



February 25, 2015

Senator Gary Stevens  
State Capitol Room 429  
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Senator Stevens,

My name is Mary Guilas-Hawver. I am the Director for the Providence Kodiak Island Counseling Center and we serve the special needs population in the Kodiak Island Archipelago, specifically the Severely Emotionally Disturbed Youth (SED), Chronically Mentally Ill Adults (CMI), substance abuse youth and adults and other Kodiakans who are experiencing psychiatric emergency issues or disorders. I am writing to request your support for Education Funding Equality for Children with Mental Illness (HB102). This important piece of mental health and education legislation will assist children with severe emotional or behavioral disorders the opportunity to receive an equitable and comparable education while they receive intensive mental health treatment. I am in full support of this Bill and urge you to please do the same.

I want to go on record for supporting this legislation as it will:

- Increase the educational opportunities and measurable outcomes for children with mental illness so that they can successfully transition back to their traditional school after receiving intensive and sometimes lifesaving mental health treatment.
- Require school districts to send a portion of funding that would normally a part of the funding formula for the school days the child is in attendance.
- Allow the licensed facility to deliver appropriate educational and related services provided by licensed teachers and credentialed service providers to the student while the student is admitted to the facility.
- Allow for a more comprehensive continuum of care by individualizing each student's academic plan to complement their therapeutic treatment goals.
- Provide the state real time data that will assist the state with meeting the needs of other special populations such as students residing in rural villages.

- Increase the length of time students spend in school learning and track measurable outcomes to be reviewed by stakeholders.

Again, I ask you to please support HB102 as it will improve the provision of educational services to the children with severe mental illness.

Respectfully Yours,



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Director

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Cc: Senator Charlie Huggins, Senator Cathy Giessel, Senator Mike Dunleavy, and Senator Berta Gardner