

# 2021

## Annual Report

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**AKEELA**  
HELPING ALASKANS ACHIEVE  
RESILIENCE & WELLNESS



## Our Mission

Akeela builds resiliency and wellness throughout the lifespan of Alaskans.

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## Our Vision

Recovery and wellness for everyone.

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Akeela serves adults and children who have been adversely affected by the repercussions of addiction and/or mental health issues. We are dedicated to a client centered approach, first and foremost. This is demonstrated by our commitment to quality through Joint Commission Accreditation.



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# Message from the CEO

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Dear  
Akeela  
Family  
& Friends,

This year was a tough one for the Akeela family. In 2021, everyone – our clients and employees included – faced many tribulations that can clearly be linked to the pandemic. Fears include COVID infections and outbreaks, employees and clients experiencing COVID fatigue, staff experiencing anxiety about working from home (WFH) or, in some cases, anxiety about returning from WFH, and the newest pandemic-influenced phenomena, the Great Resignation. In these times, it is easy to feel like the punches keep coming as each month passes us by; however, it is crucial that we pause and take a moment to truly reflect on the year that we just conquered... and we really did conquer it!

Our Akeela family shared some incredible moments during 2021. We experienced healthy growth and much needed change throughout all levels of our staffing, and we significantly expanded access to trainings and learning opportunities for all employees. Akeela administration kicked off the implementation of a long-awaited employee recognition program, and both virtual and in-person events that provide every Akeela employee the opportunity

to engage and grow with their Senior Administrative Leadership Team are regularly hosted. The pandemic provoked new ways of conceptualizing how we provide our services and the way we do business. These past 12 months caused us to reflect, and to closely examine how to better communicate as well as how to be flexible and nimble. As a result, Akeela thrived.

Out of an abundance of caution, as you know, this year's annual meeting of the Akeela Board of Directors is taking place virtually. It is my sincerest hope that by this time next year, for the 2022 annual meeting, we will return to our decades-long tradition many of us remember so well, of excitedly gathering in person for a lovely meal and a lively meeting. Until then, I hope you thoroughly enjoy the following 2021 Akeela, Inc. Annual Report and its accompanying virtual meeting.

*Stay safe & vaccinate!*

Warmly,

**Dr. Courtney K. Donovan**  
*Chief Executive Officer*



... it is crucial that we pause and take a moment to truly reflect on the year that we just conquered... and we really did conquer it!





# COO Report

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Like many organizations, 2020 and 2021 has tested the resilience of Akeela. Amid an unending pandemic, economic uncertainty, community unrest, political turmoil and an unstable job market, our 100+

employees have seized the opportunity to meet the moment ensuring continuity of care for our community's most vulnerable.

Since March 11, 2020, when Governor Dunleavy first declared a public health state of emergency, Akeela has published 24 updates to our COVID-19 prevention and mitigation plan to ensure that we are responsive to the evolving state of the virus. The foundation of Akeela's COVID-19 prevention and mitigation efforts has three pillars: health and safety of clients and staff; continuity of services for clients; and preservation of employment for our employees. Vaccination of our clients and staff remains our highest priority. To date, 77% of Akeela's staff is vaccinated. Our prevention and mitigation efforts have not been possible without shared sacrifice across the organization.

In the midst of uncertainty, Akeela advanced forward.

We were poised on day one to flip the switch, sending clinical staff home and providing telehealth services. Akeela has been a leader in distance service delivery and the pandemic provided an opportunity for Akeela to scale our telehealth service delivery model. This would not have been possible without the flexibilities provided by Alaska's Department of Behavioral Health allowable under the governor's public health emergency declaration.

The pandemic forced rapid advancement of some of Akeela's other automation initiatives. Over the last two years we have automated a number of clinical and organizational processes, increasing efficiency and reducing redundancy. Clinically, we have experienced growth or sustained census levels compared to 2020 and increased our client show rate as a result of expanded telehealth. At the time of this publication, Akeela's non-essential clinical staff are once again home providing distance services following the latest surge of cases in our state. Our prevention/mitigation plan utilizes guidelines provided by the CDC and World Health Organization. As we battled

AKEELA HAS PUBLISHED

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UPDATES TO OUR COVID-19 PREVENTION AND MITIGATION PLAN

## COO Report cont.

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the Delta variant and now Omicron, our core principles of health and safety, continuity of care, and sustained employment remain our top priority.

**Our core principles of health and safety, continuity of care, and sustained employment remain our top priority.**

Finally, Akeela has not been immune to the labor challenges experienced throughout the country. It has been a challenge to sustain staffing of key clinical and paraprofessional positions. We have utilized costly third parties to fill some of these holes. We have launched an overall employee recruitment and retainment strategy that includes rebasing of base salaries and referral and new hire bonuses. Additionally, we have launched both an employee learning management system and employee longevity program. Finally, we are exploring other strategies such as national recruitment efforts to ensure we are attracting top talent to Akeela.

In 2021, we continued our advocacy at the state level through the Alaska Behavioral Health Association and the national level through our engagement with Treatment

Communities of America. Additionally, we are now increasing our capacity at Akeela House as a result of our expansion project. I represent Akeela on the state's crisis and 988 workgroups. Finally, Akeela continues to experience great success under the state's SUD and Mental Health 1115 waiver.

**Daniel Gladden, MBA, MSW, LCSW**  
*Chief Operating Officer*





# Clinical Report



Akeela remains as a trailblazer in providing the highest quality of behavioral health services during a global pandemic. During this past year Akeela continued to act as “One Akeela” and focused on supporting the staff

providing the direct services. Akeela was able to accomplish this in numerous ways to include visits to sites, costume contests, weekly CCO vision cast emails, and town hall meetings and getting ahead of the state 1115 regulations.

The DSM Cross Cutting tool is aligned with national benchmarked behavioral health tools to provide clinical representation of the symptomology of Akeela clients as an evidenced based way to track the clients' clinical improvement.

Communication was increased this year in the way of CCO vision casts and Akeela quarterly town hall meetings. The first Akeela town hall meeting occurred April 23rd and all staff were sent a Zoom link to participate, the second Akeela town hall occurred July 30th and the focus was on introducing senior leadership to all frontline staff. The third Akeela town hall meeting occurred October 29th and the focus was on celebrating longevity of Akeela staff.

The next Akeela town hall is scheduled to occur in January. The weekly CCO vision cast emails are sent each week to clinical leaders to include inspirational quotes, videos to share in their treatment teams, productivity, clinical measures, and the tracking of our monthly screening tools. In efforts to boost morale and further encourage resiliency and support to our staff during the pandemic, leadership visited all its outlying sites to include Kenai, Juneau, and Ketchikan. This year also saw the creation of monthly themed costume contests in which all sites participate. The costume contests are meant to inspire employee's togetherness and morale during the pandemic.

