

**Alyce Spotted Bear and Walter Soboleff Commission on Native Children**

**August 20, 2021**

**Alaska Regional Hearing**

**Panel 3: Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Violence**

**Recording:**

<https://commissiononnativechildren.org/media/video/panel-3-child-welfare-juvenile-justice-and-violence-recording-august-20-2021/>

**Commissioners Present In-person:**

Gloria O’Neill, Chair; Dr. Tami DeCoteau, Vice-Chair; Melody Staebner; Carlyle Begay; and Donald Gray.

**Commissioners Present Virtually:**

Dr. Dolores (Dee) Subia BigFoot, Anita Fineday, and Dr. Leander R. McDonald.

**Commissioners Absent:**

Elizabeth Morris, Jesse Delmar, and Stephanie Bryan.

**Detailees, Staff, and Contractors:**

Ronald Lessard, Department of Education

Eileen Garry, Department of Justice

Regina Gilbert, Department of the Interior

Tiffany Taylor, Department of the Interior

Lisa Rieger, Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Joshua Franks, Cook Inlet Tribal Council

Miriam Jorgensen, Native Nations Institute, University of Arizona

Kyra James, Native Nations Institute, University of Arizona

Stacy Leeds, Leeds Consulting

Briana Moseley, Kearns & West

Chelsea Cullen, Kearns & West

Caisey Hoffman, Kearns & West

**Agenda: 2:45 pm – 4:15 PM AKT - Panel 3: Child Welfare, Juvenile Justice, and Violence**

**[Transcript]**

Commissioner Gray 00:00 Thank you. I want to take a moment and first show you an appreciation to provide testimony today. It’s greatly appreciated. I like to start with the Commission in the goals of the meeting. We are an 11-member Commission established by Congress

to conduct a comprehensive study of all issues affecting American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian children from prenatal to age 24. A really broad spectrum to take a look at. The bill that created us was co-sponsored by former Senator Heidi Heitkamp from North Dakota and Senator Lisa Murkowski from here in Alaska. We know that Native children and youth experience severe social economic disparities compared to other racial ethnic groups in the US. Though the federal government has a trust responsibility to provide for the education, health and safety of Native children, complex programs and limited resources have not been successful at addressing these issues. To make things worse, federal agencies too often lack clear guidance or operate in an uncoordinated way, inhibiting the ability to effectively address the needs of Native children. We also know that historical trauma and intergenerational cycles of poverty contribute to the disproportionate health and well-being challenges faced by Native children and families today. We were created to address the challenges and build upon their strengths to find creative ways to change the outcome for Native children for the better. We are looking at all of these issues affecting Native children and youth including health, mental health, education, early childhood development, child welfare, and juvenile justice. We'll be looking at data and research identifying the best practices and models and are inviting expert witnesses to provide testimony to help us with recommendations and to highlight some challenges that we are facing. With that, I'd like to take a moment and introduce all of the Commissioners here in the room. Starting with here in the room and then we'll introduce the Commissioners who are online.

Chair O'Neill  
02:22

Thank you, Commissioner Gray. My name is Gloria O'Neill and I have the privilege of serving as the Commission Chair and also have the privilege of serving as President and CEO of Cook Inlet Tribal Council here in Anchorage.

Vice-Chair  
DeCoteau  
02:41

Good afternoon, I am Tami DeCoteau. I'm a licensed clinical psychologist in the State of North Dakota and a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa, Arikara Tribe, and I serve as the Vice-Chair on the Commission.

Commissioner  
Gray  
02:55

Again, my name is Don Gray and I am a descendant of Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corporation out of Barrow. And I serve as Co-chair for the Alaska regional meetings here in Alaska. As we wait for the other Commissioners to join us here in this room, is Commissioner Fineday on?

Commissioner  
Fineday

Good evening. Yes, I am. My name is Anita Fineday. Hi Tracy, and I am participating from Minnesota. I'm a Commissioner. I'm a member of the White Earth Tribe here

03:20 in northwest Minnesota. And I thank you for taking the time to spend this evening with us.

Commissioner  
Gray  
03:45

Commissioner McDonald.

Commissioner  
McDonald  
03:53

Good evening, everybody. My name is Russ McDonald. I'm President of United Tribes Technical College, located in Bismarck, North Dakota. I'm a member of the Spirit Lake Dakota Nation and a proud descendant of the Sahnish, Hidatsa and Hunkpapa Nations. Thank you for being with us this evening.

Commissioner  
Gray  
04:11

Then, Commissioner BigFoot.

Commissioner  
BigFoot  
04:16

Good afternoon. Thank you for joining us for this hearing. I'm Dee BigFoot. I'm of the Caddo Nation of Oklahoma. I serve on the faculty at the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center. And I am the Director of the Indian Country Child Trauma Center and also the SAMHSA-funded Suicide Prevention Resource Center.

Commissioner  
Gray  
04:44

Thank you, Commissioner BigFoot. As we wait for the other Commissioners to join us, I shared earlier that one of my biggest fears in hosting a panel is butchering people's last name so if I butcher your last name, I apologize profusely, please correct me. And with that said, I'd like to introduce our first panelist, Traci McGarry.

Traci McGarry  
05:14

Thank you very much. I'm really honored to be here and to be able to speak our truth about what's happening with Alaska Native children. Especially I'm from, I live in the Nome region. So again, my name is Traci McGarry, I'm the Director of Children and Family Services at the Child Advocacy Center at Kawerak, a Native nonprofit up in Nome. Our population for the region because we serve Nome and the surrounding 16 villages is around 10,000. And Nome proper is about 3,500. And the villages fill that in. Our region that we serve is the size of West Virginia. There is one road that goes to one village and is passable for about two and a half months out of the year. Otherwise, we're flying or snow machining, dog sled getting there, rivers, so it is a little bit difficult getting here and there. So, I've worked for a Kawerak for nine years now, I came to Alaska in 2010, to be a school counselor. I did that for two years. I have my Master's in Education and School Counseling from Western Washington University. I did that at the National or

excuse me, Northwestern Alaska Career and Technical Center, also called NAC Tech. And I was listening to the education earlier. Programs like NAC Tech are incredible for all kids. They give kids in the villages a step up to be able to get credits they couldn't get in their villages, to learn skills they wouldn't be able to get in their villages, to look to get a driver's license; just hands on skills that they might not be able to get at the village level. So, I did that for two years, and then was recruited to go over to Kawerak and do the Children Family Services Program, which is also the ICWA program. And did that for a couple months. Then they added the Child Advocacy Center into that. So that's how I got here.

Commissioner Gray 07:21 Thank you very much for that introduction. I greatly appreciate it. Is our panelist, Brittany Madros online? And then is our panelist, Tracy Dompeling? I know I butchered that. And I apologize afterwards.

