

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Alaska Commission on Aging

April 6, 2009

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Rooms 518 and 516
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Support for SB 133

Dear Chair Hoffman and Chair Stedman:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) respectfully asks for your support of SB 133, a bill to establish a statewide electronic health information exchange system that would modernize the current paper-based system and allow health care providers quick access to patient health care records, reducing medical errors and enhancing cost effectiveness. This legislation is authored by Senator Joe Paskvan and co-sponsored by Senator Bettye Davis.

The benefits of an electronic health care information exchange system are significant and would contribute substantially to the State's goals to improve safety, cost effectiveness, and quality of health care in Alaska. An electronic information exchange system provides the means for individual Alaskans to have their own personal health records accessible to all health care providers so that providers can make medical decisions in a timely and secure manner in the location where medical services are delivered. The electronic exchange system will support telemedicine services including the transfer of high resolution images for patient care and video conferencing between providers and between providers and patients which are particularly important for patients living in rural Alaskan communities. SB 133 also provides for the implementation of a secure infrastructure that follows federal standards and requires patient consent to insure maximum protection of patient confidentiality and their medical records.

For older Alaskans, an electronic health information system will help to enhance the management of chronic diseases and improve health outcomes by increasing the availability of complete patient health information to ensure appropriate care and use of evidence-based health care services. An electronic health information system can also help to facilitate patient education in self-management of health conditions and potentially provide a means for personal health records to be connected to the electronic medical record system – including prescription records, lab results, schedules of medical appointments, and patient diaries of reported symptoms, side effects related to medicine, and other related information.

ACoA is pleased to support SB 133 and appreciates your consideration of this bill. We believe that an electronic health care information system will serve all Alaskans well, including older Alaskans who are among the largest consumers of health care services. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director (465-4879), should you have any questions regarding our position or request assistance from our office. Thank you for your consideration of support for this important legislation.

Sincerely,



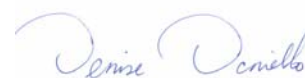
Sharon Howerton-Clark
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

CC: Senator Johnny Ellis
Senator Charlie Huggins

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

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Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

CC: Senator Donald Olson
Senator Joe Thomas