



Behavioral Health Programs Handbook

Updated September 22, 2020

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Welcome to VOA Alaska!

As an Alaskan direct-service non-profit organization, VOA Alaska has focused on serving Alaska's most vulnerable since 1981. Today, our behavioral health professionals educate and support youth struggling with substance misuse and mental health conditions, while also providing a safe space for healing. Additionally, our public health team is on the front line of prevention, working to strengthen and promote healthy communities.

Our vision is a community that supports the hope, health, and healing of every Alaskan.

Our mission is to empower Alaskans and uplift the human spirit through recovery services, housing, and promoting healthy communities.

We are driven by **our values** of courage, connection, hope, innovation, joy, and responsibility.

Hours

Monday-Friday 9:00am-6:00pm

Location

2600 Cordova Street, Suite 101
Anchorage, AK 99503

Call to schedule an appointment today!

907-279-9640

Visit us online to learn more about our services.

voaak.org

Program Philosophy

VOA Alaska acknowledges that addiction is a disease affecting the person's life physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually. Both ARCH and Outpatient programs utilize an abstinence and/or harm reduction model. The principles of the 12-step recovery programs are encouraged and incorporated into substance use program components.

We also acknowledge there are many who suffer from mental health issues that are physiological in nature and can impact the same life domain as those who suffer from substance use. Substance misuse and mental health issues are viewed as a struggle that impacts the entire family. Family involvement, therefore, plays a critical role in the treatment process.

Services are designed and implemented in a manner which:

- Supports the recovery, health, or well-being of the persons or families served;
- Enhances the quality of life of the persons served;
- Reduces symptoms or needs and builds resilience;
- Restores and/or improves functioning; and
- Supports the integration of the persons served into the community.

VOA Alaska further believes that clients are to be afforded dignity and respect regardless of circumstances and that each client requires an individualized recovery plan that realistically meets the client's needs. All services provided are person centered with goals articulated by those we serve.

The agency also upholds the value of acknowledging, assessing, and treating co-occurring disorders, and recognizes the importance of service integration for persons served with commitment to developmentally appropriate models of care and evidence-based research methods. The agency takes active steps to remain current with best practices and implements these models as data becomes available. In addition to providing mental health treatment for co-occurring disorders, the agency also provides services for individuals who do not actively present with substance use issues.

VOA Alaska believes in providing evidenced based services. All services have been designed specifically to meet the unique developmental needs of adolescents or young adults. Services are

further designed to intervene effectively for mental health, substance use, and co-occurring disorders.

Client Satisfaction

Throughout an individual's treatment journey with VOA, you will be asked to complete a variety of client satisfaction surveys. Surveys are confidential and you are not required to put your name in the surveys. The purpose of this process is to allow you a means to identify and talk about your satisfaction with services that you are receiving. It is important for you to know that you do not have to wait until the satisfaction surveys are given to you to discuss your satisfaction with services. You can discuss your satisfaction with treatment staff at any time during the course of your treatment.

Overview of Behavioral Health Programs

VOA Alaska has been providing behavioral health services to adolescents, ages 12–18, since 1981 with the opening of the ARCH residential treatment program located in Eagle River. Since then, a full continuum of care has been established to allow individualized services and care in the least restrictive environment possible.

VOA Alaska's continuum of care has evolved to now include residential, intensive outpatient, outpatient, community-based services and outreach, school-based services, and permanent supportive housing. This continuum of care allows individuals with mental health disorders, substance use disorders, and co-occurring mental health disorders to be placed in the most appropriate level of care. Together, these components provide a comprehensive range of services, which are individualized to meet the specific needs of each client and effectively intervene on substance misuse and mental health symptoms.

Individualized services can include: screening, comprehensive assessment, referral and linkages to outside services as necessary, case management, crisis intervention and stabilization, individual, group and family therapy, psychiatric evaluation and medication management, community support services, psychoeducation, substance use education and counseling. All services mentioned can be integrated in to care depending on client's clinical need.

Outpatient Substance Use Services

VOA Alaska's Outpatient Program (OP) consists of less than 6 hours of substance use treatment tailored to each client's level of clinical severity and function, and is designed to help the client achieve changes in his/her alcohol and other drug use or addictive behaviors.

The program is approximately 12 weeks in length. Treatment addresses major lifestyle, attitudinal and behavioral issues that have the potential to undermine the goals of treatment and/or impair the individual's ability to cope with major life tasks without the addictive use of alcohol or illicit substances. This level of care also supports VOA Alaska's Continuing Care Program (CC) that is utilized for individuals to provide a decrease of services while increasing supports in the community that includes ongoing monitoring, support and modification of their individualized relapse prevention plans as they endure new experiences on their journey in recovery.

Assignment of groups that therapeutically enhance client's functioning and address assessed problem areas identified in their assessment may include: emotional regulation/feeling management, relapse prevention, thinking errors, etc. At level 1, group assignment can include up to two groups per week, and an individual session frequency either weekly or bi-weekly depending on client need.

Intensive Outpatient for Substance Use Services

The intensive outpatient program (IOP) provides a structured treatment experience for youth with substance use disorders and/or co-occurring disorders who require substantial structure and frequent counseling in order to maintain abstinence and success in the community. The intensive outpatient program is variable in duration and intensity dependent on individual client needs and progress. Intensive outpatient consists at a minimum of six or more contact hours per week and utilizes the Matrix model to deliver services in accordance with evidence-based practices. There are a variety of group therapy sessions offered at this level, including: relapse prevention, living in balance, emotional regulation, healthy relationships, seeking safety, 12 step facilitation, early recovery skills, and a family psychoeducation group. Individual sessions with the CDC Counselor and/or Mental Health Clinician vary depending on the youth's specific needs and intensity of services needed.