Tracy Dompeling 07:45 No problem. It's Tracy Dompeling actually. Hi, everybody. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak with you this afternoon. I'm the Director for the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice. And I'm going to take an opportunity today to talk a little bit about some of the cultural programming that we've done, as well as some of our work with trauma as an agency. And you know, one of the things that I always like to say is I hear people talk about trauma informed, you know, being trauma informed. And one of the first conferences I was at as Director, I heard the presenters say, "I really don't like the word trauma informed." And I thought, what have I just got myself into, this person doesn't like the word, you know, doesn't like the term trauma informed. But she said, you know, it's one thing to inform your staff about trauma. It's another as an agency to be trauma responsive in the practices and the work and your policies that you implement as an agency. And so that really stuck with me and so some of my slides, you will see I talk about more about trauma responsive versus trauma informed and I look forward to being able to present to you a little bit later.

Commissioner Gray 08:53 I greatly appreciate that, actually, and I'm looking forward to that. At this point in time, maybe we'll turn it over to Traci to begin her presentation. Thank you.

**I. Panelist: Traci McGarry, Director of Children and Family Services at the Child Advocacy Center at Kawerak**

Traci McGarry 09:09 I was reviewing the goals of the Commission and took some notes on what we're doing in our region up in Nome, and what could be improved upon. For I recently

applied to, for the Department of Justice grant to start a Family Justice Center in Nome. We have a Child Advocacy Center. For those that don't know it's a one stop shop for kids who have been physically abused, sexually abused, severe neglect. They can come to the Child Advocacy Center and receive services right there. So, everybody comes to the center and they don't have to go to the police station, OCS, or Child Protective Services, the hospital, they can be served right in one building and the family can be served as well. And when Tracy was talking about the "trauma responsive," that's our, that's our gig. That's how we that's how we operate the Child Advocacy Center. But what we've noticed in our region is that violence against women is very high, domestic violence. And because of our funding as a Child Advocacy Center, we're only allowed to serve zero to 18, up until a 19th birthday. So, I've applied for those funds to open a Family Justice Center, we have more wraparound services, so we're hitting those individuals who are adults by age, but could need that extra hand up, that extra help getting into services and receiving the needs, of receiving the help that they need. We do have a high, high amount of domestic violence in our region. So, the Family Justice, what I really liked about this grant is that typically, I don't know how many of you have written grants, but it's very arduous. And I have to do it. But you have to write your narrative and your abstract and your timeline. And, you know, it has to be such and such and such. And for this one, the grant manager called and interviewed me. We were on the phone for about an hour and a half. She asked questions, she filled it all out. And then she sent it to me a week later, and I filled in what was missing, I turned in my budget. And I heard back at the end date that we had received that grant, that took a huge load off. Because sometimes it's hard to make time to sit and write a grant when you're wearing several different hats, as we all know, and most of us in working in Alaska Native populations wear many, many, hats. I thought that was what made it a lot easier and it felt more productive because you get to talk to someone, they're asking you questions and trying to understand your program. And sometimes it's hard to do that on paper, at times. Also, I know a lot of Tribes and tribal organizations don't have funds for grant specific grant writers. So having that ability to do the interview for the DOJ grant was really helpful. Something else I wanted to bring up, a little over 25 years ago, the Tribal-state collaboration group was developed here in Alaska, with the Office of Children's Services and Tribes who were who had received IV-B funds. Kawerak was one of those Tribes. And I became a co-chair of the Northern Region I think four years ago. We have one co-chair for every region, five regions in Alaska and we focus mostly on disproportionality, especially recently, but we've also been able to put Tribes into workgroups within the state. So, for example, a tribal social services supervisor is able to sit on the hiring committee for almost every position within

OCS. That is a huge deal. And we're also able to access information that we weren't able to before, so we can try to prevent OCS, or Office of Children's Services, from knocking on the door. And that has been really great. We're hoping that numbers go down. Unfortunately, disproportionality, the disproportionate number of Alaska Native children in care in Alaska is still really super high. It's about a little over 65%. And it's been hovering around 65% since I've been in. It went down, I have to say it went down to 55%, about seven years ago, but it's slowly gone back up, and it's still at 65%. And you know, one of your goals that you had brought up, was increasing the number of Native social workers. I highly, I think that will change the disproportionality rate in Alaska. I know that universities in Alaska have an excellent social work program. I think incentivizing that somehow for youth to go into those programs. It, being a social worker, I look at it like, in the villages, my staff are in the villages as the ICWA workers or the lay attorneys for the ICWA cases or the Indian Child Welfare Act cases. And it's difficult for them because people have a different understanding of what their role is. And it can be hard to go against someone who you've known all your life and tell them that, you know, you think that they could be safer, better parents and that's very, very difficult. My whole heart goes out to them, because I know that that must be really hard to do. And yet they still do it. And I've had several that have been doing it over 20 years, and they love their tribal members, they love their villages, and they want to see what's best for their kids. But back to IV-B Tribes. So, IV-B funding is based on population. Which means, you have to base funding on something right. And I think that's fine. However, I think taking into consideration cost of living. This goes back with grant funding too, you know, like I said, we can't, we had to fly everywhere. So, an average cost of a flight to one of our villages round trip is \$500. So, when we have to travel to the villages to provide services, or when we're required to travel to DC for grantee meetings, or to Seattle for grantee meetings, flying from Nome is a lot more expensive than flying from anywhere else grantees are usually from. Maybe, Utqiagvik probably I'll give you that it's probably more expensive, but it's really, really expensive to get anywhere. And that can send them funding for services. So, you know, if I didn't have to do that travel or if grant funding was like, travel might be separate from the services funding, so that we are still, the playing field is a little bit more level, I think that would really be appreciated. And with IV-B funds as well, we do have a small population, but we have high rates of suicide, high rates of domestic violence, high rates of alcoholism, high rates of sexual abuse, but we still have just that minimal funding because our population is smaller. And, you know, I was thinking too, if you look at a container, a can of Similac, you know, in Anchorage, let's just say it might be like \$8, and Nome is going to be \$12. And then in one of the villages, it's going to be between

\$20 and \$40, for the same can so, and hopefully not expired, by the time you get it in the village. Something to help with that would be amazing, because there's not a lot of jobs in the villages and people are doing the best they can.

Something, another focus with funding will be ICWA funds, Indian Child Welfare Act funds through the BIA. ICWA was established in 1978. And I believe we've been receiving roughly \$29,000 since early 1980s. It's 2021. And \$29,000 really doesn't go very far. And if we want our Alaska Native youth to be represented by their Tribes, we need to be able to fund Tribes to be able to do that so that so that youth voices are heard and the Tribes' voices are heard in court. I'm lucky to work where I work, at Kawerak, we're a Native nonprofit and our board is, they like to agree with what I asked for, which I'm super lucky for. So you know, they give me more funding so that my staff, you have benefits, and you know, that goes above and beyond \$29,000 so they can make a livable wage and have a nice office and be able to do the work that they need to do.

