



☐ SUNSHINE CLINIC HC 89 Box 8190 Mile 4.4 Talkeetna Spur Road, Talkeetna, AK 99676 Ph: (907) 733-2273 Fax: (907) 733-1735
Delivery Address: 34300 South Talkeetna Spur Road
☐ WILLOW CLINIC P.O. Box 1049 - Mile 67 Park Hwy - Willow, AK 99688 Ph: (907) 495-4100 Fax: (907) 495-4106
Delivery Address: 11203 N. Nancy Lakes Parkway

February 9, 2011

Representative Robert Herron
State Capitol
Juneau, AK

Dear Representative Herron,

I am writing you regarding HB 78

As executive director for the Sunshine Community Health Center, I cannot tell you how valuable a loan repayment and incentive program is to recruiting potential medical and dental providers.

It took Sunshine 20 months (December 2008 – August 2010) to hire a new dentist and while there were other obstacles (i.e. licensing for one) which hampered our efforts, loan repayment was the number one question asked by candidates. In March of 2009, we began a search for a medical provider, which last 6 months, 70% of the candidates interviewed said loan repayment was critical in their choice of employment. During those six months, we were forced to employ a locum rather than reduce clinic days or hours, which would have been a hardship to the rural and remote patients we see. The cost in hiring a locum is 35% more than hiring a permanent provider.

While Alaska certainly has a lot of offer we cannot compete with clinics and centers in the lower 48 if the playing field is not level. One-way to even the playing field is to approve and fund a loan and incentive program in Alaska.

I urge you to support this bill because without and even playing field we place clinics in a position of having to scale back hours as they search for months for new providers. At a time when clinics in Alaska are seeing a shift in patient needs seeing more uninsured, Medicare and Medicaid patients we cannot afford to close or reduce hours at the expense of good patient care.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sharon Montagnino", is written over a horizontal line.

Sharon Montagnino
Executive Director

cc: Regan Mattingly, AKPCA