

March 25, 2014

Senator Cathy Giessel
State Capitol Room 427
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: **SB 169**

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 169, *an act establishing in the Department of Health and Social Services a statewide immunization program and the State Vaccine Assessment Council.*

Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alaska provides healthcare coverage to over 100,000 members in Alaska and offers a range of innovative programs focused on wellness and prevention to help members improve their overall health. Our health benefit plans cover in-network preventive care in full which includes coverage for all vaccinations recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for members under age 19 and certain vaccines for adults without cost sharing.

Premera supports SB 169 to maintain the state's universal vaccine program to ensure that Alaskans can continue to access the recommended vaccines in a cost-effective manner. The state would continue to purchase vaccines at a bulk, discounted rate thereby minimizing healthcare costs for these critical immunizations. The bill would also establish a financing mechanism such that all payers are paying for their fair share of vaccines that are administered.

While a number of details will need to be discussed and resolved for implementation, we look forward to working with the stakeholders and the Department of Health and Social Services to establish a sustainable solution for the Alaska market that helps to lower healthcare costs while preserving access to important preventive healthcare services.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Sheela Tallman
Senior Manager, Legislative Policy