

March 23, 2020

House Finance Committee
c/o
Representative Jennifer Johnston, Co-Chair
Representative Neal Foster, Co-Chair
Sent via email

Re: Trust support for SB 134 – Medicaid Coverage of Licensed Counselors

Dear House Finance Committee Members:

The Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (Trust) supports SB 134, and urges its passage this legislative session. This bill, which adds licensed professional counselors to the list of Medicaid eligible providers, will increase access to needed behavioral health services in our communities.

The Trust exists specifically to improve the lives and outcomes of our beneficiaries, who include Alaskans that experience mental illness, substance use disorders, intellectual and developmental disabilities, Alzheimer's disease and related dementia, and traumatic brain injuries. In partnership with the Department of Health and Social Services, the Trust ensures Alaska has a comprehensive and integrated system of care to provide the necessary services and supports for beneficiaries in their community of choice, and in the least restrictive setting possible.

This legislation will create a more equitable distribution of health professionals in Alaska, expand options for behavioral health treatment and care, decrease the wait times experienced by many who are seeking behavioral health services, and prioritize helping our most vulnerable beneficiaries.

The Trust is eager to support this measure that will increase access to needed behavioral health care services in Alaska.

Sincerely,



Michael K. Abbott
Chief Executive Officer