Groups and individual sessions are designed to increase the awareness of the youth's substance use disorder and its impact, increase the youth's motivation for change, increase interpersonal communication and coping skills, reduce mental health symptoms, reduce destructive behavior and increase the ability to identify, express and manage feelings appropriately. Individualized treatment plans are developed that address the client's substance use disorders, mental health issues, behavioral issues, relapse prevention, family issues, skills development, and utilization of clean and sober support systems. All clients are strongly encouraged to attend Alcoholics Anonymous, or similar programs, as part of their treatment plan.

Intensive outpatient clients are provided case management services throughout their treatment. Case management activities include linkage to needed community services, coordination with the youth's school, linkage to employment and pro-social activities, and coordination with agencies involved in the youth's life to include Division of Juvenile Justice and Office of Children Services.

School-Based Services

VOA Alaska's School-Based Services consist of an integrated model of care with the Anchorage School District (ASD). Qualified, committed, and experienced clinicians are based in various ASD sites to meet the need directly where our youth attend school. This integrated model with the school district combines education efforts with behavioral health support to promote the wellness of the youth in the community.

Students have access to integrated assessments, drug and alcohol education, crisis intervention, individual and family therapy, and mental health and substance use counseling. Students are taught life and coping skills and feelings and behavior management skills to improve their ability to function within and outside of the school setting. Case management and care coordination are also provided to support the student and their family, as well as linking them to needed resources and positive social activities in their home community. This effort is supported through our partnership with Anchorage School District, Anchorage School Based Health Centers, and ASD Alternative Schools.

Outpatient Mental Health

Outpatient mental health (OP MH) services are offered at VOA Alaska's Cordova Street office or at the client's home and are primarily community-based serving age ranges 12-24. These services also help provide onsite outreach and supportive services to transition aged youth at Covenant House and their Housing Navigation Center. In addition, they serve as the supporting clinician to those enrolled in SUD services who struggle with co-occurring disorders to ensure wrap around care.

Mental health and family services are an integral component of all VOA Outpatient programs. These services are delivered by a highly trained team of master's level clinicians supervised by qualified and competent professionals and receive clinical supervision with a licensed psychologist. Individuals within any VOA Alaska program or referred from the community may receive individual therapy sessions focused on either the primary or co-occurring mental health disorder as determined by the assessment.

The frequency of sessions is based upon acuity levels and ultimately determined by the assessment as well as the clinician assigned to the case. The clinician may work in conjunction with a counselor, if the client would benefit from additional therapeutic behavioral health

support addressing life skills and coping strategies between clinic sessions.

Our mental health services value family involvement and strongly encourage parents and/or loved ones to be involved in family therapy sessions while the individual family member is enrolled in the program. Family therapy can be a stand-alone or complimenting service for an individual in any of the Outpatient programs and is provided by a qualified and experienced clinician.

The duration of mental health and family therapy is decided collaboratively with the individual and family enrolled in the program, based upon need and improvement outcomes. Clinicians may also refer their clients for on-site psychiatric assessment and medication management appointments by coordinating directly with the VOA consulting psychiatrist.

If deemed clinically beneficial, it is within the framework of the Outpatient program to continue mental health counseling after their completion of OP/IOP programs. Although these services are integrated within the OP/IOP/CC program, if continued support and therapy is recommended an internal transfer can occur. The counselor interfaces with all program components to facilitate a smooth transition from primary treatment. Mental health and family therapy are designed to address the mental health concerns and diagnoses derived from an individual's assessment. The frequency and duration of sessions is determined by the assigned clinician in collaboration with the client and family, based upon perception of need, acuity level, and assessment results.

Transitions Division

This division is led by a Lead Transition Facilitator who is trained in TIP (Transition to Independence Process, an evidence-based model). This division includes a Family Support Coordinator, Case Manager, and Peer Support Specialists. The Case Manager and Peer Support Specialists utilize the TIP model as the foundational structure of the services they provide. The Family Support Coordinator is a peer position for families to provide support and overall navigation assistance of needed resources. This division serves all VOA Alaska enrolled clients.

TIP is a community-based model that serves transition aged youth 14–24 who are experiencing emotional, substance misuse and/or behavioral difficulties. TIP engages youth through various VOA services that are strength-based and youth driven. The TIP model has been infused

throughout the treatment system resulting in services that are TIP informed. This model can also function as a stand-alone component that connects youth with a Transition Facilitator who prepares them for progression into adult roles with a focus on six different domains:

1. Employment and career,
2. Education,
3. Living situation,
4. Personal effectiveness/wellbeing,
5. Community-life functioning, and
6. Safety net of support.

Services are provided in both the residential and outpatient programs and in the community as appropriate with contact hours and duration of services being dependent of the needs and goals of the youth. TIP can be a stand-alone outpatient program, an addition to another outpatient program, or an addition to an intensive outpatient program.

Family Support

VOA's Family Support Coordinator (FSC) provides support to families at the onset of and throughout treatment. The FSC is a peer navigator whose purpose is to help families navigate through the treatment process, engage parental/caregiver support in the treatment and process, and create opportunities for pro-social involvement for individuals.

The FSC focuses on engaging and retaining clients and solicits participant feedback through client and family exit interviews. The FSC is considered a peer position with the criteria of having experienced addiction and the process of addiction treatment in their family, preferably with an adolescent, which allows them to relate to the family's questions, struggles, and needs.

