

# 2018 Session Operating Budget Amendment

**Offered In:** The House Finance Committee  
**To:** HB 285/HB 286  
**Offered By:** Representative Ortiz

**Agency:** Health & Social Services  
**Appropriation:** Senior and Disabilities Svcs  
**Allocation:** Senior/Disabilities Svcs Admin

## Transaction Details

**Title:** Companion Services  
**Wordage Type:** Intent  
**Linkage:** Appropriation - Senior and Disabilities Svcs

## Wordage

It is the intent of the legislature that the State of Alaska proceed expeditiously to establish companion services under Section 1915(c) of the Social Security Act to complement and support the services provided through the Medicare/Medicaid waiver programs. The Department of Health and Social Services shall submit a report to co-chairs of the Finance Committees and the Legislative Finance Division on the status of the service no later than January 31, 2019.

## Explanation

The Department indicates the process of establishing a "companion service" category under Section 1915(c) is lengthy and can stretch from one to two years. With the reduction in services under the Day Habilitation program it is vital that the State pursue the application process aggressively. Families and communities have been heavily impacted by the 12 hour per week cap on Day Habilitation services and until companion services are available to complement and support Day Habilitation services, these families struggle to meet the needs of this vulnerable population.