**Brandi Burchett, LPC, LCMHC, LCAS, CCS, NCC, ACS, CCTP, MAC**  
*Chief Clinical Officer*





# Clinical Report cont.

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## PROGRAM LOCATIONS

### Anchorage

Akeela House Recovery Center  
Akeela Outpatient Program  
Transitional Housing  
Stepping Stones Residential Program  
Akeela Women and Families Program  
Family Care Court  
Mental Health Outpatient Services

### Homer

Alcohol Safety Action and Juvenile Safety  
Action Programs

### Juneau

Mental Health Services for Children and  
Families  
Therapeutic Foster Care

### Kenai

Alcohol Safety Action Program

### Ketchikan

Outpatient Substance Use Treatment  
KAR House Residential Program  
Gateway Mental Health Services  
Gateway Psychiatric Emergency Services  
Ketchikan Horizon House



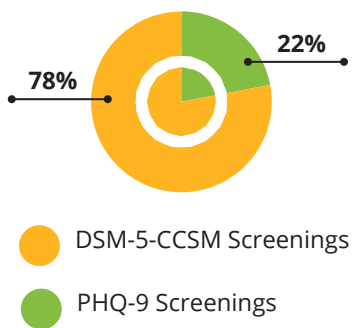
# Clinical Report cont.

## DSM-5 LEVEL 1 CROSS-CUTTING SYMPTOM MEASURE & PATIENT HEALTH QUESTIONNAIRE (PHQ-9)

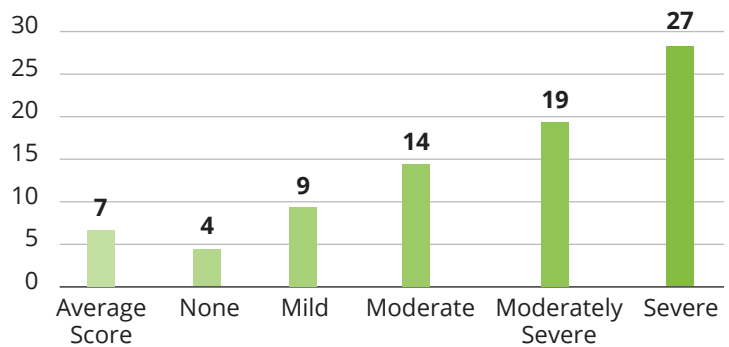
These patient assessment measures were developed to be administered at the initial patient interview and monitor treatment progress. Therefore, they should be used in research and evaluation as potentially valuable tools to enhance clinical decision making and not as the sole basis for making a clinical diagnosis. PHQ-9 is a self-administered 9-item instrument based on the nine DSM-V criteria listed under criterion A for Major Depressive Disorder. The instrument aids in guiding criteria-based diagnosis of depressive symptoms can assist in identifying treatment goals, determining the severity of symptoms, and guiding clinical intervention.

The DSM-5 Level 1 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure is a self- or informant-rated measure that assesses important mental health domains across psychiatric diagnoses. Akeela screens all clients' DSM-5 Level 1 Cross-Cutting Symptom Measure if domain score is positive for depression, a PHQ-9 is conducted. In addition, Akeela will track the percentage of clients screened for depression to determine the need for mental health treatment.

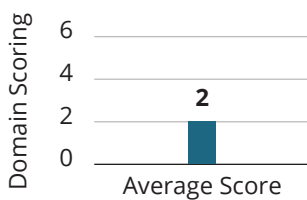
### SCREENING TOOLS CONDUCTED



### PHQ-9 SCORING



### DSM-5 CCSM DEPRESSION DOMAIN



# Clinical Report cont.

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## **SOUTHCENTRAL REPORT**

### **Anchorage Outpatient Programs**

Anchorage Outpatient programs experienced several highs and lows over this past year. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a change in service delivery and a higher expectation of client care from clinical professionals. Anchorage Outpatient programs have persevered through these challenges without failure.

Client engagement is the critical point of behavioral health services and Anchorage Outpatient staff have continued to engage with clients in ways that ease the tension that comes with telehealth care. Client engagement has remained strong as evidenced by attendance and the many graduations that have occurred. When the resurgence of COVID-19 began in June and July 2021, Akeela Leadership placed a mitigation plan that restricted client face-to-face engagement for Anchorage Outpatient to ensure the safety of clients and staff. Anchorage Outpatient leadership and the company that conducts clients' drug screens developed a plan that allowed for continued drug testing while maintaining staff and client safety. This was an encouragement not only to clinical staff but to clients as testing is a tool used for accountability.

Anchorage Outpatient experienced a decline in client referral when the resurgence occurred as referring agencies were determining their needs and how to proceed.

In fall 2021, both programs in Anchorage Outpatient have seen an increase in census and now have waitlists for clients seeking treatment.

As we have seen with all industries over the past two years, employment has declined across the country and Anchorage Outpatient was not immune to employment loss. Anchorage Outpatient experienced several staff member resignations in 2021 which affected staff morale. Another factor that affected staff morale was the return to all services being provided via telehealth. But once staff and Anchorage Outpatient leadership worked on increasing client engagement and a life-work balance for staff, morale increased and the bond between staff in the programs became stronger in support of one another showing yet again the resiliency the providers possess. Akeela continues to contribute to the training of staff and with the implementation of 'Relias' in September 2021, staff have access to trainings that are beneficial to their clinical growth.

### **Akeela House**

Akeela House has maintained a capacity of approximately 20 beds over the last year. Akeela has continued to navigate the challenges of COVID-19 and created virtual workflows that will contribute to ongoing efforts to be flexible in how we deliver services. Akeela continues to receive a steady stream of referrals and has a quick turnaround time in getting clients connected to services. Akeela House continues to bill

## Clinical Report cont.

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under the Medicaid 1115 Waiver. Akeela House has decreased turnover in the last year and most positions remained filled. Akeela House continues to identify talent internally and offer promotions accordingly.

Akeela House has undergone upgrades and remodeling in its main facility. It has increased its capacity as a result of an annex expansion of 13 additional beds. The few open positions that currently exist will go towards occupying the annex extension. Akeela House has been part of developing an Intake Center that centralizes all intakes in the Southcentral region. Akeela House team members have been encouraged to engage in Akeela Developed trainings that will assist with credentialing Counselor Technicians (CT) and Chemical Dependency Counselor I (CDC-I). Akeela House continues to evolve as trauma-informed and co-occurring based modified therapeutic community model.

### **Stepping Stones**

Stepping Stones' capacity has been at 12 for the majority of the year. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the way Stepping Stones delivers services. The use of apartments for isolation continues to limit the number of intakes we have been able to accommodate. However, restoring one of the unused apartments has allowed for additional availability. Additionally, there has been upgrades to the facility and property. Stepping Stones experienced a change in leadership, which led to modification and improvements in program structure. There has been some

staff turnover this year, however, continuing to hire staff has allowed the program to continue functioning without incident. Staff members have adjusted to the mitigation plan, which has contributed to a decrease in fears and an increase in their willingness to come into the facility to work. Although COVID-19 is still present, the children in the program have returned to school and the mothers are able to fully engage in treatment. Leadership continues to encourage training for staff members and some have obtained certification in Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT). Other staff members have earned the credential Counselor Technician (CT) and/or Chemical Dependency Counselor I (CDC-I). Stepping Stones staff members have supported clients while they worked towards securing the peer support certification.