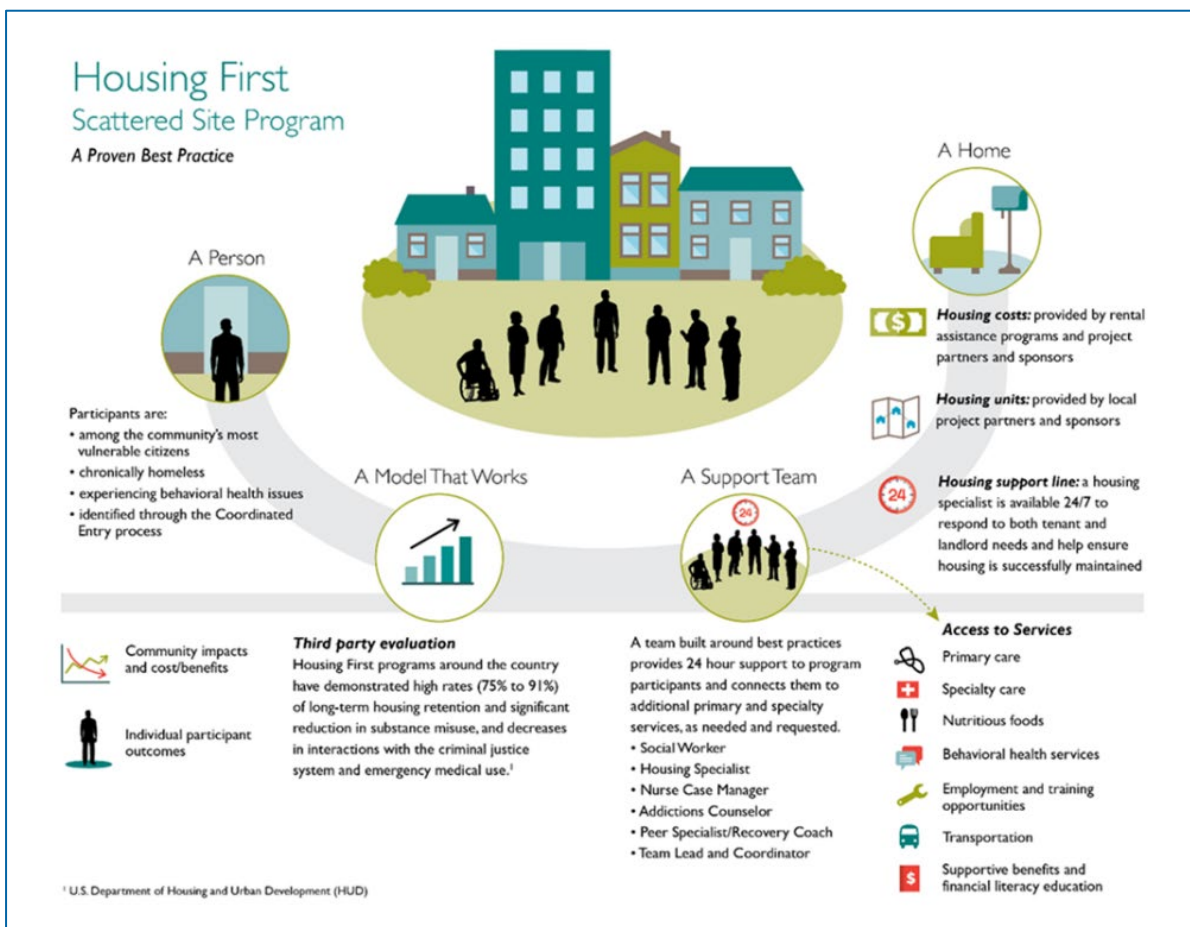
The FSC is responsible for conducting a family needs assessment to identify supportive services and resources, which will help support the family unit and ensure wrap around services are provided to the youth and their families. The FSC facilitates a weekly parenting support group that is open to all past and present VOA Alaska families.

Permanent Supportive Housing

VOA Alaska's Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program is targeted to transition-aged youth ages 18-24 who are experiencing homelessness. This innovative program is part of a

national demonstration to target investments upstream and address homelessness at a younger age.

PSH pairs affordable housing with support services and is often used to address chronic homelessness. Permanent Supportive Housing is an evidence-based practice with a significant body of research around its effectiveness. This intervention uses affordable housing through scattered sites and support services to address homelessness, economic instability, and poor health outcomes. Support services consist of integrated assessment, individual and family therapy, case management utilizing the Transition to Independence (TIP) model, and psychiatric services if needed.



VOA Alaska’s PSH program includes a coordinated approach with partners such as Covenant House, the Anchorage Coalition to End Homelessness, and NeighborWorks Alaska. The admission process includes completing a Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) screening that determines risk and prioritization of housing

services. VOA Alaska services those with a VI-SPDAT score of 9 or higher.

There are several entry points to complete the VI-SPDAT that include: Covenant House, Loussac Library, and Brother Francis Shelter. After the screening, an individual will be placed on a coordinated entry list that partners review on a bi-weekly basis to assign the right housing program to the individual.

Those identified as eligible for PSH (VI-SPDAT 9 or higher) are contacted and a coordinated intake with NeighborWorks and VOA Alaska takes place to complete an integrated assessment and the necessary paperwork to become a participant.

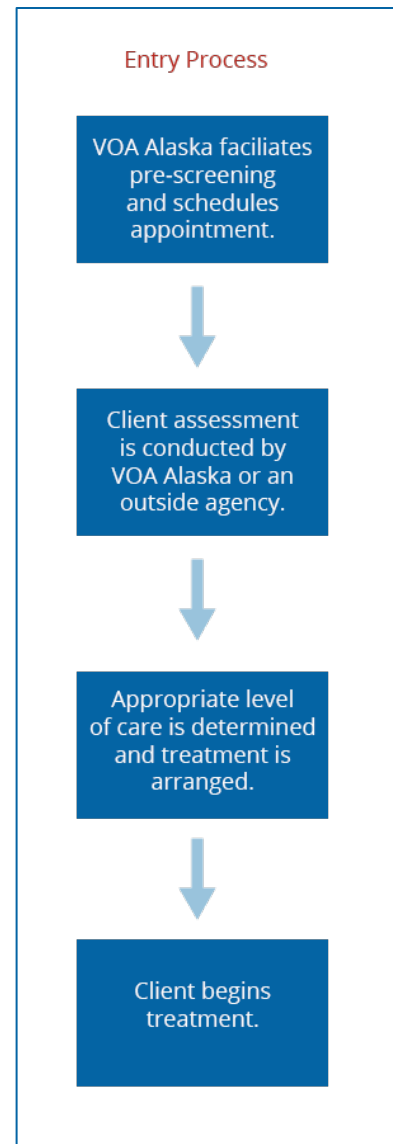
Searching for housing begins immediately and supportive services are encouraged during the assessment and treatment planning process to support the individual in identifying goals to achieve self-sufficiency.