The IV-E funds, tribal Title IV-E. We've been doing IV-E for a very long time. We have an agreement with the State to do training and admin. And we couldn't do our work without those funds. They are definitely, can provide for salary, they provide for supplies, they provide for travel. We use that funding to help foster parents and relative placements get bunk beds or other supplies they need to help get them licensed with the State that we wouldn't be able to do otherwise if we didn't have those funds. One way I think we'd be able to use those funds better is the Family First Prevention Services Act. Currently, because of our agreement with the State to do IV-E work and not be direct, we have to go under the State's plan for prevention. And in order to do so, we have to have Tribes included, have to use evidence-based practices. In evidence-based practices the evidence does not come from Alaska Native families, it doesn't come from Alaska. And so, it drives me bonkers when they ask us to use evidence-based practice, but the evidence isn't there for our population. That's a little soapbox. However, if the federal government would allow the State to make a plan where they say "we work with Tribes in this way, and these are the plans that Tribes are using, can we please be reimbursed for their prevention activities," Tribes would get a head up, the state would get a head up, and the children of course we're all working for, would be able to hopefully stay out of the State's custody. And if you are a direct Tribe, which St. Paul is direct through the feds, they can have their own FFPSA, Family First Prevention Services Act Agreement and not have to follow those rigorous evidence-based practices, they can use other practices.

And also, I looked at your private sector partnerships, and I want to let you know, and also thank Casey Family Programs, Kawerak has worked with Casey Family Programs for a long time. And we are so appreciative for their help. We work a lot with them on the tribal-state compact, Child Welfare compact, and also directly with Kawerak. We work with family friendly foster families, and relative placements. So, trying to make sure relative placements are supported, so they can keep their family with them at that time. We also, under the Child Welfare compact work with the Rasmussen Foundation. So, we do have some private work help, but more is liked of course. With my Child Advocacy Center, we also work with Rasmussen to make sure we're up to date with all of our, our center's up to date, and the lights are still on.

Another thing I want to say and I talked about the Similac, but fresh food, fresh fruit and veggies in the villages are next to impossible to come by. Even the one on the road system, I used to be a school counselor there and you know, you go to the store, and there'd be like, four potatoes and some onions. And then that was it for fresh fruits or vegetables. So, and then at the school, once a month, each kid got a piece of fruit, fresh fruit. So just think of that. Once a month, you get a pear. Otherwise, you're eating canned fruit and vegetables or frozen fruit and vegetables.

For school districts, I've been thinking about this a lot lately. You know, we always see an uptick in kids going into custody, and reports of harm when school starts again. And that's because mandated reporters are there and you know, folks maybe haven't laid eyes on kids for the whole summer. And they will call the Office of Children's Services hotline and CPS hotline. I was thinking we had talked more about doing like a warm line. So mandatory reporters learn what to call OCS for and what could maybe somebody in the in the community help with instead and maybe that would be helpful. If the child doesn't have, if the child is not being watched and the parents are inebriated maybe somebody in the village can help instead of the State having to come in and doing an investigation. So, I especially when they were talking about having a lot of new teachers, we have new teachers all the time. I myself was one of those people who was here for two years, but you know, two years and then I then I was gone. But, when you're brand new and you haven't lived in a village or you haven't lived in Alaska or you haven't, you know, you don't know what you're seeing and maybe don't understand differences in life.

A big issue is housing. And I hope somebody brought this up already, but I'm not sure. But, housing is a problem. We don't have enough houses in our villages. We

have like a two-bedroom house with up to 18 people living in it. And kids are sleeping in shifts. And you know everybody's sleeping in shifts because they're just aren't places to sleep. What we try to do for our relative placements is in trial home visits for kids that are coming back into homes is purchase bunk beds for kids so that they have their own bed, and they have their own little space. And hopefully it can be in a quieter place so that, you know, people coming in and out, where we live, we don't lock our doors, and it's just it's, it can be safer for them to have their own bed. And I also read a study on the way here that links housing insecurity with involvement, not only with the Child Protective Services, but also to the Department of Juvenile Justice for kids up to age 15. And they did a longitudinal study, from birth to age 15. In the kids that had the parents self-report that they had housing insecurity, were much more likely to be involved with the DJJ, or some other and definitely CPS, but with DJJ as well. And we don't want our kids there. And I know in Nome we're trying so hard for housing and housing is expensive. It's expensive to build, getting everything up there, of course has to be shipped or flown in and it's costly. Speaking of construction, and then I'll stop. But, we, alongside of grants, when I was talking about our new Family Justice Center we're working on, the grants I would try to apply for, have no new construction. You have to use your existing building, and basically put lipstick on a pig to make it nice, make it what you need. And that's just, I'm going to have to keep doing that, I'm going to have to keep asking you for money over and over again to keep, you know, dolling it up to try to make it a good-looking place, or a place that I need. And that's really frustrating. So that's why we do have to reach out to private sector to ask for that, for that help, so that we can at least get started to apply for grants. But you know, the buildings that we do have could be in disrepair, and if we could have funding to have new structures that would be, that would be amazing.

Commissioner Gray 27:26 That was certainly action-packed. And I can't tell you how much I, relate to most of what you just said. And I will share, and my frustration and the cost of goods and services in the villages. I will tell you that a brick of shotgun shells in Seattle cost \$50. Here in Anchorage, at Cabela's, you can pick up a brick of shotgun shells for about \$105. You go up to Utqiagvik that same brick is going to cost you \$600. And that is the price they have to pay in order to engage in subsistence hunting. So, target practice, and going out to secure your source of food is even that's expensive. So, I greatly appreciate those sentiments and echo it as well. I can go off on a tangent on that. But I Madam Chair had a question. I'll turn it over.

Chair O'Neill 28:37 Thank you. Thank you, Traci, you talked about, you know, more of the grants and funding side of the house and in between you talked a little bit about or refer to

the high rates of domestic violence in the region. And my question is, what have you seen that works to really support families who might find themselves in that vulnerable situation? And, what has Kawerak done to support those families and children?

Traci McGarry  
29:25

Thank you. So, we received funding to work with Bering Sea Women's Group for a safe home program. And we were working on getting a safe home in each village. We succeeded in eight villages, I think and one in Nome, we actually had two in Nome, one was specifically for men and one was for women and children. And that program, I think was pretty good. Instead of people having to, you didn't have to call law enforcement in order to go to a safe home. So, if you were in an argument, and sometimes law enforcement can escalate arguments, as we have seen, you're not required to contact law enforcement first. That helped that program helped, our safe home program. And I was hoping that we could do keep going with that.