**Stepping Stones clients continue to graduate the program, meet reunification goals, have their OCS cases closed, and regain custody of their children.**

### **Dr. Nathan Fearington**

*Regional Clinical Director - Southcentral*

# Clinical Report cont.

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## JUNEAU

### **Akeela Children's Mental Health**

Akeela Children's Mental Health in Juneau continues to provide special programming and services for children with severe emotional disabilities. COVID-19 has led to modifying service delivery by incorporating the use of telehealth.

As a result, children, adolescents, and their families have been able to continue to receive wrap-around clinical and behavioral supports.

Telehealth service delivery includes individual therapy, family therapy, assessments, treatment planning/coordination, case management, skill development, and child and adolescent psychiatry. In-person services were provided, including in-school behavioral support until the COVID-19 mitigation plan was reinstated. A part-time Mental Health Clinician and a full-time Behavioral Health Associate were hired.

Team members have been encouraged to engage in Akeela-developed trainings that

will assist with credentialing Counselor Technicians (CT) and Chemical Dependency Counselor I (CDC-I). Akeela's Therapeutic Foster care program has continued to maintain homes, gaining three through the year despite challenges. Currently, there are five active homes with three youth. Juneau is in the process of supporting two youth through permanency and one adoption. The program continues to be active in its fostering of community relationships. Currently, the program is within 60 days of implementing Akeela's first Home Based Service as a result of the Behavioral Health 1115 waiver implementation.

### **Dr. Nathan Fearrington**

*Regional Clinical Director - Southcentral*

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## SOUTHEAST

Akeela/Gateway Center for Human Services continues to be THE Community Mental Health Center for the Ketchikan area, providing myriad substance misuse disorder/mental health treatment services for adults and children alike. As well, as the Alaska Division of Behavioral Health grant recipient for Emergency Psychiatric Services for the Southeast Alaska catchment area, we collaborate with the local Medical Center (PeaceHealth) in evaluating for risk of harm to self or others or gravely disabled for possible recommendations of placement on Title 47 (Involuntary Commitment) Holds. Over the

## Clinical Report cont.

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past 12 months, approximately 235 on-call services were supported through Gateway's Emergency Psychiatric Program and assisted in coordinating 16 patients transported to off-island treatment through the efforts of our four FTE On-Call Clinicians.

### **Substance Use Program (Residential and Outpatient)**

Gateway Center for Human Services staff continues to work to build our Outpatient Substance Misuse Program and maintain consistent census at our Residential Substance Misuse facility, KAR House. The pandemic has presented challenges in securing client engagement through technology and onboarding of residents from within region only. Despite these challenges, staff strive to provide our consumers the quality supports they deserve. We are proud to be Akeela programs. All Akeela/Gateway staff continue striving to grow the numbers of services provided to those in our community within the specifications of the Medicaid 1115 Waiver, ensuring treatment is ongoing.

Over 5,500 individual services were provided to Gateway consumers in 2021 by our staff of a .5 FTE Outpatient Program Manager, 1 FTE Residential Program Manager, 3 FTE SUD Counselors, 2 FTE SUD clinical associates and 3 FTE Client Monitors. Akeela can be proud of the SUD supports we offer and level of skilled SUD treatment which is provided in our Ketchikan facilities.

Our SUD staff is a solid, hardworking group of caring individuals.

### **Adult SMI Mental Health/Peer Support Program**

Throughout 2021 our Adult Mental Health Program provided over 5,700 individual services for the severely mentally ill adult population in our community. The Adult Mental Health Program currently is staffed with a .5 FTE Outpatient Program Manager, 1.5 FTE Master's Level Clinicians, 3 FTE Clinical Associates, and 2 .5 FTE Peer Support Specialists; a team which works side by side in developing creative solutions for our consumers' needs. The "Working from Home" platform presents challenges across this program as well with clients having difficulty with connectivity, not wanting to engage via phone or video due to confidentiality concerns, etc.

THE SOUTHEAST ADULT MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM PROVIDED OVER

5,700

INDIVIDUAL SERVICES FOR SEVERELY MENTALLY ILL ADULTS

## Clinical Report cont.

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Since 2014, Gateway has been providing community supports through our Peer Support program. Presently Akeela/Gateway Center for Human Services is working to grow our Peer Support program. Staffed with 2 FTE Peer Support Specialists and a Peer Support Coordinator overseeing the staff and program, staff are housed in our main 3050 Fifth Avenue facility, working alongside an assigned MH Clinician and MH Clinical Associate. These teams collaborate in providing our SMI clients with wrap-around services designed to lessen diagnosis symptoms and increase level of functionality in each of those we support.

These Peer Support Specialists are dedicated to helping isolated people engage with their peers, and within their community.

They encourage activity, healthy cooking/eating, and wise shopping/budgeting, modeling social skills and enjoyment of life.

**Jim Harryman, PhD., LPC., BACS., NBCC**  
*Regional Clinical Director - Southeast*

## ALCOHOL SAFETY ACTION PROGRAM (ASAP)

Alcohol Safety Action Program (ASAP) in the State of Alaska monitors the treatment and compliance for both the Court and the Division of Motor Vehicles. We screen, refer, and monitor our clients' progress throughout their time with our office. Clients can enter our program by self-referral for DMV purposes or be court-ordered to complete the program by the State of Alaska Court system.

During fiscal year 2021, the Kenai/Ketchikan ASAP office continued to work through the COVID-19 pandemic and restrictions. As the numbers remained elevated for much of the last 12 months, we have rolled back to closed doors for walk-ins, conducting all business through distance methods. We utilize email, fax, United States Postal System, and our drop box for documents. We have also assisted clients with sending their paperwork to other offices if they are unable to send them in by either faxing or emailing appropriate documents for our clients, to help ease the hurdles of the pandemic restrictions.

Towards the end of fiscal year 2021, the state of Alaska experienced a cyber-attack and had to take various online systems offline, including the AKAIMS data system that ASAP uses exclusively for client files. This outage forced all the ASAP offices to utilize back-up forms and methods of tracking for approximately six months, ultimately coming

# Clinical Report cont.

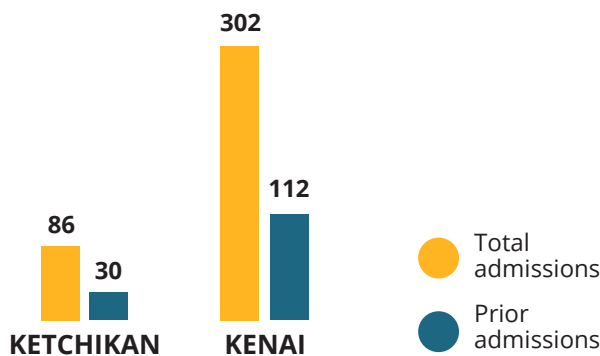
to an end in fiscal year 2022. During that time, the Kenai/Ketchikan ASAP office went back to our old ways of note keeping with word documents in the clients' electronic files and were able to continue moving cases forward albeit in a much slower process. The new challenge we will face in the new fiscal year will be inputting all the data from the six-month outage into AKAIMS so we can resume our regular reporting and tracking.