Access to Care

Assessment

The goal of an assessment is to determine appropriate treatment options and provide a recommendation to support the individual's needs. The highly skilled and competent assessor reviews substance use, medical, developmental, mental health, trauma, among other areas, to understand the depth of need to ensure the right level of care and services are recommended from the beginning of someone's recovery journey. The assessment process determines the most appropriate and effective ways to support those who are seeking services.

VOA Alaska's assessment and screening process include the participation of the individual, family members, and supportive persons involved if appropriate, in addition to collateral information received from other entities involved in the youth's life. Assessments are currently conducted regularly during business hours at our Cordova Street office, local acute care centers, McLaughlin Youth Center, and telephonically for those consumers out of the Anchorage area.



Access to Services After Hours

VOA Alaska's outpatient programs do not have after-hour services; however a message can be left with a staff at our residential program, ARCH, at 907-694-3336, and if urgent, an on-call staff member can contact the appropriate supervisor to ensure contact is made.

**If you are in crisis and need immediate support,
please go to your local emergency room or call 911.**

Or call the National Suicide Prevention Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255.

Program Rules

Attendance

Attendance is essential, and consistent attendance is critical to a successful treatment experience. Each program component has a specific number of unexcused absences allowed. If an individual is unable to meet the attendance requirements, they will be discharged and given a referral to a more appropriate program. They may be re-screened for re-admission to a program within VOA that best fits their needs.

- **Intensive Outpatient** – A client can have a maximum of 5 unexcused absences from groups and 2 for individual sessions.
- **Outpatient** – A client can have a maximum of 2 unexcused absences from group and 0 for individual sessions.

Client Expectations

VOA Alaska will hold all clients to the following expectations:

1. Arrange for transportation, come on time, and attend all scheduled sessions. If unable to make any appointments or activities, please cancel at least 24 hours in advance.
2. You can only be 5 minutes late, or 15 minutes if you call in prior to group time.
3. No drugs or drug paraphernalia is permitted in the building or on the premises. This includes hemp items, tobacco products/vapes, alcohol, and all other drugs.
4. Smoking is not permitted on the same block as the building. The group you attended that day will be counted as an absence if you do so.
5. Weapons or items used to simulate knives, guns, or other items intended to threaten or harm are not allowed at VOA Alaska programs.
6. No clothing with profanity/vulgarity or clothing advertising alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, violence, or sex. Low-cut blouses or see-through shirts are not to be worn. No bandannas, rags, gloves, chains, or gang-related decorative articles are to be worn.
7. You must have at least 24 hours of clean time to be in group.
8. Outer garments, including coats, jackets, hats, hoods, sunglasses, backpacks, and purses are not permitted in group rooms or in individual sessions. Please leave these items in

the front office.

9. Cell phones, beepers, or electronic equipment must be completely turned off during groups and individual sessions. If an electronic device goes off during a group or individual session on even one occasion, you will need to leave it at the front desk for the remainder of your program.
10. There is no leaning back in chairs and chairs must remain within the group circle.
11. No food, gum, or beverages (including water) are allowed in individual and group sessions.
12. No gossiping about your peers, within group or outside of group. Confidentiality of others should be kept at all times.
13. No romantic relationships with peers also involved in treatment.
14. No swearing, hate language, or sleeping in group.
15. Participation is strongly encouraged in all program activities.

Refusal to follow the program expectations will result in the following actions:

- Possible removal from the program until further notice.
- Parent's, probation, court, or any other involved parties may be notified.
- Case conference will be held with parents/guardians, probation, and other involved entities.

Mandated Reporting

All VOA staff are required by Alaska State law ([A.S. 47.17.020](#)) to report to proper authorities suspicion of child abuse, physical or sexual abuse, severe neglect and if/when a client is in immediate harm to themselves or someone else.

Urinalysis Policy

For individuals who are enrolled in VOA's substance use programs (Outpatient, Intensive Outpatient and/or Residential), urinalyses are collected and processed to monitor progress towards goals of maintaining abstinence and determined to be medically necessary.

Overview: A urinalysis (UA) is a test that evaluates a sample of your urine and involves examining the appearance, concentration, and content of urine. VOA Alaska uses UAs to detect and assess the presence of substances (illicit and licit) for the purposes of mental health and substance misuse treatment.

The results of a UA will be used to evaluate the validity of a client's report of sobriety, abstinence, or relapse. The results may also be used in mental health treatment to evaluate the validity of a client's report of prescription use/misuse or evaluate toxicology issues that influence the prescribing of medications.

VOA Alaska has a Qualified Service Agreement with Millennium Health, LLC, a toxicology company that provides the UA supplies, examines the UA, and provides a report on UA results. Millennium Health is bound by HIPAA and 42 CFR Part 2 to maintain your confidentiality in the receiving and testing of UA submissions. They will only disclose results to VOA Alaska. Millennium Health, LLC will bill the UA directly to your insurance.

UA's will be considered medically necessary for a client's course of treatment and should be covered by insurance. In the rare case that it is not, clients may apply for a hardship waiver that will cover or go towards the cost of the UA. VOA Alaska will also help the family with financial solutions to cover the cost of any uncovered UA. The purposes for UA testing are specifically for facilitating progression towards treatment goals.

Please be advised of the following UA testing procedures at VOA Alaska:

1. A UA specimen will be given upon staff request within the specified amount of time. Be prepared to give a UA anytime you are at Outpatient/ARCH.
2. While giving a UA specimen, you are responsible for:
 - Remaining under direct staff supervision at all times.