Another thing that has helped is we have kind of a grassroots effort that are several Kawerak employees, not necessarily a Kawerak program of women in Nome who meet monthly with survivors, just about talking to people who they know are in kind of a rocky situation. Kawerak Wellness Program also started a Green Dot Program. I don't know if you've heard about that, but I don't know too much about it, because it's not my program. But Green Dot is like a bystander training. So, if you're around, one of the things is distract, or trying to have the person be safe. Green Dot I think really took off. I think we trained a lot of people. A lot of people were trained in how to step in, but also keep themselves safe in a domestic violence situation. What concerns me the most is when children are witness to domestic violence, a lot of times law enforcement, and parents also will kind of downplay the children's involvement. They were sleeping or they were in the other room. But kids hear everything and they know everything that's going on, and it does impact them a lot more than parents and definitely law enforcement realize. I think training, we've been working with law enforcement in Nome, the Troopers and our local PD to really comprehend that, and you know, when talking again, about trauma, like looking at it with a trauma informed lens. So, when you walk into the house of the people that are screaming, if you can hear it outside, the kid's going to hear it in the other room. And probably a good idea to check in, you know. And kids, well, we know kids will step in between their parents when they're fighting and they hold that with them. So, we've been able to provide training to our local law enforcement and our VPS or Village Public Safety officers as well, which is another program that Kawerak has.

Commissioner Gray 32:49 Thank you. I also want to take a moment and recognize that Commissioner Melody has joined us and was wondering if you could introduce yourself as well.

Commissioner Staebner 33:01 I am Commissioner Melody Staebner and I coordinate Indian Education for Fargo and West Fargo School District in North Dakota, and I'm enrolled in the Turtle Mountain Reservation of Chippewa in North Dakota. Thank you for coming and sharing with us.

Commissioner Gray 33:20 Do we have any questions from our Commissioners online? I can't really tell if you raise your hand or not. So, I apologize. I'll take that as a "no." Again, Traci, I can't tell you how much I can relate to everything that you have expressed. Anita, I'm sorry.

Commissioner Fineday 33:50 That's okay. Thank you. Traci, I want to tell you my takeaways of three recommendations based upon your testimony. And you tell me if I have it right. One recommendation would be to increase IV-B funding and to add some kind of a formula enhancement for travel costs. Another recommendation would be to increase ICWA funding from the BIA which has been flat since 1980. And so, this next one I'm kind of playing around with what you said a little bit, relax the IV-E requirements to allow more Tribes to gain access to direct IV-E and cultural practices. Are you're in agreement?

Traci McGarry 34:55 Yes. With the IV-E, the prevention, I would appreciate it if the Tribes that are working with a state can still work with the state plan, but not have to reach those highly evidence base practices, to use more culturally based practices. Yes.

Commissioner Fineday 35:22 Thank you.

Commissioner Gray 35:27 I also wanted to kind of echo some of the themes that I heard, and that we've heard throughout the last few days, of meetings with various individuals and organizations across the state. The need to address evidence-based practices has been shared by multiple individuals. So that's been a very clear need to at least take a look at. And I may be putting words into your mouth, but I and maybe you could help me better articulate it. But I think that I heard that a, looking at a method of how do you speak to parents who are failing? And I think that there's a definitive art around that. I have not seen a program that does that well. So that is one of the underlying themes that I heard from you, as well. And I can certainly empathize and relate to the cost of housing. In Utqiagvik, we're paying about \$600

per square foot. So basically, that means if you want a mobile home, 1,000 square foot mobile home, it's going to cost you \$600,000. You know, it's hard to find somebody who's willing to give you a mortgage for that. So, I can't tell you how much I appreciate your testimony today. And I would ask that you listen in on the next panelist and share your thoughts as well. With that, I'd like to turn it over to, did I ignore you again?

Vice-Chair  
DeCoteau  
37:17

That's okay. No, it's hard to see me way over here. Thank you. Thank you for your testimony and for taking time out of your schedule to be here today, Traci. As some folks in my state of North Dakota like to say, [Native language] "That's alot." I'm wondering if when children get into the system, if your workers, if the children have access to the services they need in terms of dental, medical, behavioral health care, children with significant behavioral health needs or special education needs? Do they have those services accessible to them?

Traci McGarry  
38:03

Thank you for your question. Yes and no. We do have Norton Sound Health Corporation. I think you heard from Matt Hirschfeld, earlier today. Dr. Hirschfeld, we work closely with him and he has a peds [pediatrics] clinic, I don't know if you talked about that. But up in Nome we've worked with him so that what we found was that when families would come in for pedes clinic, all of a sudden, we have more kids going into foster care, going into custody. So, we worked with him so that it can be a day trip. So instead of people coming in and having to spend a night they charter a plane to bring families in they are there for the day. They have activities during the day, then they fly back in the evening, so there's not an opportunity to make poor choices or do things that would bring their children into care.

As for special education, it does exist. Each village has a SPED program. We have one school psychologist for all 15 villages to create ILPs in all networks, so that can be difficult. [Inaudible] It's tough, especially there's Medicaid limitations. Our CAC received a grant to hire our own clinician who doesn't have to bill Medicaid. She's paid through the grant. She's not required to use some specific programing that may or may not work with our population. She can call and just have a phone call to check in, there's no billable hours. She doesn't have to worry about that because with the grants she is paid for out of the grant. The has seemed to be working, we've gotten a lot higher rate of response. Our families are calling back, they're calling in every week or going on Zoom every week to meet with her. And we did not have that before when they were going through Behavioral Health Services. Behavioral Health Services in our region go to their villages once a month,

weather depending. You know, out in Diomedes, where it's hard to get there, you know, they might go once every three months or four months, because weather shuts them down. And then that was their only week, they can't just push it back a week. I think we do have tele-med and telehealth in our region, which we are using a lot, especially with COVID. So, they are there, but it's not near to the level, it would be in a larger community. And some kids can't, are not able to go back to their communities. What we found is the majority of kids who are placed in foster care and go outside or come down here, I would say 80% to 90%, probably closer to 90%, will not come back to the region. And if they do, they won't go back to their village they'll be in Nome. That's a huge number. And that's a lot of kids that won't know where they're from and won't understand their background or know their family. And that's where we come in. So, we're working really hard to try to keep kids up in Nome and find those services, like at the CAC with the clinician. We know kids need to see a clinician, what can we do outside the limitations of this to get kids what they need?

## **II. Panelist: Tracy Dompeling, Division Director for the Alaska Division of Juvenile Justice**

Commissioner Gray 41:37 Thank you so much. At this point, I'd like to turn it over to the panelists. Tracy, are you still on?

Tracy Dompeling 41:48 Yes, thank you. I just wanted to check; do I need to run the presentation from my computer? I had some PowerPoints, some photos and stuff that I wanted to share. Oh, excellent. Thank you so much. That's helpful. All right, perfect. If you could just, you could just go ahead and get started.

Commissioner Gray 42:17 Please, thank you.

