

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Session:
State Capitol Building,
Room 424
Juneau, Alaska 99801-2186
Phone (907) 465-4230
Fax: (907) 465-3883
Toll Free: (877) 465-4976



Interim:
1292 Sadler Way
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701
Phone: (907) 452-6084
Fax: (907) 452-6096

REPRESENTATIVE PETE HIGGINS

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 376 – “AN ACT EXTENDING THE TERMINATION OF THE ALASKA HEALTH CARE COMMISSION; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE”

HB 376 extends the sunset of the Alaska Health Care Commission until June 30, 2017. The Legislative Auditor has concluded that the Alaska Health Care Commission is serving the public’s interest and should continue its statutory obligation.

The legislature established the Commission under AS 18.09.010 in 2010 to recommend policies to improve quality, affordability and access to health care, and to identify strategies for improving the health of all Alaskans. Seats representative of various health care stakeholders are designated in statute, and voting members are appointed by the Governor. Sen. Coghill and Rep. Keller currently represent the legislature as ex-officio members of the Commission.

The Commission’s approach has been to study current conditions of Alaska’s health care market, and design market-based strategies and policy recommendations that enhance the consumer’s role in health and health care. The Commission submits an annual report including policy recommendations to the Governor and the legislature on January 15 each year. A summary of the core strategies and policies recommended by the Commission to-date is attached.

In its short tenure the Commission has developed a strategic framework including a time-specific vision with measurable objectives; conducted numerous studies to increase knowledge and understanding of current problems in the health care system, designed a comprehensive body of specific, relevant and measurable market-based policy recommendations for improving health care cost and quality; and created a template for and is facilitating development of an executive branch action plan for implementing Commission policy recommendations. The Commission has also coordinated with and provided consultation to private sector employer groups on health care system concerns.

Excessive health care costs and medical inflation in Alaska threaten the sustainability of the health care system and create a burden on families and public and private employers. Continuation of the Commission would promote accountability and evaluation of public program implementation through finalization of a state agency plan to implement recommended policies, increase transparency in the health care system, and provide continuing consultation and coordination with private sector employers in support of their health care value improvement strategies.

The Commission has consistently proven to be efficient and effective in its progress to develop a strategic framework for improving statewide health care and I ask for your support in the passage of this bill.