- Washing your hands just prior to taking the specimen cup.
 - Making sure the cup is clean, unopened with seal intact.
 - Being under direct supervision while filling specimen cup.
 - Screwing lid back on to cup, rinsing and drying cup.
 - Completing signatures (initials) on required paperwork.
3. Refusal to give a UA sample in the prescribed time or fashion, including tampering with the collection, storage and testing process will be considered non-compliance and it will be assumed the sample was positive for chemical use.
 4. Clean urinalysis screening will be taken as evidence of:
 - Progress in treatment.
 - Appropriateness for program continuation.
 5. UAs which test positive for continued chemical use will be discussed in a case conference and may result in notifying probation and possible discharge from treatment.
 6. The UA specimen will be given in observance of same sex staff unless an oral swab is used.

Personal Search Policy

At all times, our substance misuse treatment programs and mental health programs operate in such a manner as to enhance the dignity and protect the human and legal rights of all clients. Additionally, staff members shall carry out their duties in a manner that preserves the self-respect and individuality of each client, including their cultural heritage.

The purpose of searching is to detect contraband and to act as a deterrent to contraband being brought in the program. It is also to ensure that the program remains a safe, drug and alcohol-free environment at all times. A safe and substance free environment is essential to a therapeutic climate that is conducive to personal change.

To ensure the provision of a substance-free environment, the following search procedures are used:

1. A clinical staff member on duty and the same sex as the client will conduct the search in an area of privacy.
2. The client will be asked to remove clothing and shoes down to the underwear and the removed articles will be thoroughly searched.
3. The client will be asked to pull out the elastic band of the underwear approximately one inch to prevent containment of contraband.
4. There will be no physical contact during the search.

The search process will be conducted in a manner that will allow the client as much dignity as possible during the process.

Fees and Payment

Free health insurance is available for qualified children and teens through Denali KidCare. We recommend all clients apply for this beneficial assistance program. If you need assistance or have questions, please contact your counselor or Directing Clinician.

Fee Schedule by Service (effective 08/01/20)

Assessment, Integrated.....	\$495.00 each
Assessment, Mental Health	\$430.00 each
Assessment, Substance Use	\$230.00 each
Assessment, Psychiatric.....	\$565.00 each
Alaska Screening Tool (AST)	\$42.00 each
Counseling, Individual.....	\$100.00 per hour
Counseling, Group	\$40.00 per hour
Counseling, Family	\$100.00 per hour
Psychotherapy, Individual	\$140.00 per hour
Psychotherapy, Group	\$60.00 per hour
Psychotherapy, Family.....	\$140.00 per hour
Psychotherapy, Multi-family Group	\$60.00 per hour
Case management	\$100.00 per hour
Crisis Intervention Short-term	\$130.00 per hour
Pharmacologic management	\$150.00 each
Psychological testing and evaluation	\$140.00 per hour
Residential Substance Use Treatment 3.5 Level (ARCH)	\$500.00 per day
Residential Substance Use Treatment 3.1 Level (ARCH)	\$360.00 per day

Sliding Fee Schedule

A sliding fee is available to all clients, even those with insurance. Income and number of dependents claimed on taxes is required to determine a sliding fee. Either the most recent tax return or pay stubs from the prior two months can be submitted (tax return preferred).

If submitted information indicates client might qualify for Medicaid/Denali KidCare, the client must apply for Medicaid/DKC and supply proof of applying. Upon proof of applying, VOA Alaska will pend patient bills.

The website to apply is <http://dhss.alaska.gov/dpa/Pages/dkc/default.aspx>.

The Sliding fee is not available for clients who do not apply for Medicaid/DKC despite appearing to qualify based on submitted financial information.

There are three different sliding fee scales, depending on level of treatment program.

Outpatient and Assessments

Family of 2	discounts beginning at \$ 64,650 annual income
Family of 3	discounts beginning at \$ 81,450 annual income
Family of 4	discounts beginning at \$ 98,250 annual income
Family of 5	discounts beginning at \$115,050 annual income

Intensive Outpatient

Family of 2	discounts beginning at \$ 94,820 annual income
Family of 3	discounts beginning at \$119,460 annual income
Family of 4	discounts beginning at \$144,100 annual income
Family of 5	discounts beginning at \$168,740 annual income

Residential

Family of 2	discounts beginning at \$107,750 annual income
Family of 3	discounts beginning at \$135,750 annual income
Family of 4	discounts beginning at \$163,750 annual income
Family of 5	discounts beginning at \$191,750 annual income

Payer Sources and Fees:

Medicaid and most insurance are accepted and billed, and no one is turned away due to the inability to pay. Fees are adjusted on a sliding scale. At intake, a fee schedule and payment plan will be developed with each family.

VOA Client Rights

1. Each client has a right to the provision of services in a manner that is sensitive to the person's age, gender, social preferences, culture, religion, spiritual beliefs, language, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, psychological characteristics, physical situation, or disability.
2. Each client has a right to be treated with dignity and respect; free from neglect and abuse (physical punishment, sexual abuse, and psychological abuse); including humiliating, threatening, and exploiting actions and/or retaliation.
3. Each client will be free from any abuse for financial gain to include misuse of funds received from or held for the client or taking advantage of the relationship with the person served.
4. Each client has a right to confidential maintenance and privacy of all information pertaining to the client and the right of prior written approval for the release of identifiable information. No information that would directly reveal your treatment status may be disclosed to anyone outside the agency without your informed written consent as governed by local, state, and federal laws (exception as outlined in privacy notice: subpoenas from a court of law or when there is reasonable concern that harm may come to you or others).
5. Each client has a right to informed consent, informed refusal, and/or expression of choice regarding service delivery, releases of information, concurrent services, and involvement in research projects and composition of the service delivery team. If involved in a research project, adherence to guidelines and ethics will always be adhered to.
6. Each client has the right to withdraw consent for services and/or seek services at another agency and to do so without pressure or intimidation.
7. Each client has a right to be involved in all aspects their treatment including participation in formulating, evaluating, and periodically reviewing his or her individualized written treatment plan, including requesting specific forms of treatment, being informed why requested forms of treatment are not made available, refusing specific forms of treatment that are offered, being informed of treatment prognosis, to be provided information in a timely manner for decision making, and communicated in a language and format that you understand.