Tracy Dompeling 42:19 Okay, sounds good. Alright, next slide, please. Okay, so I have about three focus topics that I wanted to share with folks today. Our trauma responsive interventions with the Division of Juvenile Justice, some cultural programming that we've been doing, primarily at the Bethel Youth Facility, and also some tribal diversion that we've been doing over the last several years. Next slide, please.

So, taking a look first, one of the interventions that I was asked to actually speak about is the trauma screening tool. Oops, actually, I think I need to go back one more, there we go. The trauma screening tool. So, this tool was really developed in consideration of the adverse childhood experiences study, and taking a look at all of the, you know, information that was gathered there. We work with professionals in in the State to help come up with this 15-question, screening tool that we do at different phases, where youth may have contact with juvenile justice. So could be within the first seven days of their, excuse me, 24 to 72 hours of their detention admission, could be then within the first seven days of their secure treatment admission, or probation may do that at different points in the court system. Usually after there's been some formal finding before the court. But what this information does is, it really is valuable to our staff to help understand and address the resident needs and behaviors that we have. You know, not only in our facilities, but for the youth that we serve in the community that are also on probation, because you know, at times they're struggling, and a lot of times, some of the information that can be gathered from this trauma screening tool can help to answer some of those questions and maybe guide those decisions into some better interventions that help support the youth and really encourage their success. We find it helpful in our facilities for the treatment team in case planning, with our clinical interventions, we have mental health clinicians that are either at all of our facilities or travel to our facilities at least once a week. That, you know, again, helping with all of these interventions, but also having a goal to help build resiliency with the youth. And we also like to point out that the tool itself is really a complement to, not a substitute for, staff awareness, other professional judgment, you know, with professionals with whom the youth has been seeing in the community. This is just kind of a supplement to help the youth be more successful. Next slide, please.

So, I usually get asked, well, what do you find from the trauma screening tool? And so these are the top four responses that we saw from those 15 questions from the youth that received the tool or the screening in FY20. And as you can see here, I mean, really over 50% of those kids reported having a household member or someone that they cared about go to prison. You've got two 39% experiencing the loss of a parent and caregiver through divorce, abandonment, or another reason. Also living or having frequent contacts with someone who experiences alcohol or drug abuse. And then this one kind of changed from the previous year, the previous year, we saw more youth that had experienced housing difficulties, which kind of went along with what Traci had just spoke about from Nome a little while ago. This one kind of changed this last year, interesting enough, to pop up to have

those youth that had reported experiencing repeated bullying or harassment. And so, it's, you know it's information that can help us and it can help other agencies really direct what kind of interventions or preventative efforts, different communities may want to do to try to help either prevent youth from even coming into the juvenile justice system, prevent them from having that contact with child welfare agencies, or just really helping to create healthy communities. Next slide, please.

I was also asked to talk about the Trauma Informed Effective Reinforcements System really long word for TIERS, not the crying kind, we always say this is the good kind. So, TIERS is a research-based gender responsive, trauma informed alternative that we like to use, or are starting to use more in our facilities as an alternative to compliance focused behavior management systems in a secure facility. So, it helps our staff reduce their focus on traditional compliance methods, and really helps teach skills to redirect unsafe and unhealthy behavior, teaches skills that are really more effective and motivating to the positive behavior. And I get it. This is stuff we should have been doing all along. But when you think about, you know, correctional facilities, you know, 20 to 30 years ago, this was not the mindset that we saw. So, it takes a while to steer that ship around the iceberg. And I'm happy to report we're going around it. So, we're doing some things in the right direction. What we did with this, however, is we brought it into our division as a response because we needed a gender specific model for programming for females. So, we were having a lot of some self-harm issues on our female treatment unit, we were seeing a lot of staff assaults, assaults on or from resident to resident, and we knew we needed to do something. So, we really we had some technical assistance. We've brought in the folks through TIERS, and they have helped really develop that program with us on the unit. And so, while it was originally gender specific, they've also found that it's pretty effective for young men, boys. And so, we've been expanding this program. It is now at the Fairbanks Youth Facility. It's on their boys treatment unit, their co-ed detention unit. It's in the Johnson Youth Center treatment unit. And it's in the facility here in Juneau. We did since move the girls program to Johnson Youth Center for various reasons. But they also again, they continued on with TIERS, training their staff.

And moving to the next slide just really quickly, this looks pretty dramatic. It looks more dramatic. I felt bad last night when I was going through the slides and I realized oh, I have the fiscal year and not the calendar year because the calendar year is even more significant. But these are showing some of the reductions that we saw from one fiscal year to the next. And this is after the implementation of

TIERS on the girls treatment unit. And I can just give you some brief numbers that are not going to match what's on here but are pretty dramatic when you talk about calendar years. So, at the tail end of 2017 was when TIERS was implemented on the girls training unit. And at that time, they had 45 confinements that year, and 112 restraints. They also had 40 of the injuries that were because of that, and then 22 staff injuries. So, the following year that dropped down from 45 to 23 confinements, from 112 restraints to 35 restraints, injuries dropped by over half from 40, down to six. And the staff injuries dropped again over half from 22 to eight. And then the third year, and I'm just going to compare these even to the beginning when we didn't have TIERS. So, in 2017, 45 confinements down to 2019, where we only had five confinements, and confinement is really when the youth get confined to their room for disciplinary reason. We don't like to have youth confined in their rooms. We understand it sometimes is needed for behavior management, but our staff are encouraged to work with youth to get them out of their rooms, and back engaged with our programming as quickly as possible. And then the restraints had dropped also down to 17, in calendar year 2019, from up in the 112 region in 2017. And so those were some of the most dramatic results that we saw, we've seen reductions as well, in restraints at the Fairbanks facility. So, these numbers just really encourage us to keep moving forward. I've been able to be a part. There's a lot of focus on community on the units, they have gatherings in the mornings, and in the evenings, where they kind of they have goals each day or each week. Things are focused on, the residents share, a lot of times the residents lead the groups. What I find really engaging is that when there's new youth that come in the unit, they have what's called a community welcome. So, they all welcome the youth. You have to think about, you know, it's scary enough to go into a secure facility, but trying to just to show that sense of community that people there do care about them, that they are safe. And that, you know, they too are going to make the best of the time that they've got there, you know, engaging in the activities that are available, and hopefully having those positive behavior outcomes. And the same thing happens too when the youth are getting ready to leave. I've been a part of one of those and it's nice, especially on the girls unit, and I love that it promotes the females to find the positives in one another and not nitpick. I know I shouldn't stereotype, but as a female, that can sometimes happen. And so, I just I appreciate hearing the girls talk about, you know, the qualities in the youth that's getting ready to leave the program. You know, and they also talk about their successes and how much they've seen that person grow, and what they hope to, they that person can accomplish when they leave. And so, it's really it's just, it's hard to describe the feeling of being there and being able to see that interaction, but it is extremely positive. Next slide, please.

