District, and the Anchorage Health Department to discuss findings and recommendations.

Kevin Sullivan reported that relief grants enabled sites to stay open and pay bills, such as rent/mortgage, utilities, payroll, and supplies. Some facilities were able to offer scholarships and reduced fees to families as well. Childcare enrollment is down ~25% across Anchorage, but there are also more than 1,000 children on waitlists. Many before- and after-school care programs have not re-opened along with schools. Childcare operators overwhelmingly report that the waitlists are due to staffing shortages and space limitations.

The biggest challenge now is finding, hiring, and keeping qualified staff. This has always been true due to the low wages in the industry (~\$12/hour), but the pandemic has exacerbated the problem. Childcare providers desire more training but need help: more staff to cover assignments while other staff complete training; more or different training times; and pay for time in training. 65% of sites want to learn more about preparing children for successful transition to school. Recommendations for the future include:

- Establish childcare in businesses, in individual sites, at schools or as cooperatives (tax or other incentives)
- Provide public investment and support for childcare, including early care and before/after school care, as an essential service that supports working families and the economy
- Establish and support collaborative link between childcare providers and neighborhood schools/staff for information sharing, professional education, and peer mentoring

- Explore establishing a mixed delivery pre-K system (programs, providers and settings that are supported with a combination of public funds and private funds)

Clark Halvorson reported that UWA has hired new staff, including Executive Assistant, Business Relationship I/II, Project Manager, and Volunteer and Community Engagement Lead. UWA also posted Marketing Director and Digital Engagement Manager positions. Clark Halvorson updated the Board on UWA's current organizational structure. Strategic planning is currently underway, with the following goals for the process:

- Re-assess UWA's identity and role in the community
- Increase diversity and equity, both internally and externally
- Focus in on most vulnerable
- Revisit approach to development and funding allocation and increase revenue and leverage
- Decide how UWA collects and shares data
- Identify "North Star" goals and how to get there

Stakeholder engagement (interviews, small groups, surveys) will include the core group of staff, Board, highly engaged donors and core partners, as well as community partners (funding recipients, policy advocates, providers, local and state governments) and community stakeholders (community health leaders, youth, Houseless Resource Advisory Committee Program participants, BIPOC, LGBTQ+, people with disabilities leaders and organizations).

The strategic planning process will include a detailed organization and environment scan, including the organization's history and staffing, national trends, local trends, Board of Directors, as well as financials and development. One of the things UWA is really going to be taking a look at is what it does and whether UWA's vision and mission line up. UWA is preparing a quick survey that will be going out to the Board shortly.

Motion to adjourn the Board meeting was made by Mike Huston, Susan Parkes seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Next Board meeting: October 20, 2021