8. Each client has the right to timely case reviews and referral to internal and external services
9. Each client has the right to access or referral to legal entities for appropriate representation, self-help support services, and advocacy support services.
10. Each client is entitled to all their legal rights. Each client has the right to be informed of all agency rules and regulations related to your service and provided treatment with the least restrictive intervention possible.
11. Each client has the right to initiate a complaint or conflict resolution about your services and to be informed of the agency's grievance procedure. Additionally, all clients have the right to an investigation and resolution of alleged infringement of rights.
12. Each client has the right to receive prompt and adequate medical treatment.
13. Each client has the right to provide input on programming, rules, and quality of care through regular evaluations.
14. Each client has the right to review with a staff member at a reasonable time, their treatment record and request amendments as stated within the guidelines of federal law and Volunteers of America Alaska procedures; however, information confidential to other individuals may not be reviewed by the client.
15. Each client may request a written summary of their treatment, which should include discharge and transition plans.
16. Each client will be informed by the prescribing physician of the name, purpose, and possible side effects of medication prescribed (when applicable) as part of the client's treatment plan at the community behavioral health services provider.

VOA Grievance Policy & Procedure

It is the policy of VOA Alaska to address all client grievances in a timely and uniform manner. When a problem arises which a client and/or family member feel is unacceptable, the following grievance process is available. The grievance policy is posted at each facility with the grievance forms accessible to client and their families at all times.

Procedure:

1. The Grievance Policy will be reviewed with the client and his/her parents at intake in a manner that is understandable. A signed copy will be in the file.
2. Clients and their parents are encouraged to talk to their primary counselor or directing clinician about any concerns they may have. It is possible that a misunderstanding has taken place and can be cleared up if the persons involved are aware that a problem exists.
3. If an agreement cannot be achieved then a client can submit the grievance in writing, email, in person or via telephone, an impartial person will be assigned to provide assistance with this process upon request. Consumer advocacy groups will be accessed as needed. The grievance will be forwarded to Quality Assurance and the appropriate supervisor of each program where the incident occurred.
4. Grievance forms and envelopes are available in an area accessible to the clients.
5. Upon receipt of the grievance the appropriate supervisor notified will communicate with the client and/or parent that the agency has begun the process to resolve the grievance.
6. The appropriate supervisor will respond in writing to the client/parent with a decision within five days of receipt of client's complaint.
7. Satisfactory resolution to grievances will be achieved within 30 days of receipt of the grievance. Appeals are made by parties verbalizing their dissatisfaction with the outcome and desire to pursue it further as outlined in the steps below.
8. If an agreement cannot be achieved, it will be forwarded to the appropriate Vice President within 5 business days. At that time, parents, appropriate caseworkers, probation officers and VOA staff will schedule a meeting with the client to resolve the situation. Every effort will be made to have this meeting within 72 hours dependent upon the availability of caseworkers, client, parents and probation officer.
9. If the situation remains unresolved, the appropriate Vice President will involve the CEO

if it remains unresolved or is otherwise appropriate.

10. If a resolution is not reached, the Division of Behavioral Health will be contacted within 5 business days with a request to mediate the situation.
11. Grievances will be maintained on file by the Quality Assurance Team. Grievances will be reviewed at the Quality Assurance Committee meeting to assess for trends and areas needing performance improvement.
12. Clients are guaranteed no retaliation, barriers to service, or consequences as a result of filing a grievance.

VOA Alaska Code of Ethics & Conduct

This agency has adopted the NAADAC code of ethics as our own, in addition to having an internal code of ethics and conduct. Both are reviewed at time of hire and periodically throughout employment. Employees and contractors are expected to have a working understanding of these principles and adhere to them always.

This agency has a policy and procedure manual to address all issues related to working for VOA Alaska. Our staff is required to adhere to these policy and procedures in matters of employment and human resources.

Staff will be knowledgeable of and adhere to the program as outlined in the program manuals. When questions arise regarding programmatic issues, improvising is not an option. Consult the program manual first and follow up with a call to supervisor.

All staff and client relationships are to be therapeutic and strictly professional in nature. Personal involvement between staff and clients is inappropriate, unprofessional, and damaging to the therapy process. Personal involvement with all clients (past or current) is therefore prohibited. This applies to any involvement outside the scope of the agency and to both current and former clients. If current or ex-clients are encountered in the community, staff should maintain their professional role and boundaries and protect the confidentiality of the individual.

Staff persons are not allowed to accept money or gratuities from clients or give gifts to clients, regardless of value. Staff may not borrow anything from the clients. Similarly, they may not lend anything that is not directly from the agency to clients.

Illicit substances, alcohol, and nicotine are prohibited on the premises. Refer to the agency's Drug-Free Workplace Policy for details. The use of medicine that could create impairment must be reported to management at the beginning of each shift.

Staff will be knowledgeable of all clients' rights and ensure that those rights are being protected.

Staff are expected to demonstrate respect for and safeguarding of the personal property of the persons served, visitors, personnel and property owned by the organization.

Staff should present themselves to clients, families, and other community members in a professional manner **at all times**. This requires acting in a professional manner as well as having a professional appearance and attire to ensure client and stakeholder trust in the agency and in its staff.

In the interest of professional and consumer confidence, when communicating with community members, staff will represent the agency and the profession in its best light.

It is important to keep in mind that our personal lives do reflect on the profession and the agency. It is our professional duty to be respectful of prevailing legal and moral standards in the community, and of the adverse effects the violation of these standards can have on the agency and the profession, and therefore, those we serve.

In working with children, we understand that their life and safety are in our hands while they are in our care. We understand that in the case of minor emergency (sudden illness), localized emergency (building fire, long term power disruptions), and major emergencies (earth quake, floods, and forest fire), we are to maintain care of our clients until the time we are relieved of that responsibility by authorized family members, or health care workers more qualified than ourselves.

