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January 2, 2011

Rep. Les Gara
716 W. 4th Street, Suite 310
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2133

Dear Representative Gara,

The Retired Public Employees of Alaska (RPEA) is gratified to offer its support for your draft bill to require that retiree medical insurance coverage include colorectal screening and colonoscopies. In fact, provision of this coverage has been a major objective of RPEA for several years. We hope that the Alaska legislature will seize this opportunity to offer coverage that makes sense for both retirees and the State.

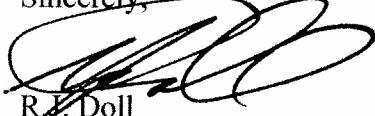
Buck Consultants in their letter of November 29, 2007, reported on their effort to estimate return-on-investment (ROI) for adding colonoscopy coverage to the retiree plan. That letter concluded, in part, "...we believe an explicit colon screening diagnostic provision in the retiree plan will prove financially positive over time."

As long ago as August 29, 2005, the American Cancer Society, Alaska Office, wrote to then Commissioner of Administration Ray Matiashowski reporting the results of a study by the Lewin Group, a nationally recognized health policy consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. Based on the results of that study the Society reported "Our final conclusion is that there is no economic reason for insurance plans not to offer the full range of colorectal cancer screenings and there are tremendous life-saving benefits for doing so."

The Congress has included in the Affordable Care Act of 2010 coverage for colorectal cancer screenings. For State retirees covered by Medicare, such screenings are a major step forward in the effort to combat this disease. Retirees under 65 years of age, covered only by the State medical plan, are left to combat this threat at their own expense, an inconsistency that we find difficult to understand.

The apparent unwillingness of the executive branch to recognize the benefits of colorectal cancer screening leaves legislative action as the only alternative available to Alaska's retirees. RPEA is proud to have the opportunity to enthusiastically endorse your draft bill.

Sincerely,



R. J. Doll
President