The graphs below show both the Kenai and Ketchikan ASAP offices by the numbers. Please keep in mind that with the AKAIMS outage, these numbers may not capture all the client files for the last month of fiscal year 2021.

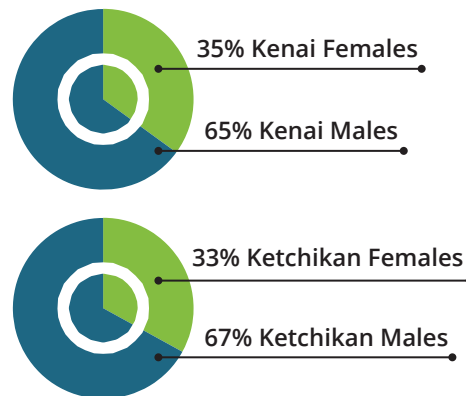
The number one charge ASAP monitored during this last fiscal year remains the DUI charge for both Kenai and Ketchikan.

## Kenai and Ketchikan ASAP offices by the numbers FY 2021

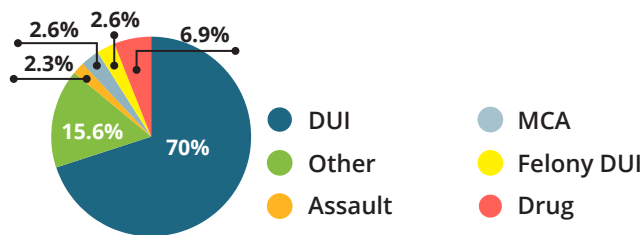
**TOTAL CLIENT CASES & CLIENTS WITH PRIOR ADMISSIONS**



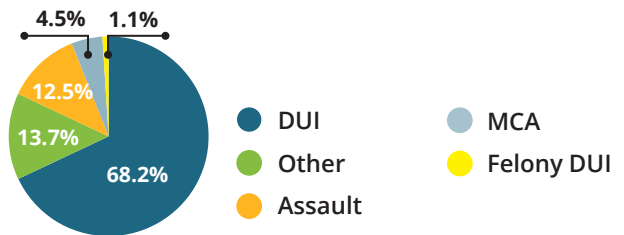
**FEMALE AND MALE CASES**



**TYPE OF CHARGE - KENAI CASES**



**TYPE OF CHARGE - KETCHIKAN CASES**







# Chief Infrastructure & Safety Officer Report

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The purchase and usage of new software in 2021, MaintainX, has expedited program requests and allowed for close tracking of projects. MaintainX manages all data and analytics of work orders

in order to produce graphs and charts that show the flow of work and repair for both Anchorage and Ketchikan.

Over the course of the year, we have been able to purchase vast quantities of computer equipment and components from the government auctions allowing us to have the highest speed available and the largest single-purpose server racks available to meet our growing computing needs within a small budget expenditure.

With the IT department, we have developed a very robust network with several different system technologies enhancing our Wi-Fi and network abilities.

**We currently have some of the best encryption, virus and intrusion software and hardware available.**

**Mark Marlow**

*Chief Infrastructure & Safety Officer*

## **MAJOR PROJECTS COMPLETED IN 2021 INCLUDE:**

### **Annex Building**

Completed Department of Health and Human Services approval for 13 beds, Municipality of Anchorage final inspections and Certificate of Occupancy

### **Akeela House**

Completion of laundry room remodel, new medical room set up for 38 clients and the furnishing of the dining room with new table and chairs

### **Stepping Stones**

Ongoing renovations on two apartments and office areas



# Compliance Report

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This year at Akeela was one of transition as staff and clients found ways to adapt in the face of a pandemic that is ever-changing. As the newest member of the team, it was impressive to see

how easily everyone came together to tackle incredible change. While the challenges along the way were notable, they were not insurmountable, and the beauty lies in the unity Akeela brings to the table among staff and clients.

I, too, was part of a transition and found the level of teamwork amongst leadership to be integral in taking this position. I have six years of experience working with mental health, hospice, and dementia. I believe my strength lies in streamlining the complex into something manageable and well understood. The role of the compliance manager is changing in this post-pandemic world of remote access and my goal is to ensure Akeela's ability to provide care remains a reliable resource for the community, as well as withstanding the new challenges facing the industry with the rise of data breaches and cybercrime affecting every aspect of patient care.

A risk assessment was recently performed by Deep Forest Security and assessed our vulnerabilities to internal and external threats, updated HIPAA requirements, and how protected our stored health information

is. The findings highlight areas of concern as well as areas that are up to standard. These results are still in review as more input is needed from other members of senior leadership on the outcomes before drawing formal conclusions. I plan on having the findings to you by the beginning of next year as well as a plan on how to move forward.

One of the greatest successes of the year was The Joint Commission survey, the findings highlighted areas of focus as well as the phenomenal staff Akeela works with. Overall, they were impressed with the levels of dedication to quality and safety during the survey. Any issues found were not life threatening and were easily remedied, reaffirming the consistency that Akeela brings to the table. Akeela was recertified and remains accredited by The Joint Commission standards for another three years.

As the year draws to a close, I am excited for the opportunity to create a compliance program that streamlines many of the current processes that may be outdated and cumbersome, as well as bringing a fresh perspective to the table regarding current healthcare practices in compliance and how that impacts our role in behavioral health.

**YaNuri Dietrich LPN**

*Senior Compliance Manager*



# Human Resources Report

After a year and a half of uncertainty, workers are now more certain than ever of what they will and won't tolerate at work. Employees want to be treated fairly, to make a substantial contribution to the organization through their work, and to be valued and appreciated for their efforts. While Akeela has not been immune to the "Great Resignation," we have made great improvements to highlight staff contributions and their dedication to our organization.

## Employee satisfaction and retention are top Akeela priorities.

During 2021, there were no restrictions on hiring, as there was at the onset of the pandemic. Akeela hired 37 new staff during the past year.

During recent months, we have been able to fill several key positions – Regional Clinical Director for Southcentral, Director of Utilization and Quality Management, Program Coordinator for our Juneau program, as well as Senior Manager of Human Resources.

Akeela's Longevity Program, originally delayed due to the pandemic, officially rolled out in October of this year. Employees are awarded for their time spent with Akeela, for 1, 3, 5, 10, 15 and 20 years. Staff can choose from a wide variety of gifts to show our appreciation for their dedication to our organization.

Keeping up morale during the most trying of times was no small feat. Finding and exploring ways for people to keep in contact with each other was imperative. Akeela has started to hold town hall meetings where staff can interact with each other and all Akeela leadership is present to discuss anything that staff may wish. Additionally, in order to stay competitive, Akeela raised the hourly wage this year to \$15/hour.

To increase recruitment during these challenging times, Akeela has implemented its first ever Employee Referral Bonus program, where current employees may be eligible for a financial reward if they refer qualified candidates that end up being hired at Akeela. We have also started to offer a \$1500 sign-on bonus for full-time employees and \$750 for part-time positions to recruit qualified candidates in this current job market.