So, I want to talk a little bit about the cultural programming. Just very briefly, we like to ensure that we're providing cultural programming because we know it helps to learn skills. Again, working as part of a community I just mentioned that TIERS really focuses on community, helps increase the youth's cultural identity, and can create positive outcomes in youth. And so here listing these lower rates of depression, decreases of alcohol and drug abuse. I won't read them all for you, I know we're pressed for time today. Next slide.

And so, here's some additional benefits that our staff have really noticed, especially from Bethel Youth Facility. You know, and also, some of these goals is really that the youth can take with them when they return home to their communities and help with their overall success. Because these are cultural activities that, you know, while they're in our facilities, they've probably missed out on you know, doings with elders in the community, doings with parents, you know, other positive adults. And so, being able to have participated in those, learn how to mend nets, those types of things, you know, hopefully can help them reintegrate more successfully back into their community. Next slide, please.

And here's actually a picture of a youth learning to mend a net at Fish Camp at Bethel Youth Facility. And three of the highlights of what Bethel does each year. They have the Cultural Heritage Week, Culture camp, and Moose camp. If we could go to the next slide.

So, here's some pictures from Cultural Heritage Week and this really developed in Bethel. The cultural programming in general developed from the community's cultural heritage week that takes place in the spring each year. Bethel collaborates with their local school district and numerous volunteers each year to make this happen. Youth complete various projects throughout the week, they learn traditional activities. Again, you know, with volunteer elders and other folks that come in. We really encourage youth, or the families of the youth to come in and to participate. You know, their participation is anywhere from approving the youth really, to be able to participate in some of the programs. But really, having them come and actively participate and help teach some of the skills that they, you know, that they have to share as well. You know, and really finding that family involvement enhances and reinforces the benefit of the youth participating in the culture program. One of the examples Bethel provided was that they had a parent of a youth that was a master ivory carver, and he was able to come in and teach the youth the basics of ivory carving. But it really allowed this young man to see his

father in a positive light and, and the youth found it very, or the staff saw it too, as very impactful because they also had some deep family issues that needed to be delved into with our clinician. And it really helps kind of with that bonding with dad, seeing dad in that positive light, and then helping to engage everybody in that family work to help the youth successful on his transition home. Let's see, I'm pressed for time, I just had some notes, want to make sure I hit on everything. Next slide, please.

So, the Culture Camp also providing opportunities for youth to engage with elders and other community members with cultural activities. A lot of times, it's the Fish Camp, Bethel Youth Facility, partners with the Native Council there in Bethel. They are allowed, Bethel, to use the Fish Camp for the Culture Camps. They do two of them each summer, typically in June and August. This can be youth actually from the detention unit, as well as the treatment unit. And we just like to make sure folks know that these are youth that have earned that ability to be out in the community and can be safe in the communities. Certainly, we don't want to create a public safety situation. But there's youth that are so excited about participating in these activities. And even youth with challenging behaviors will hold it together. They will hold it together for weeks before Culture Camp so that they will be able to go. And these kids, you know get out there. And unfortunately, in these photos, I have to blur out faces for confidentiality, and you don't get an opportunity to really see the smiles on their faces, to be able to be out to be outside and participating in these activities, which they know they're missing out on at home. And so really helping to keep that connection. Next slide please.

And then this one, is one that I know sometimes people scratch their head a little bit about. I was at a national conference once and I thought people were going to have a heart attack when I told them that we took a small group of youth out to do moose hunting. But it provides, so, staff are able to take some of the kids out to participate, they don't usually go out overnight. So, they're very thankful when they go out early in the morning. And they happen to get the moose early. And they're able to kind of process there in the field and bring that meat home. But it really it's a great opportunity for the staff to be able to teach, educate, frankly, learn from the youth. There's been parents that have also participated in this as well. It provides opportunity to bring traditional foods into the facility throughout the year that the youth were able to, you know, kill and process and to learn that subsistence hunting or those subsistence skills are also part of you know, they're a part of the cooking of that meat as well to kind of help with the life skills program. So just I'd like to let everybody know there's about eight relevant safety groups

that these kids have to pass before they go out on the hunt. But it is definitely a positive cultural experience for the youth to be able to go out and to do. Lastly, if you could move to the next slide, please.

I just want to touch briefly on the tribal diversion agreements that we've been able to develop partnerships with about 29 Tribes in Alaska so far. So, I know we have 200 to go, but this is really an opportunity where we as the State Division of Juvenile Justice can divert low level youthful offenders through rural diversion. And in Alaska, we were a state where the probation officer, where our office actually receives the report of delinquency first, and then has an opportunity to determine what's the best action that should be taken next with a youth. Whether they can be diverted from formal court action or they do need that formal court intervention. So, this is an opportunity for probation officers to work with communities and Tribes to help divert those youth in most cases back to the community. The concept of restorative justice in general really reflects the values of our division. And we know that restorative justice has really been a recognizable practice for generations by the Indigenous people of Alaska. So these restorative justice concepts support our belief that true accountability and justice is best practice at the most personal and culturally appropriate level in communities. So, we definitely believe in and we support our tribal and community restorative justice programs. Or excuse me, not ours, the ones that the Tribes and communities are creating, that really helped to address a low-level juvenile delinquency. And we continue to seek these collaborative partnerships with Tribes and village councils moving forward.

And just some last final thoughts, I knew I had gone back through the document that was provided, if you could move to the last slide for me. Great photo out on the water with the net, and the water and the dog hanging out too with the boys. Just wanted to touch on a few things I know some of your goals were for the Commission, educational opportunities, and social services for incarcerated youth. We are able to partner with the local school districts in each of the six locations where we have facilities to be able to provide high school and GED opportunities for the youth. Many times, youth come to us well behind in their grades and where they should be as far as close to graduation. And so, they have a lot of opportunity for credit recovery when they're in our facilities. The one thing that we're really lacking in and we certainly know this and want to do better is that there's limited educational opportunities outside, beyond just the GED or high school diploma. Sometimes we are able to have youth go out and I know we have one that's going to be participating in classes at UAA. And then he'll come back and stay at the

facility in the evening until he's ready to fully discharge. So, we do have some of those opportunities. But that doesn't work necessarily for every youth. And as Traci talked about earlier, when you talk about social services, certainly we have things available for incarcerated youth, it's when they go home, those might be limited, especially if they are youth that are returning to rural communities. But we do see that increase as Traci mentioned as well and telemedicine opportunities for you to receive those services, or as she said, as well, they do have to travel to tribal communities. Our ability, we're really sort of limited in the prevention activities that we offer. However, we are able to take some of our I believe it's our Title-II federal funds, and their, for pass-through grant opportunities for tribal communities so that we can, or they can create prevention and pro social related activities in communities, and can really, again, focus on culture with these mini grants that are awarded. We do this through the rural Community Action Program or Rural Capital, if you've heard from them at all during this time, but we've really seen some positive outcomes and are happy that we're able to use some of those Title-II funds to support those activities and communities. When it comes to intervention and alternatives to incarceration you know, certainly the tribal diversion agreements that I mentioned, are other roads or alternatives for us to really bringing youth into the juvenile justice system, it doesn't necessarily mean incarceration. But where, you know, they may not necessarily need that higher level of formal court intervention. I think family and cultural involvement I talked a lot about that. But I know the Commission, kind of looking at how that plays into account and Family Court, you know, family involvement in the State of Alaska is encouraged in the delinquency court hearings. You know, because we're able to divert cases before they need to go to formal court action, I think that, you know, we don't see as much of that cultural involvement in the formal court processes.

