



CENTER FOR COMMUNITY

700 Katlian Street, Suite B

Sitka, AK 99835

Phone: 907-747-6960

Senator Johnny Ellis
Alaska State Legislature
P.O. Box
Juneau, AK 99811

RE: Support on behalf of constituents in Sitka, Yakutat, Hoonah, Kake, Angoon, Wrangell, and Ketchikan, for SB 32, "An act relating to medical assistance payments for home and community-based services."

Center for Community is a non-profit organization that provides personal care and home and community based services throughout the services throughout South East Alaska: with clients and employees in nearly every community from Yakutat to Metlakatla. In these communities, we employ a total of 71 Southeast residents and serve 113 Southeast clients at the current time (not counting Juneau).

Senate Bill 32 will cure a long-standing problem in Alaska's Medicaid system for long term care of our seniors and other children and adults with disabilities of all kinds. SB 32 will finally ensure that the Legislature and the Administration regularly receive information about the true cost of providing care to Alaskans--at home--who are trying to avoid more expensive institutionalized long term care. SB 32 gives everyone the information necessary to make both short term budgetary and long term policy choices.

Thank you for your introduction of Senate Bill 32. If we can do anything to further legislative support for passage of SB 32, please call upon us.

Sincerely

Connie J. Sipe, Executive Director
Center for Community

csipe@cfc.org

(Sitka Headquarters Office: 747-6960)

AGENET'S 2009 Legislative Priorities

The Association of Alaska's Providers of Services to Older Alaskans

Contact Information: Marianne Mills (463-6154) or Ken Duff (262-6331)

1. Support legislation, such as SB 32, which would put into statute a regular review of Home and Community-Based Medicaid Waiver rates similar to the process for institutions (hospitals, nursing homes).

- Services available to persons eligible for the Home and Community-Based (HCB) waiver program include meals, transportation, chore, respite, care coordination, adult day services, specialized medical supplies/equipment and home modifications.
- These services are provided for a fraction of the cost of institutionalized care to older Alaskans in their own homes and traditional communities.
- Investing in home and community-based care is the most cost effective way to provide long-term care while supporting local communities throughout the state.
- Regular rate reviews will provide parity with hospitals and nursing homes which have had a similar statute in place since 1999.
- Regular rate reviews will provide a good management tool for the Department of Health and Social Services to determine program costs, budget adequately, and create a 10-year fiscal plan.

2. Work with the legislature to adjust grant rates with a \$2 million increment for Family Caregivers, Nutrition, Transportation & Support Services grants.

- Senior grants help pay for home and community-based services for senior citizens who are not eligible for the HCB Medicaid Waiver program, services such as meals, rides, adult day, chore, respite, care coordination, and health promotion.
- Investing in senior grants upfront save millions of dollars the State would otherwise pay for expensive institutional care (nursing homes). In Alaska, the cost of one month's stay in a nursing home is \$10,000-\$20,000 per senior (compare this to a package of grant services for only \$61 to \$83 per month).
- Alaska's long term care policy is aimed at allowing Older Alaskans to remain at home for as long as possible; these grants help them remain at home, saving the state money, and also support the unpaid work of their family caregivers, work which has been valued at \$534 million in Alaska.
- In July 2009, a regional funding formula will shift senior grant monies out of seven (of nine) regions of the State, jeopardizing local communities from providing much-needed services; this shift will happen even though senior populations in all regions are still increasing and as the costs for food, fuel and workers increase.
- The proposed \$2 million increase in senior grants will help ensure that all regions of the State receive adequate funding to continue senior grant services so that seniors may remain in their traditional communities.



Alzheimer's
Resource of Alaska

Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Co-Chairs Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Anchorage &
Statewide Services
1750 Abbott Road
Anchorage, AK 99507
phone 907-561-3313
fax 907-561-3315
Toll-free in Alaska
800-478-1080

Fairbanks Services
565 University Ave.
Suite 2
P.O. Box 72791
Fairbanks, AK 99707
phone 907-452-2277
fax 907-457-3376

Juneau Services
3100 Channel Drive
Suite 19
Juneau, AK 99801
phone 907-586-6044
fax 907-586-6084

Mat-Su Valley Services
Trinity Barn Plaza
P.O. Box 4406
Palmer, AK 99645
phone 907-746-3413
fax 907-746-3412

www.alzaska.org

March 2, 2009

Senators Stedman & Hoffman,

The Alzheimer's Disease Resource Agency of Alaska (ADRAA) formally requests your support of the CS for Senate Bill 32 which has just been referred to the Senate Finance Committee and is currently awaiting a hearing date. As you are aware, CSSB 32 would regulate rate review for medical assistance payments for home and community based (HCB) personal care services for providers working in personal and assisted living homes. Currently, no such review is regularly mandated for HCB or Assisted Living Care, although facility based providers such as nursing homes are reviewed regularly to keep up with the growing population served and accurate information regarding cost of care.

The Alzheimer's Resource of Alaska provides in home care services for individuals affected by Alzheimer's disease and related dementias and for frail elders. In FY08, we provided 57,452 hours of services statewide. The services provided include personal care, respite for family caregivers, and household chores such as meal preparation, snow shoveling, and chopping wood. It is the work of unpaid family caregivers as well as professional in home workers that allows elders to remain in their homes, and their communities rather than being placed in full time nursing care at great cost to the state.

ADRAA thanks the bill's sponsor and co-sponsors for their foresight on this issue and for their continued support of seniors across Alaska. We enthusiastically support SB 32 which would strengthen the existing infrastructure of home and community based services and would allow for the best possible outcome for both our clients and employees.

Sincerely,

Dulce Nobre
Executive Director

cc: Senator Johnny Ellis
Senator Charlie Huggins
Senator Bettye Davis
Senator Donald Olsen

cc: Senator Joe Thomas
Senator Kim Elton
Senator Joe Paskvan