102

TOTAL AKEELA EMPLOYEES  
STATEWIDE

76

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA EMPLOYEES

26

SOUTHEAST ALASKA EMPLOYEES

## Human Resources Report cont.

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Presently, Akeela is in the final steps of selecting a logoed fleece jacket for all employees as an acknowledgement of their hard work and dedication over the past year, as well as for not being able to have the annual summer picnics or annual holiday parties this year. Akeela provided a similar gift last year, which was well received by our employees.

With most of our clinical staff continuing to work from home, notable shifts have occurred in how Akeela provides training to our employees. Akeela has begun to utilize Relias, an online training platform that offers a large array of quality training courses which are current and relevant to our organizational needs.

**Our employees can at anytime, anywhere, train in an efficient, consistent, user-friendly manner, personalized to their needs.**

Many of the courses enable credentialed staff to receive instant CEUs once they have completed the course.

Digitalization in the HR department was badly needed, and COVID-19 gave us the right push. Akeela has begun to utilize its existing payroll software, Accufund, as a Human Resource Information System. This will allow increased information access between our HR offices in Anchorage and Ketchikan and provide our HR department more ability to craft reports for various administrative aspects of Akeela.

### **Tyler Mortensen**

*Senior Manager of Human Resources*





# Utilization & Quality Report



Thank you for this opportunity to introduce myself as the newest out-of-state remote colleague of the Akeela Senior Leadership Team. My name is Joanna Sanchez, and I have worked in

the behavioral healthcare field since 2011 in North Carolina, where I reside. I provided direct care services as a mental health and substance use counselor in outpatient and residential settings for the first four years. In the last six years, I transitioned to supervisory and managerial roles, eventually finding my way to my passion for Quality Improvement and Quality Assurance in Behavioral Health.

The Utilization and Quality Director role is new to Akeela, and with the newness of the role comes its challenges as expected. However, with the support and direction of clinical leadership and senior leadership, the role continues to develop and grow. I am continuously working on data being a natural topic of conversation within treatment teams and daily workflows to ensure that everyone recognizes the importance of data-driven organizational decisions.

As the Utilization & Quality Director, I am responsible for quality improvement projects, performance outcome tracking, analyses, compliance with federal, state, and contractual standards and department policies, utilization review, inpatient and outpatient service authorization,

documentation training, and ensuring the overall quality of service delivery at Akeela. Since starting at the beginning of April, I have worked on several projects, including implementing an internal process for authorization reviews in preparation for the 1115 Waiver Authorization Request for residential programs. In addition, I worked closely with the Chief Clinical Officer on the plan of correction for the Joint Commission survey completed in July.

As we continue to improve service delivery across the Mental Health and Substance Use Services continuum at Akeela, we have developed focus areas to ensure data-driven decisions. The following are areas where we have chosen to improve service delivery and outcomes of care:

- Developing of Dashboards
- Program Report Cards
- Key Performance Indicators
- Productivity Benchmarks
- Patient Satisfaction Outcomes
- Employee Engagement
- Utilization Review of Services
- Clinical Peer Reviews

Akeela is developing a comprehensive dashboard initiative to strengthen reporting practices while improving transparency and accountability. The following is a snapshot of data collected from Quarter 1 of 2021.

**Joanna Sanchez, MS, MAC, CDAC**  
*Utilization and Quality Director*

# Utilization & Quality Report cont.

## AKEELA DEMOGRAPHIC REPORT: UNIQUE COUNT OF CHILDREN AND ADULTS RECEIVING SERVICES

Akeela collects demographic data such as age, racial/ethnic, gender, and education for all new clients who received services in the Southeastern and Southcentral areas during each quarter for demographic analysis.

### ORGANIZATIONAL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA: Q1-2021

N = 196

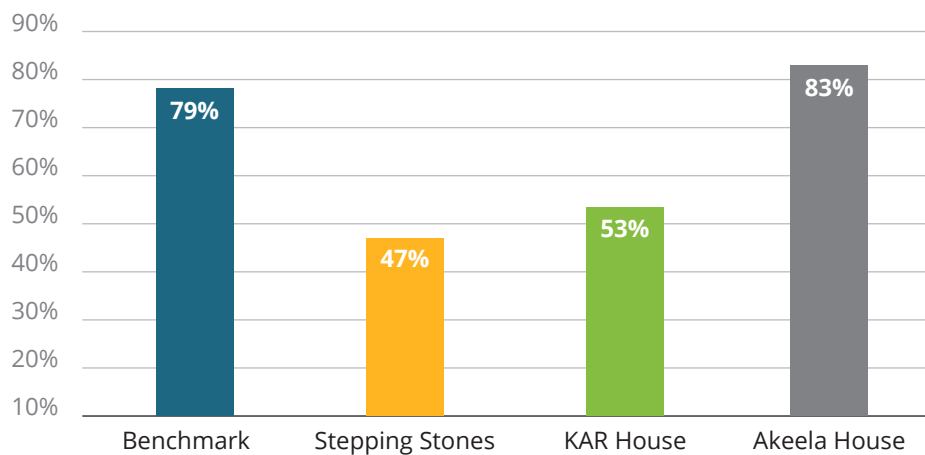
AGE	NUMBER	PERCENT
Under 5	0	0%
5 - 17	9	5%
18 - 28	37	19%
29 - 44	106	54%
45 - 64	43	22%
65 and over	1	1%
<b>GENDER</b>		
Female	77	39%
Male	119	61%
<b>RACE</b>		
Alaska Native/American Indian	65	42%
White	68	44%
Asian	3	2%
Pacific Islander	8	5%
Black	5	3%
Other/More than one race	6	4%

# Utilization & Quality Report cont.

## FACILITY CAPACITY AND UTILIZATION RATES

The Facility Capacity and Utilization Rates provide an overview of the utilization percentage rate for each substance use residential program for every quarter.

### RESIDENTIAL UTILIZATION RATES FOR Q1-2021



*BENCHMARK SOURCE: Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, National Survey of Substance Abuse Treatment Services (N-SSATS), 2020.*

## SERVICE DELIVERY

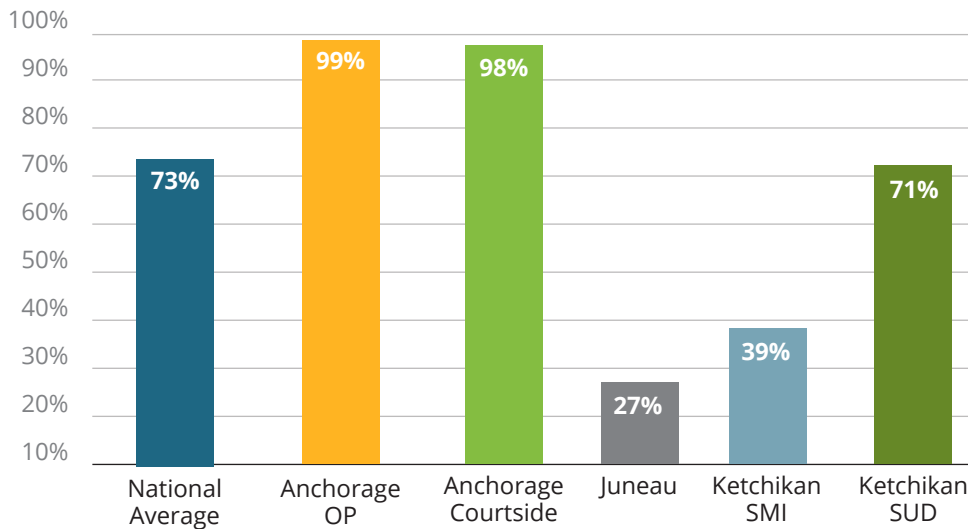
Akeela continues to address treatment gap by making services more accessible and convenient, improving health outcomes, and reducing health disparities. Telehealth provides a mechanism to increase access to quality care and reduce travel costs for clients, increasing the likelihood that clients will see their provider regularly and attend scheduled appointments. The following data shows the percentage of telehealth services provided throughout each quarter.

