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Memorandum

To: Senators Bert Stedman, Cathy Giessel, Pete Kelly, Bill Stoltze, Johnny Ellis, Berta Gardner
Re: SB 156. Insurance Coverage for Contraception

I have reviewed SB 156 a number of times. This issue is of serious importance for the health and safety of Alaskans and deserves a reasoned and informed discussion from health care providers, citizens, and policy makers.

That said, I have the following comments for your consideration:

- 1. It is important to clearly define what is meant by "contraception" and what is meant by "prescriptive contraception". These terms appear to be used interchangeably in the proposed legislation. They are definitely not the same.***
- 2. Does this bill really intend for all (including over-the-counter) contraception to be covered by health insurance plans? Think about that... and the usefulness (and not so useful) plethora of over-the-counter products. It is valuable to delineate just which contraceptive products (prescriptive and otherwise) are being considered.***
- 3. Most oral prescriptive pharmaceuticals are ordered for three month intervals with an expiration of one year. What are the justifications for this difference? Life changes and so do people and their ever-changing contraception use. Where is the oversight? Have other options been considered?***
- 4. It may be entirely appropriate that additional consultation be sought from medical, public health and pharmacy health care professionals.***

It is my view that contraception (prescriptive or otherwise) can decrease unintended pregnancies with its potential associated morbidity, quality of life issues, and/or mortality.

While my career in obstetrics and gynecology has led me to firmly believe in contraception, I believe this proposed legislation will require some continued work and consideration to address the issues raised so that there is a win-win for patients, health care providers and society. We must continue this work.

Please let me know if I can answer questions or provide additional information.

I ask that these comments be introduced into the public record.

Thank you for this consideration.