And then lastly, preventing unnecessary detention and successful re-entry. You know, the last several decades we've seen a reduction in the number of youth that we have in our detention, in our secure treatment settings. You know, this is good and bad. It's really great because we lower these numbers, it's bad in the sense that when you start lowering numbers and budgets get tight, you end up potentially closing facilities. And even though I say potentially closing we have had to close a couple facilities over the last seven years. The most recent one was in Nome, about three years ago. And you know, we understand what that can do. Yeah, the other one was in Ketchikan. So, it's you know, smaller communities. Again, taking you further away from families. You know, community engagement, cultural activities. And so, you know, we definitely try to incorporate the cultural piece in our facilities as well. We did last year, actually, before the pandemic, it

was a blessing in disguise we had to jump through all the hoops in order to get the Zoom capabilities in our facilities so that we could encourage more family engagement for youth, because we knew that with the closure of those facilities, the kids would be further from their families. And so, while it gives that opportunity, one of the downsides is, you know, some families that didn't work well, sometimes internet connections are a little spotty, even in the places where it usually runs fast. And so, when you get out into smaller communities, where you just don't have that connectivity, it's not as effective. So unfortunately, it is a downside, it's not as convenient for families [inaudible].

Reentry, we do that with every youth, we do try to, you know, we do try to get youth back to their home communities. We've had times where we have sent staff out with youth to their community where they will return to work with families just to try to help set up the community supports that they need to be successful. But you know, it's all individualized based on the youth. And so, all of these things that we do, and our secure treatment programs, including our reentry efforts that we've done over the last several years, I believe, has really impacted and shown some of those decreases in our overall recidivism rates. So, thank you for the opportunity to present before you today. And if you have any questions, I'd be more than happy to answer them.

Commissioner Gray  
1:06:59

Thank you, Tracy. I literally have so many questions. But I think I will hold myself in check and ask the other Commissioners, if they have questions that they would like to ask first before I get to hog all the time there. So, with that, I'll open it up for Commissioner questions. All right.

Chair O'Neill  
1:07:24

I'd just like to say that I'm really impressed with the cultural activities integration, I think that leads to so much healing. And we have over the past several days, as we've been meeting with different individuals across the state, and people whose dedicated their lives to the well-being of children, and most importantly, vulnerable children. The issue of culture continues to come up, both from the state and tribal viewpoint. And, and I, it's wonderful for me to hear this. Especially being in my role at CITC for so many years, and being a part of these conversations to know that we are all moving in the same direction. And it's exciting. I don't know if I could say that 20 years ago, you know, but one thing I do know about Alaskans is that we're innovative and entrepreneurial, and we'll make it work, you know, and we'll figure it out along the way. And so, I'm just really proud that we have, you know, individuals who, we all work in different capacities, but we're working

towards that same means, and that is to ensure the health and safety of our children. So, thank you.

Commissioner  
Gray  
1:09:04

Do we have any Commissioner questions from online?

Commissioner  
BigFoot  
1:09:09

Yes, this is Dee BigFoot. I have an echo, but thank you, all the panels or panelists have been absolutely amazing. So, thank you. I am wondering, Tracy, if you could speak to how the juvenile justice handles adolescents or children who have inappropriate sexual behavior. What are the guidelines around that? And also, within the curriculum that you offer, which is amazing, I mean, all the activities that you offer, how is sex education included in that? Thank you.

Tracy  
Dompeling  
1:09:54

Thank you, okay. So first, so the sexual behavior, that question is a little tricky, because when juvenile justice can get involved is when there is probable cause or that legal sufficiency to say that a crime, you know, if it was committed by an adult, we don't address status offenses that tie in with age, if a youth committed a crime. So, a sexual crime, that would fall into DJJ's jurisdiction. The ones that get a little trickier, the ones with the younger youth with the sexual acting out behavior, and I know that's been brought up recently at another presentation, our statewide Probation Chief has addressed that issue because it kind of falls outside of DJJ's jurisdiction per se, because if there's no probable cause, or no crime that's been committed, you know, the question is, what do you do to help support those sexually acting out behaviors so that they don't become a criminal offence later on down the road? Because really, we all know what that means. That means that there is another victim. And that's what we all want to not see happen. So that's a tough one to answer. I know the division will to the best of its abilities, still try to work with families, try to work with other social service organizations to try to get that youth and even the parents the support that they need. When it comes to teeth in that we don't really have it. So, if the family says yeah, we're not going to do it, there's not a thing that we can do about it. And I think that the same thing goes for other social service organizations as well.

Now, those youth that we do have jurisdiction, if we can, you know, work with the family to have them go get, you know, a sex offender assessment or risk assessment to really determine what need of intervention is available. But now that's becoming another issue in the state as well, and I know it's been discussed, is that our service providers for adolescent sexual acting out behaviors is I mean,

it's diminishing. We really don't have a lot of service providers in that area. So that would, when we run out of service providers in the community, that means we have to look at that next level of care, which is residential inpatient services. And so, there's a few programs in the states that do offer that level of service. If a youth isn't successful at that level of service, we have a unit at McLaughlin Youth Center that is specifically for adjudicated sex offenders. And it's more like an 18-to-24-month program, it's a bit longer than our other programs. But even on those units, while we are addressing that sexual behavior, you know, those youth that have earned that privilege and are safe enough to do so, even participate in community activities. I know that specific unit goes out and cleans up I think, along Ship Creek in Anchorage, every spring to kind of pick-up trash and things like that. So, that's kind of a community service project that unit in particular has been able to do. But so, there's all sorts of the gamut of different opportunities to be able to provide interventions for youth with the sexually acting out behavior. And then that kind of goes into the curriculum that's used, it's really I can't specifically speak to exactly what type of curriculum is being offered on the specialized sex offender program at the Anchorage facility. But it's been longstanding up and running. And I've been providing those interventions to youth in the program.

Commissioner Gray  
1:13:50

Thank you. Commissioner Fineday. You had a question?