	ANCHORAGE OP	ANCHORAGE COURTSIDE	JUNEAU	KETCHIKAN SMI	KETCHIKAN SUD
<b>VIDEO</b>	760	830	37	387	257
<b>FACE TO FACE</b>	10	12	116	482	72
<b>PHONE</b>	0	0	0	150	31
<b>TOTAL SERVICES</b>	770	842	139	1019	360

# Utilization & Quality Report cont.

## SERVICE DELIVERY

### PERCENTAGE OF TELEHEALTH SERVICES FOR Q1-2021



NATIONAL AVERAGE SOURCE: Koonin LM, Hoots B, Tsang CA, et al. Trends in the Use of Telehealth During the Emergence of the COVID-19 Pandemic — United States, January–March 2020. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2020;69:1595–1599.

## ADULT EXPERIENCE OF CARE AND HEALTH OUTCOMES (ECHO®) SURVEY 3.0

To assess client perceptions of the care that they received through Akeela Inc., the instrument selected for the survey was the Adult Experience of Care and Health Outcomes (ECHO®) Survey 3.0. Akeela sought to know from current and previous clients aspects of their behavioral health care and services experiences. This survey and future surveys will be conducted to improve the quality of behavioral health services. This survey is used to evaluate and monitor the quality of services at Akeela. The results from the ECHO Survey assist Akeela in monitoring and improving the quality of behavioral health services. Akeela uses the ECHO survey to measure patient experience and measure the quality of the behavioral health services they are receiving by evaluating perceived improvement, amount helped, and overall health composite scores.



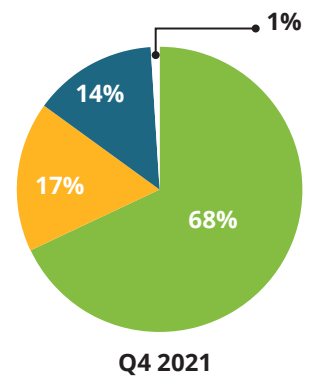
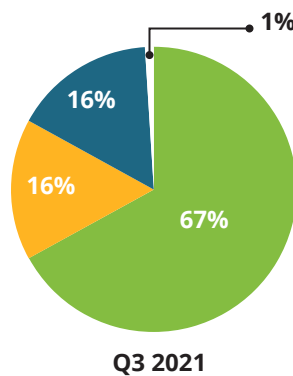
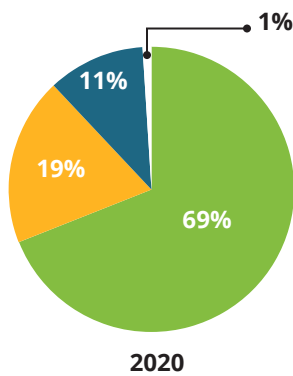
# Utilization & Quality Report cont.

## ADULT EXPERIENCE OF CARE AND HEALTH OUTCOMES (ECHO®) SURVEY 3.0

### ECHO SURVEY RESPONSE RATE

	SURVEYS SENT	RESPONSES	RATE
2020 TOTAL	669	41	6%
Q3 2021	350	61	17%
Q4 2021	364	25	7%

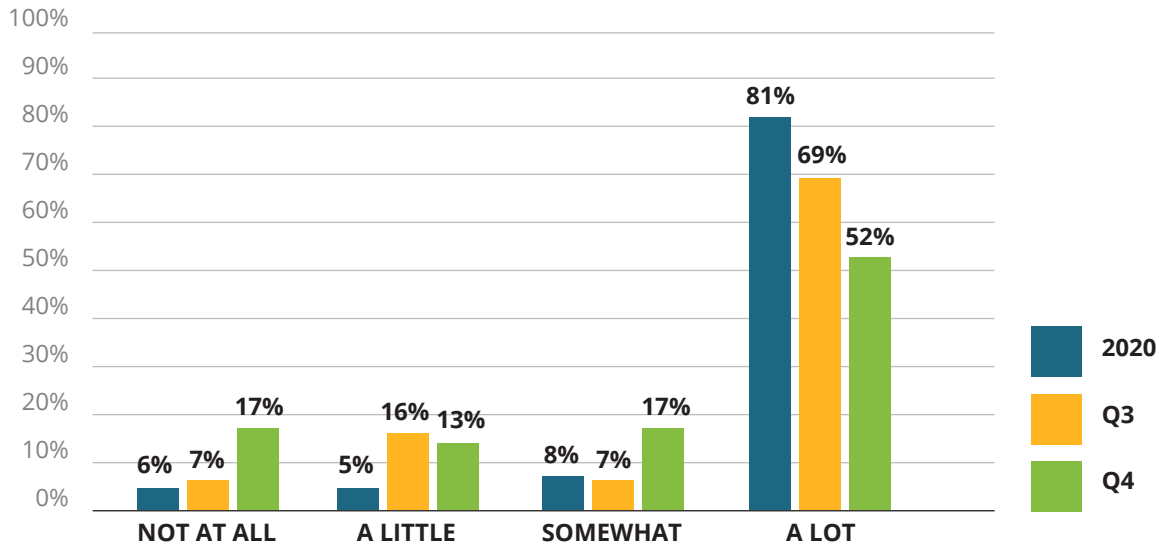
### PERCEIVED IMPROVEMENT



Perceived improvement is the average score among the following questions: Q31 compare the ability to deal with daily problems to 1 year ago, Q32 compare the ability to deal with social situations to 1 year ago, Q33 compare the ability to accomplish things to 1 year ago, and Q34, compare the ability to deal with symptoms or problems to 1 year ago.

