



"We help adults with mental illness live their own best lives"

Quality Community Behavioral Health Services Since 1985

March 20, 2014

Representative Wes Keller
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol Room 118
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Rep. Keller,

In reference to CS for HB 214, I would like to offer an amendment to more clearly state the application of the legislation to mental health facilities that hold persons who have been involuntarily committed under state statute. The current CS states, under Sec.4 AS47.30.847, (8)(C)(3)(h),

"Nothing in this section applies to a facility or unit or designated treatment facility that only provides outpatient services."

We would like to suggest this be re-worded as follows:

"This section applies only to a hospital, inpatient facility, or designated evaluation and/or treatment facility."

JAMHI, Juneau's state-designated Community Behavioral Health Center and numerous other providers of outpatient services, also provide group home, supported living, and similar housing and services for persons with serious mental illness. Individuals are not involuntarily committed or otherwise locked or held in these facilities. They are community-based programs that enable people to live in the community as opposed to being hospitalized or held in a locked unit.

If the current CS is interpreted to include such facilities that provide residential care as well as outpatient services, it would impose an unnecessary administrative burden, beyond which is already in place governing client access to filing complaints and grievances if they are unhappy with the services they receive.

We would appreciate consideration of our proposed amendment, which we believe supports the intent of this legislation, while clarifying how it is to be applied.

Thank you for your support and work on this important issue.

Respectfully,

Pamela L. Watts
Executive Director
Juneau Alliance for Mental Health, Inc.