

ALASKA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #2024-11

A resolution requesting the Alaska State Legislature invest resources to address the state's behavioral health needs, from crisis response to community-based services.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Behavioral Health Systems Assessment (2016) estimated that approximately one in four Alaska adults and youth live with one or more behavioral health conditions; and addressing behavioral health needs, at a population and community level, are a form of public health, from promoting mental health and well-being to having appropriate crisis response training and services; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Constitution requires the State of Alaska to “provide for the promotion and protection of public health” (Article VII, Section 4), and the State has statutory responsibility for ensuring mental health services are provided, while Title 29 provides for certain types of local governments to adopt health powers, but only some local governments have taken on this authority, and most lack the necessary resources to implement an effective program; and

WHEREAS, since 2018 multiple partners are working together to improve Alaska’s system of care that responds to people experiencing a behavioral health crisis following the nationally recognized Crisis Now model, which implements a continuum of services; and

WHEREAS, some Alaska communities are leading local implementation of the Crisis Now model, including mobile crisis response teams in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Mat-Su, and crisis stabilization centers in Anchorage and Juneau, and other communities are exploring local services following the Crisis Now model; and the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline was implemented in Alaska in July 2022, and the Alaska Legislature has already made investments to implement Crisis Now at a local level with \$8 million in capital funding; and

WHEREAS, communities look to State leadership and investment to address system-wide behavioral health needs, to ensure a stronger and more coordinated continuum of services that bridges the needs and complements investments at the local level;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Alaska Municipal League requests that the Alaska Legislature increase investments in Crisis Now, both at the statewide system level with investments such as permanent funding to operate the 988 Crisis Lifeline, and additional targeted investments to assist local communities in building out their own behavioral health services; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, AML requests that the Alaska Legislature address gaps in the overall behavioral health continuum of services, including investments in workforce and housing, and removing regulatory barriers and programmatic inefficiencies.

Adopted by the majority of AML members at the Annual Business Meeting, December 8, 2023.