



AARP Alaska
3601 C Street
Suite 1420
Anchorage, AK 99503

T 1-866-227-7447
F 907-341-2270
TTY 1-877-434-7598
www.aarp.org/ak

December 20, 2010

The Honorable Les Gara
Member of the House of Representatives
716 W 4th Ave., Suite 200
Anchorage, AK 99501-2133

RE: Colon-cancer Screening for Retirees

Dear Representative Gara:

On behalf of the AARP members in Alaska, we would like to indicate our support for your bill to include retirees in the colo-rectal screening services available to active employees.

This only makes sense.

Medicare will begin covering colonoscopies for retirees over 65 with no co-payment. The federal government made this decision because prevention is good public health policy. On January 1, 2011, all our public employee retirees on Medicare will be eligible for free colon-cancer screenings.

The only group that would not be covered would be Alaska's public employee retirees who are under 65 and not yet eligible for Medicare.

This is also the age group that is most likely to have colon cancer problems and screening makes good economic and health sense.

From what we understand, Buck Consultants have already recommended that the state provide such coverage because it has been determined that screening and early treatment is an economic plus compared to waiting until expensive surgery may be necessary.

AARP strongly supports this bill which will provide sensible preventive care to public employees who retire before Medicare eligibility.

Should you have any questions about our position, please feel free to contact me at 907-762-3314 or jluby@aarp.org.

Sincerely,

J. Patrick Luby
Advocacy Director

Jennie Chin Hansen, President
Addison Barry Rand, Chief Executive Officer