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Dear Ms. Erickson,

As a pediatrician in a small, solo practice, I am writing to voice my support for the Alaska Health Care Commission's recommendation that the Alaska legislature fully fund the immunization and vaccine program.

Changes in funding will lead to small practices like my own being unable to provide vaccine for our patients. I have estimated the costs for the first year to be equivalent to hiring another full-time employee. But, even more importantly, ethically, I feel medical practices should try to provide vaccines to their pediatric patients. This is part of the "medical home" model which we are being encouraged to follow, which is associated with better outcomes for children. If patients have to go to another clinic for their vaccines, some of them will forget or "be too busy". The end result will be a less immune set of children, more susceptible to infectious diseases that should be things of the past. The recent pertussis outbreak in California (10,000 case, 10 deaths) stands as a warning for what Alaska could be facing. The treatment of these diseases is much more expensive than their prevention by vaccination. At a time when Alaska is ranked 49th in vaccination rates among the United States, we really cannot afford this short-sighted approach.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Ann Jacob, M.D., F.A.A.P.