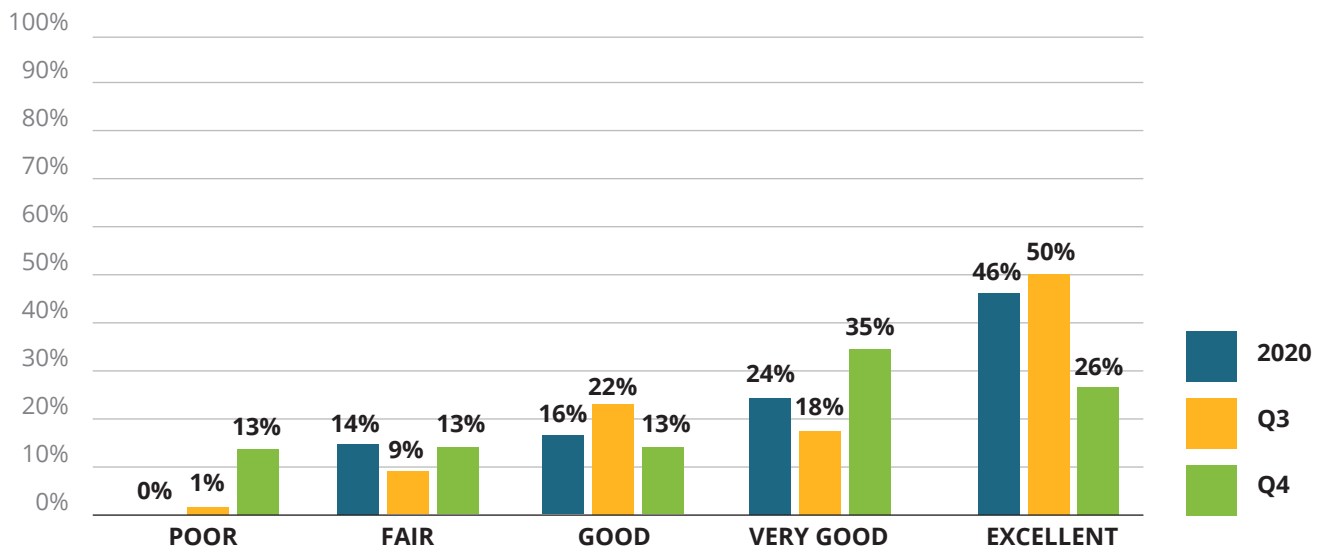
# Utilization & Quality Report cont.

## AMOUNT TREATMENT HELPED



Note: Amount helped is the average score from Q29: amount helped by treatment.

## OVERALL HEALTH



Note: Amount helped is the average score from Q 30: overall behavioral health now.



# Strategic Growth Report

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This year continued to be strongly influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing challenges created by a world in flux. While there have been challenges, both internal and external, several strategic growth accomplishments have come to fruition and with strong board leadership, we have been improving board recruitment practices.

The biggest internal challenge continues to be ensuring we maintain a qualified staff ready to deliver services. While staffing continues to be a challenge for Akeela's programs and services, the level of concern is consistent with years prior to the pandemic. This is good news. While COVID-19 wracked much of the US economy related to what is now commonly known as the Great Resignation, this organization, through a series of assertive recruitment and retention efforts, has managed to avoid much of the calamity employers have recruited across the county.

COVID-19 notwithstanding, the biggest external challenge continues to be impacts due to a major cyber-security attack on the State of Alaska that devastated the Information Technology infrastructure of the Department of Health and Social Services. This attack has plagued Akeela with a number of problems. The Grants Electronic Management System (GEMS) and Alaska's Automated Information Management System (AKAIMS) systems were knocked out earlier in 2021.

AKAIMS, the tool grantees report key outcome and delivery data on specific clients was out most of the year, only recently coming back into service. This has created a number of problems related to sharing detailed information with the state in an ongoing manner. Thankfully our electronic health records system tracks the required information allowing Akeela to maintain the highest level of service fidelity.

GEMS still has not been brought back online. As an original user, Akeela aided the Division of Behavioral Health (DBH) in developing the system. It streamlined and improved the workflow of all financial and program reporting, making possible electronic submission and tracking of all applications, program and financial reports, as well as payment details. With this system offline, we have reverted to submission of reports by alternative means, slowing down steeply the process of submitting for and receiving payment.

The cyberattacks coupled with the state's own staffing challenges has pushed payments off by several months in some cases. Initial grant payments and quarterly reimbursements, which historically have come in like clockwork, require management and tracking and sound fiduciary management as we can no longer at this time count on timely payment. Thankfully, Akeela's finance department is well prepared for this condition and Akeela maintains a strong financial position.

## Strategic Growth Report cont.

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As previously reported, with the support of the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, Akeela House has increase capacity to provide critical services to Alaskans in need. The operation is now beginning the process of ramping up client census after having met all state and municipal requirements for occupancy. Many thanks to Mark Marlow and his team for their effort to bring the facility up to code. Now the focus shifts to the clinical team to bring clients and staff on to the new census.

Through the grant renewal process, Akeela opted to reduce programs and services in the Mat-Su area and in Juneau. It was a difficult decision. But ongoing staffing challenges led leadership to conclude the best strategic decision was to cull those programs to ensure the services we deliver move the organization in the strongest position. Thankfully, DBH considered Akeela's request to reduce the Mat-Su programming to allow the organization to continue delivering certain services from our Anchorage clinical offices. This allows us to address key services in the Mat-Su as determined by clinical leadership while streamlining management in Anchorage.

An important effort is underway right now at the board level. A committee of the board run by Elaine Border is focusing on board recruitment by reviewing policy, establishing a job description for board members, and

ensuring efforts are strategic in nature. This process is ongoing and will provide valuable guidance in board membership in the coming year.

And a final note – Akeela is two years out from celebrating its 50th Anniversary. It is anticipated that the pandemic will no longer be a concern and initial efforts to commemorate this remarkable milestone are underway.

### **Christopher Constant**

*Director of Strategic Growth*





# CFO Report

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I am pleased to announce that Akeela received another clean audit opinion on our fiscal year 2021 financial statements. This success validates our commitment to excellence

in financial reporting and confirms that our financial statements are presented fairly and free of material misstatements. Even during a global pandemic, Akeela successfully provided services without interruption and closed another year with an increase in net assets. Our accomplishments continue to be possible because of the phenomenal staff that goes above and beyond in their day-to-day duties.

One of Akeela's many strengths throughout the organization is the longevity and resilience of the finance department. Akeela has a centralized finance department located in the Administrative Building in Anchorage. Our department consists of eight people, many of whom have been with Akeela for over five

years. Each of them truly enjoys what they do and believes in the mission and vision of Akeela.

**It's because of their hard work, commitment, and diligence that we can continue performing at our best and remain resilient through ongoing changes.**

The global pandemic forced our organization to reevaluate its many processes, especially within the functions of the finance department.

## FY21 Highlights

**\$0**

Reduction in state grants and Medicaid funding

**\$20,000**

Rasmuson Foundation Grant for Akeela House roof replacement

**\$1.2 Million**

of Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) COVID-19 Financial Relief was forgiven

**\$300,000**

Alaska Mental Health Trust funding for Akeela House expansion

**\$15,000**

Premera Social Impact Grant for Akeela House roof replacement

# CFO Report cont.

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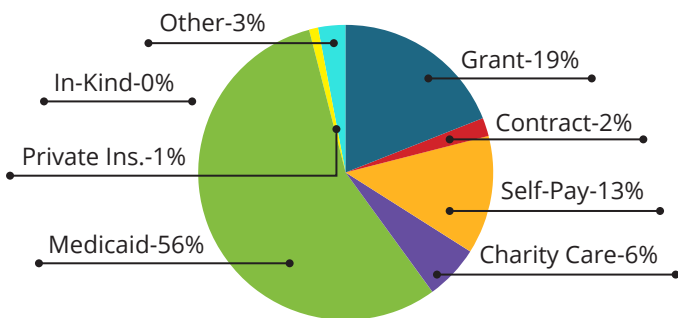
For decades, our department has operated in a mindset of “if it’s not broken, don’t fix it.” The most successful transition for us has been moving from paper processes to electronic. This evolution made things more efficient, with timelier processes and valuable resources freed up to be used in other ways. While not every position had the flexibility to work remotely, most of the team could successfully complete their duties at a distance. The staff unanimously agrees that a highlight of the pandemic has been the ability to work from home. The department truly feels that their productivity and ability to focus have significantly improved.