To best serve the clients in our care it is important that employees obtain and maintain certification in Basic First Aid, Managing Aggressive Behavior (MAB), and CPR. It is further recommended that employees have on the premises or in their vehicle any personal items that they would need to stay on shift and serve our clients in case of an emergency—up to 72 hours as estimated by the Red Cross.

It is further recommended that appropriate footwear be worn in case of any emergency situations. It is suggested that open toe shoes and high heels be avoided.

The resources of this agency are allocated exclusively for client care. Equipment and materials are the property of VOA Alaska and will be used as the management team dictates. Equipment is not to be modified beyond the scope of what is intended by VOA Alaska or for personal use.

Per the State of Alaska labor law, it is not mandated to give employees over the age of 18 breaks.

However, we understand for employees to be effective in their jobs they may need to take occasional breaks which is supported. Breaks need to be coordinated with co-workers as appropriate.

VOA Alaska follows and complies with applicable federal and state laws and grant regulations in regards to ethical business practices and standards. Employees must further adhere to business practices outlined in NAADAC Ethical Standards and those outlined in the VOA Alaska Policy and Procedure Manual.

VOA Alaska employees must use ethical marketing practices to include presenting an accurate portrayal of the services provided.

VOA Alaska prohibits its employees from engaging in any activity, practice, or act which conflicts with the interests of the agency or its clients, or in which the employee benefits personally. Specific examples are outlined in the Policy and Procedure in the Conflict of Interest Section.

Outside of witnessing agency generated forms such as intake paperwork and releases of information, employees are **not** to witness other legal documents (such as power of attorney, legal paperwork related to guardianship etc.).

A summary of the code of ethics and conduct is reviewed with clients during intake. The complete code of ethics and conduct is available for review upon request. A copy of the code of ethics and conduct is posted in each facility.

It is all our responsibility to adhere to the above code of ethics, and therefore our responsibility to report any violations of this code to a supervisor. In the event that a supervisor is suspected of violating ethical standards, the staff member who discovers the suspected violation will report the violation to the next level in his or her chain of command.

If an ethics or “conduct” violation is suspected, VOA Alaska is committed to the expeditious and objective investigation and resolution of the violation and to the greatest extent possible, corrective action to prevent future occurrences.

Any violation of the NAADAC ethical standards, the staff responsibilities enumerated above, and those policies and procedures included in the program manual will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the VOA Alaska Policies and Procedures Manual.

Confidentiality

Federal confidentiality laws protect all clients. These laws, Federal Regulations 42 C.F.R., Part 2, and 45 C.F.R., otherwise known as Health I P Privacy Act, “HIPPA,” state that no individual, nor institution, has access to information about the client without the client and legal guardian first signing a Release of Information for that person or institution. These laws and related policies have been provided to you at the assessment in our Privacy Notice. Please contact your child’s primary counselor if you have any questions or to obtain another copy.

All clients and guardians complete signed Releases of Information (ROI’s) to a variety of people including but not limited to doctors, past treatment centers, probation officers, family members, etc. There are a few other exceptions, and all clients are strongly encouraged to discuss these exceptions with their primary counselors.

Notice of Privacy Practices

This notice describes how medical and drug and alcohol information about you may be used and disclosed and how you can get access to this information. Please review it carefully.

Information regarding your health care, including payment for health care, is protected by two federal laws: the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA), 45 C.F.R. Parts 160 and 164, and the Substance Abuse Confidentiality Law, 42 C.F.R. Part 2 (Confidentiality Law).

This Notice of Privacy Practices is provided to you as a requirement of the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA). It describes how Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may use or disclose your protected health information, with whom that information may be shared, and the safeguards we have in place to protect it. This notice also describes your rights to access and amend your protected health information. You have the right to approve or refuse the release of specific information outside the Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. system except when the release is required or authorized by law or regulation.

Under HIPAA and the Confidentiality Law, Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may not say to a person outside Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. that you attend the ARCH or Assist programs, nor may Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. disclose any information identifying you as an alcohol or drug abuser, or disclose any other protected health information except as permitted by federal law.

Use or Disclosure for Treatment

Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may use your information internally for treatment purposes, in accordance with state and federal law. For example, one staff member may disclose health information to another staff member to coordinate your care. Use and disclosure outside of Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. will not be permitted without your written consent, except as described in this Notice or otherwise permitted under all applicable privacy laws.

Use or Disclosure for Payment

Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. must obtain your written consent before it can disclose information about you for payment purposes. (A consent under the Confidentiality Law is generally the same as an authorization under HIPAA. For the purposes of this Notice, the term “consent” will be used to describe both.)

For example, Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. must obtain your written consent before it can disclose information to your health insurer to be paid for services rendered. Generally, you must also sign a written consent before Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. can share your health care information for treatment purposes or for health care operations.

Use or Disclosure for Health Care Operations

Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may use your information internally for health care operations, in accordance with state and federal law. For example, information about your treatment may be disclosed to a staff member to follow up on a customer service complaint that you file against another staff member. Uses and disclosures for these purposes will be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the operational purpose.

Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. is required to obtain your written consent before it can sell information about you or disclose information about you for marketing purposes. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. must obtain your written consent before disclosing any of your psychotherapy records.

If Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. intends to contact its clients for fundraising purposes you will be informed of that intent and of your right to opt out of receiving such communication.

If Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. intends to send you communications concerning treatment alternatives or other health-related products or services, or intends to conduct notifications for which the program receives financial remuneration in exchange for making the communication, you will be informed of that intent and of your right to opt out of receiving such communication.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of This Notice

You will be asked to provide a signed acknowledgement of receipt of this notice. Our intent is to make you aware of the possible uses and disclosures of your protected health information and your privacy rights.