Commissioner Fineday  
1:13:55

Yes, thank you. Thank you for your presentation. And I'm just thinking about probably this is not for youth who are incarcerated or in juvenile delinquency for sex crimes. But I'm, I'm wondering about home monitoring or community-based services. If you do anything like that, the thing that struck me about the cultural activities, and I think they're great, but they could do that in their village. They probably do that in their village. And that's why they're looking forward to it so much, that is the way they grew up. So, I'm just wondering about community-based services, home monitoring, anything we can do to keep these kids at home.

Tracy Dompeling  
1:14:50

So, very great question. I mean, the majority of the youth that we serve in the division are in their communities, and so there are, you know, there's supervision that's provided by our probation officers, for youth that are on court ordered supervision, sometimes that does come with electronic monitoring opportunities for those higher level or higher risk youth that are in communities. But again, the majority of those youth that we actually serve are in our facilities, or I'm sorry, not our facilities, are in the community. It's just those youth that are higher risk, you

know, danger, or maybe they've committed, you know, very serious offenses and have ended up in secure treatment, or they've been provided numerous opportunities at their community placements, and unfortunately, have not, you know, shown success there. And then they end up like I said, in our secure treatment. But the majority of kids are provided those opportunities in communities. And we've tried over the years, I think, some regions in Alaska, or regions for juvenile justice in Alaska have done a better job. But we had Probation Officers who were specifically, I hate the word "assigned." But that's kind of what it was. I mean, they had a community where we saw more referrals coming out of that community. And the goal there was to really get in, make the contacts with the service providers, with the Tribes, ICWA workers, make contact with folks in those communities, so that we built that relationship to help support youth when things did, you know, maybe took a turn for the worst. And so, someone in that community would have a connection with DJJ to be able to pick up the phone and call us and say, hey, we're having trouble with this youth, do you have any suggestions. And so, you know, through some of those opportunities, I know Tanana specifically, some of these really organic things just happen just so unexpectedly. I was doing a presentation at the University of Alaska Fairbanks and I was talking about volunteers and how we always are looking for volunteers. And I was more focusing in on the facility volunteers, but there was a young man who was a basketball player in that class. And he came up to me afterwards, and he talked about, you know, was there anything that he would be able to do? Well, from that morphed into three basketball players from UAF team that actually went out to the community of Tanana. They spent a couple of days out there, they did a basketball camp in the community. And this wasn't for just the youth that were involved with DJJ, this was all youth. And it was so amazing to really see our Probation Officers participating in that. UAF athletics participated. That community was excited about it. And those are the type of organic things that I really love to see, they just don't happen all the time. But they but they do from time to time, and I'd like to share those.

Commissioner  
Gray  
1:17:54

Thank you. You shared some pretty impressive statistics in regards to the reduction of confinement restraints and injuries with the introduction of the trauma responsive interventions. Is that a program do you think that could be adapted for use in the schools or elsewhere? Different circumstances, And I get that, but it's still a pretty impressive statistic, do you think that's an adaptable program that could be useful elsewhere?

Tracy  
Dompeling  
1:18:33

It certainly, I think that the sense of what they're trying to bring forward is that community and, you know, really more focusing on the positive and rewarding behaviors than the negative behaviors. I think that, you know, we all in many aspects just want to feel like, we belong. You know, to be able to have that identity and connection with folks. And so, you know, I mean, certainly, I don't know, if TIERS itself, it's really, I think, only been focused in residential, and then secure setting type environments. But I will see. I'm going to go up to Bethel next month, and I will actually have an opportunity to talk with somebody from the TIERS program, because they'll be out there doing some more training with the Bethel staff. But it's, it'd be a good question that I would actually ask them if they've ever seen anything like this or, you know, in schools or if there's any adaptation that they think could be done, you know, to be in a school environment and help kind of promote more of that pro social engagement.

Commissioner  
Gray  
1:19:36

I greatly appreciate it if you'd be willing to forward to the Commission any information that you have on the use of that, I'd be really interested in that. My second question is, you talked about the introduction of cultural programming. Did you by chance take into statistics as to confinement restraints, injuries pre and post cultural program introduction?

Tracy  
Dompeling  
1:20:09

No, that would have been great if we would have, right?

Commissioner  
Gray  
1:20:13

And then you talked about Fish Camp and moose hunting. Did you by chance track any statistics around those who had gotten an opportunity to go to this camp that had never actually been to a Fish Camp?

Tracy  
Dompeling  
1:20:33

You know, I don't think we did. But I'll bet we could find out. Darryl Garrison and his staff in Bethel do an amazing job each year with this camp and I could probably get a write up from him on kind of some of his observations of what he's seeing, you know, what he's seen over the years, because he has been Superintendent, there in Bethel for a number of years, and he's really been, you know, very involved in the planning each year for those camps.

Commissioner  
Gray  
1:21:03

And, I guess I'd be kind of interested in the same thing as in regards to the moose hunt. And just purely from the perspective of are they getting excited about doing something that they're familiar with, and that is comforting, or are they

getting excited about engaging in cultural practice that they haven't been exposed to yet, you know, or is there something else there?

Tracy  
Dompeling  
1:21:37

Sure, I will reach out to Darryl and ask him what he knows about that.

Commissioner  
Gray  
1:21:41

Thank you. I want to be respectful of everybody's time on the on the panel, and I can't tell you how much I appreciate your guys' testimony today. It's at 4:11 right now, are there any final questions from any of the Commissioners? Anita.

Commissioner  
Fineday  
1:22:05

Thank you, Commissioner Gray, and I think you and I are thinking along the same lines, I wanted to follow up on a data point and ask you if you track the youth that are entering your programs, and do you track whether they are in foster care? We know there's a big crossover between kids in foster care, those same kids often end up in the juvenile justice system. Do you track that?

Tracy  
Dompeling  
1:22:34

We do have the capability to track that. We do know, just in the partnership with Office of Children's Services, we sometimes get what is called dual status youth. So, these are youth that are already involved with the Office of Children's Services when they're referred to Juvenile Justice. Or we're also able to find out some of that limited history of youth that have you know, either been in foster care a lot, as a child through OCS, you know, potentially through the Tribes. So, we are able to obtain that information kind of case by case. We probably have some older, you know, some older statistics on those youth that have been in foster care and then have been referred to the juvenile justice system. It just takes a little bit of interfacing between their system and ours.

Commissioner  
Fineday  
1:23:29

Thank you.

### **III. Wrap Up**

Commissioner  
Gray  
1:23:33

Well, again, I can't even begin to express how grateful I am that you guys provided testimony today. And I greatly appreciate your time. So, on behalf of the Commission. Thank you very much. And if we have any additional thoughts or comments, we'll follow up with you via a written request. Thank you.

Chair O'Neill  
1:23:56

Thank you, Commissioner Gray. We will begin our next session promptly at 4:30.

**[END OF TRANSCRIPT]**

[Transcript completed by Kearns & West]