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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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DHSS thanks Fairbanks Police Crisis Intervention Team for help, advocacy
Special team assists, protects Alaskan adults who are vulnerable due to mental illness

FAIRBANKS — Alaska's Adult Protective Services unit today presented its Community Commitment Award to the Fairbanks Police Department's Crisis Intervention Team for their commitment to supporting Alaskans during mental health crises with empathy and respect.

"We give the team members our heartfelt thanks for recognizing and respecting Alaskans' dignity during times of crisis, as well as providing them with concrete aid," said Duane Mayes, director of the Division of Senior and Disabilities Services, Alaska Department of Health and Social Services, which houses Adult Protective Services. "The 40 hours of specialized training they choose to take teaches them how to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations — dangerous often for the person who may appear to be a 'problem' but actually desperately needs help. This practical and compassionate approach has been shown to reduce arrests, and allows all of us to more effectively accomplish our shared mission of keeping vulnerable adults safe."

Crisis Intervention Teams started in Tennessee in 1988 after a police officer shot a knife-wielding mentally ill man, and is now in more than 2,700 police departments nationwide. In Alaska, the community-based partnership between consumers, law enforcement and the National Alliance on Mental Illness includes the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Adult Protective Services and mental health providers. The common goal is safety, service and understanding.

Adult Protective Services especially thanks Fairbanks lead trainer, detective Alana Malloy.

The award was presented during an annual free public resource fair for vulnerable adults and their supporters in the Noel Wien Library. Speakers gave presentations on the intervention team, Lifeline, and services available through the North Star Council on Aging. Similar fairs were held earlier in September in Anchorage and Juneau.

Gov. Sean Parnell designated September as "Vulnerable Adults Month."

Please call Adult Protective Services, 1-800-478-9996 statewide, if you believe a vulnerable adult is being harmed, exploited, neglected or is unable to care effectively for himself or herself. Call 911 if a vulnerable adult is at immediate risk. Details: dhss.alaska.gov/dsds/Pages/aps.

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