How We May Use or Disclose Your Protected Health Information

The following are examples for which the federal law permits Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. to use and disclose your protected health information without your written permission:

Pursuant to an Agreement with a Qualified Service Organization/Business Associate. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may disclose your protected health information without your consent to obtain legal or financial services, or to another medical facility to provide health care to you, as long as there is a qualified service organization/business associate agreement in place.

For Audits or Evaluations. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may disclose your protected health information to a health oversight agency for activities authorized by law, such as audits, investigations, and inspections. Oversight agencies seeking this information include government agencies that oversee the health care system, government benefit programs, other government regulatory programs, and civil rights laws.

For Research. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may disclose your protected health information to researchers, when authorized by law, if their research has been approved by an institutional review board that has reviewed the research proposal and established protocols to ensure the privacy of your protected health information.

To Report Criminal Activity. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may disclose your protected health information to law enforcement if a crime has been committed on Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc.'s premises or against Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. personnel.

To Report Suspected Child Abuse or Neglect. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may disclose your protected health information to an appropriate authority that is

authorized by law to receive reports of child abuse or neglect. In addition, we may disclose your protected health information if we believe that you have been a victim of abuse, neglect, or domestic violence to the governmental entity or agency authorized to receive such information. In this case, the disclosure will be made consistent with the requirements of applicable federal and state laws.

As Allowed by a Court Order. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may disclose your protected health information in the course of any judicial or administrative proceeding, in response to a court order issued by a judge in accordance with federal and state laws.

To Medical Personnel in a Medical Emergency. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. will disclose your protected health information to appropriate medical personnel in a medical emergency.

Before Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. can use or disclose protected health information about you in a manner that is not described above, it must first obtain your specific written consent allowing us to make the disclosure. Any such written consent may be revoked by you in writing, except for information already disclosed in reliance on the consent and if the authorization was obtained as a condition of obtaining insurance coverage, other law provides the insurer with the right to contest a claim under the policy or the policy itself. This consent must contain the signature of both the minor and the legal guardian.

Your Privacy Rights

Under HIPAA you have the right to inspect and copy your own health care information. This means you may inspect and obtain a copy of your protected health information and billing records maintained by Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc., except to the extent that the information contains psychotherapy notes or information compiled for use in a civil, criminal, or administrative proceeding or in other limited circumstances. You must make your request in writing.

In the event that Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. holds your records in an electronic health record, you will have a right to an electronic copy of your health care information. If you request a copy of the information, we may charge a fee for the costs of copying, mailing, or other supplies associated with your request.

In limited circumstance, Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may deny your request to see or get copies of your records. If you are denied access to your protected health information, you may request that the denial be reviewed. The person conducting the review will not be the person who denied your request. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. will comply with the outcome of the review.

Under HIPAA, you have the right to request restrictions on certain uses and disclosures of your protected health information. This means you may ask Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. not to use or disclose any part of your protected health information for the purposes of treatment, payment, or health care operation. You may also request that any part of your protected health information not be disclosed to family members or friends who may be involved in your care. Your request must be in writing and state the specific restriction requested and to whom you want the restriction to apply.

Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. is not required to agree to any restriction you request, except in the case of eligible requests for restrictions on information provided to your insurer for services paid for out of pocket. If Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. believes it is in your best interest to permit use and disclosure of your protected health information, your protected health information will not be restricted. If Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. does agree to the requested restriction, we are bound by that agreement and may not use or disclose any protected health information, which you have restricted, except as necessary in a medical emergency.

You have the right to request to receive confidential communications from us by alternative means or at an alternative location. Volunteers of America of Alaska, Inc. will accommodate such requests that are reasonable and will not request an explanation from you.

Under HIPAA, you have the right, with some exceptions, to amend your protected health care information. This means you may request an amendment of your protected health information maintained in Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc.'s records. In certain cases, Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may deny your request for an amendment. If we deny your request for an amendment, you have the right to file a statement of your disagreement with us, and we may prepare a rebuttal to your statement. We will provide you with a copy of any such rebuttal.

You have the right to receive an accounting of certain disclosures we have made, if any, of your protected health information. This right applies to disclosures for purposes other than treatment, payment, or health care operations as described in this Notice of Privacy Practices. It excludes disclosures Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. may have made to you, to family members or friends involved in your care, or for notification purposes. Your request must be in writing.

Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. is not required to account for disclosures prior to April 14, 2003, or for any period longer than six years prior to your request.

You have the right to receive a paper copy of this notice. You may obtain a copy of our Notice of Privacy Practices by calling the Volunteers of America of Alaska, Inc. office at (907) 279-9634 and request a copy be mailed to you, or by asking for a copy at your next appointment.

Our Duties to You Regarding Your Protected Health Information

“Protected health information” is individually identifiable health information. This information includes demographics that may identify you, and relates to your past, present, or future physical or mental health or condition and related health care services. Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. is required by law to do the following:

- Protect the privacy of your health information.
- Give you a copy of this Notice of our legal responsibilities and duties and privacy practices related to the use and disclosure of your protected health information.
- Abide by the terms of the Notice of Privacy Practices currently in effect.
- Communicate any changes in the Notice to you.
- Notify affected individuals following a breach of unsecured health information.

We reserve the right to change the terms of this Notice. We reserve the right to make the revised and changed Notice effective for all protected health information Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. already has about you as well as any information we create or receive in the future.

Complaints and Reporting Violations

Under HIPAA, if you feel your privacy rights have been violated, you may file a complaint with Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. at the address listed below or the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Civil Rights at the address listed below. You will not be retaliated against for filing such a complaint.

Violation of the Confidentiality Law by a program is a crime. Suspected violations of the Confidentiality Law may be reported to the United States Attorney in the district where the violation occurs.

Filing a complaint

To file a complaint with Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc. or for further information regarding this Notice of Privacy Practices, contact:

Michelle Pattison, Privacy Officer
Volunteers of America Alaska, Inc.
2600 Cordova St. Suite 101
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 279-9640

To file a complaint with the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, contact:

Office for Civil Rights
Medical Privacy, Complaint Division
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW, HHH Building, Room 509H
Washington, DC 20201