However, one of the main struggles throughout the team and perhaps the organization as a whole has been communication. Even though digital devices are readily available and at our fingertips, the delays, interpretation, and formats used to

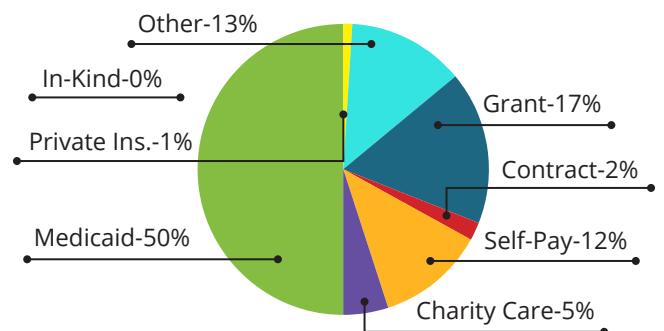
communicate throughout the organization have often been more difficult. While some of us are very comfortable picking up a phone or sending an email, others respond better to in-person communication. It’s also easy for communication to be misunderstood, as there is no tone in the text. The pandemic has taught us that change is vital for growth; that patience is necessary, and decisions need to be made confidently, yet swiftly.

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has made it difficult for businesses to operate successfully; however, Akeela has persevered during these strenuous times. We are thankful that the state grants and Medicaid remained flat-funded, as we continue to see the success of the state’s 1115 Medicaid waiver. In addition, Akeela was granted a \$1.2 million loan through the Paycheck Protection Program to aid us in COVID-19 financial relief.

## FY20 REVENUE SOURCES



## FY21 REVENUE SOURCES



# CFO Report cont.

This loan was significant in keeping Akeela fully staffed. As anticipated, this loan was forgiven in full in fiscal year 2021.

Akeela was fortunate to receive \$300,000 from the Alaska Mental Health Trust to aid in the expansion of our flagship residential program, Akeela House. This funding gave us the ability to renovate the facility and ramp-up personnel, so we can expand our bed capacity, thus able to serve more of our target population.

Although we continue to be funded primarily by Medicaid, we have yet to see that increase in the private insurance markets. This market is much more difficult to tap into as the demographics we serve are generally eligible for Medicaid.

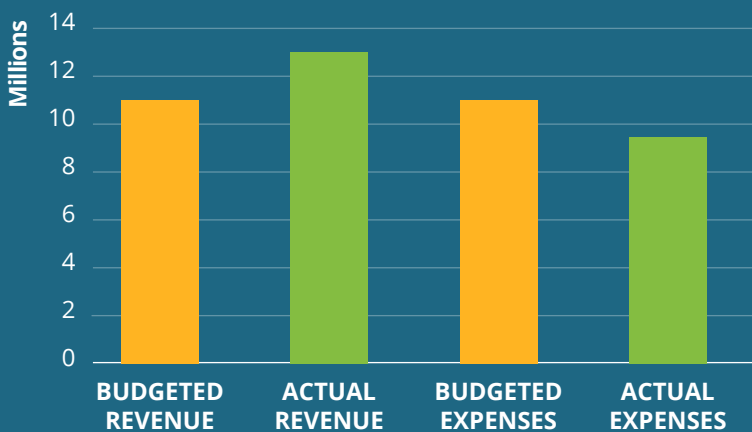
Akeela will continue striving for revenue diversification through corporate

philanthropy. As an organization, we receive various cash donations and in-kind contributions from members and organizations within our community. Our program staff does an outstanding job of reaching out, and we appreciate all of those who give back in any way possible. Unfortunately, the pandemic has made this difficult; however, it is an ongoing focus of Akeela to improve on this for years to come.

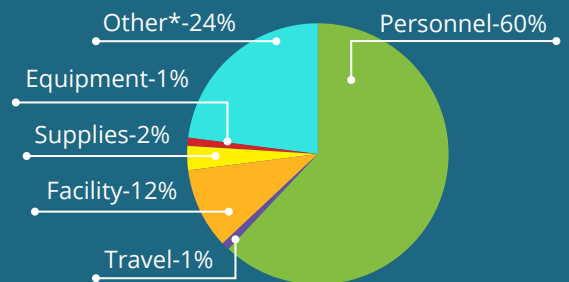
**Akeela's primary focus remains in providing treatment services throughout the state and accounts for most of our expenses.**

## ACTUALS VS. BUDGET

FY 2021



## FY21 EXPENSES



\*Other includes depreciation, interest, insurances, professional services

# CFO Report cont.

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Management did a great job of keeping costs down while operating in an unusual environment. As the state continues to face economic challenges, times will keep getting tougher for the behavioral health field and the nonprofit community. Akeela will need to monitor programs and revenue sources closely to ensure our resiliency.

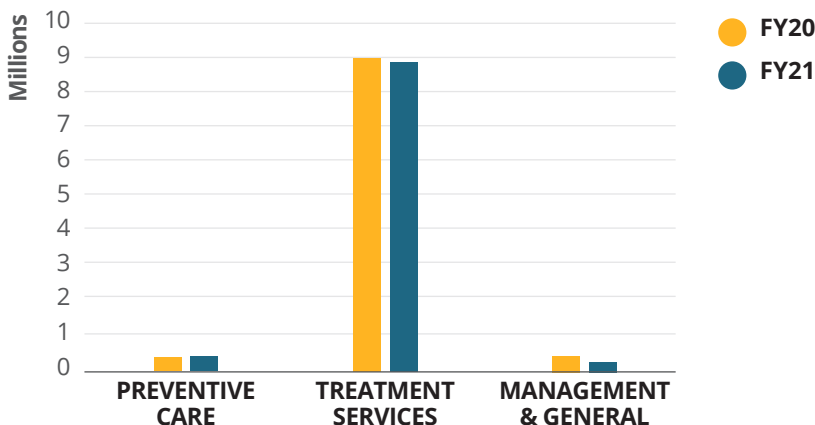
Fiscal climates are continually changing, and Akeela’s adaptive capacity is what has kept us sustainable throughout the years. It takes unified hard work, dedication, commitment, and communication from every part of the organization to ensure that we are able to achieve our mission. The achievements we continue to make each year are a direct representation of our talented and dedicated employees and without them, we would be unable to achieve our mission.

We continue to remain optimistic, yet cautious, about the future.

**Shannon Pritchett, MBA**  
*Chief Finance Officer*

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## TOTAL EXPENSES BY SERVICE







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