

Emails in Support of HB 148 -3-28-2015

Included emails from:

Lee Martin - Homer

Scott Simmons

Monte L. Jordan – Fairbanks

Cynthia Morelli – Homer

Michael Backus - Wasilla, AK

Shelley Gill – Homer

Joel Jackson – Kake

Sharon Whytal - Homer

Carol Griswold - Seward

Margaret Bauman – Knik

Cindy Lelake – Anchorage

Jeanette Pugh – Soldotna

Laurel Carlsen – Palmer

Ross Mullins

Sallie W. Rediske

March 28, 2015

Alaska House of Representatives

Medicaid Expansion Bill HB 148

I am writing in regard to Medicaid expansion coverage and HB 148. My mother, Nadine Pence 98 years old has been waiting for three months for a resolution of her Medicaid Waiver denial. Nadine came to Alaska in 1937 on the Alaska Steamship to join her husband Ed Martin who came to Alaska in 1936. Ed Martin worked as a territorial policeman in Glennallen, Anchorage and Homer. They moved to Homer in 1955 and Nadine continued to work at her husband's side as the dispatcher taking calls over the radio and telephone, issuing driver's licenses along with many other duties. Nadine was one of the first members of the Homer Hospital Board and worked to better the medical care of the Southern Kenai Peninsula. In the 1970's she took a sabbatical and moved to Oregon/Arizona. In 2006 she moved back to Homer to be with family and friends.

Nadine lives at The Terrace Assisted Living in Homer. She is 98 and is in need of assistance. In 2010 she fell and broke her hip which required two major surgeries. She was able to pull through and only needed assistance for a few months after each surgery. Now she is at the point where she needs daily care and assistance. She needs help with medications, personal hygiene, and physical therapy. Nadine has applied for a Medicaid Waiver and was denied. She (her son) appealed the denial and she has been waiting for three months to get a resolution. This seems criminal. What are we to do? Set her out on an ice floe?

Thank you Governor Walker for your hard work to improve Alaska's health care through House Bill 148.

Now Legislatures do your job and do the right thing.

Sincerely,

Lee A. Martin



Homer, AK 99603

Hello Representatives. Expanding Medicaid is a great step forward protecting all citizens of Alaska . Giving up this opportunity would be a disgrace to the ideal of humanity . If you so choose to vote against HB 148 , I fully expect you to rescind your Alaska state health insurance . Everyone is equal , everyone deserves the same quality health care . Some how I think your's is pretty good . Scott Simmons

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Dear Ms. Hansen,

I support Medicaid expansion - which will provide more Alaskans health care for less state money by maximizing use of available federal dollars. When people have insurance they are able to access primary care, resulting in less expensive emergency room visits. People are also better able to manage chronic diseases, resulting in better health at a lower cost.

Access to health care enables people to stay healthy and join or stay in the workforce. Individual Alaskans who earn \$20,314 (about \$9.76 an hour) a year or less, or married couples earning a combined \$27,490 a year or less qualify for Medicaid expansion. Medicaid gives them the freedom to work for a living without worrying about whether an unpreventable accident or illness will make them bankrupt.

I request that the our Alaska Legislators support Alaskans by supporting the governor's proposal to implement Medicaid expansion with smart reforms.

Other commitments interfere with ability to attend the LIO in person, please extend my position and comments above as public testimony.

Please extend my comments

Thank you.

Monte L. Jordan



Fairbanks, AK

Dear Senator Seaton and Health and Social Services Committee,

When it came time to enroll our family in a health care plan under the Affordable Care Act for the first time, I went for help to an outreach navigator here in Homer. We discovered based on our 2012 income, that our family of four, both my husband and I self employed, working to support our family, did not earn enough to buy our own insurance, earned too much to qualify for medicaid and did not qualify for a subsidy for health care because our income was too low.

Our 19 year old daughter decided to emancipate, and as a family of three, we then qualified for a subsidy on the health insurance marketplace.

Our daughter buys her own insurance through her college. Again this past year, I nervously enrolled our family, as we did not have our income results complete for 2014, and was unsure whether we would continue to qualify for a subsidy for health insurance on the marketplace or fall in the "gap". We are a fiscally conservative family, and to perhaps indebt ourselves for thousands of dollars by enrolling in the health insurance system is unnerving.

To have no health insurance is equally unnerving.

I support expanded Medicaid for Alaska, and even more than that, I fully support a single payer national health insurance for Alaska and the entire United States.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Morelli

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From what I understand, the expansion of medicaid in Alaska will bring in lots of federal dollars and will consequently have a very positive effect on our economy. However, I understand there is some concern about what the costs will be to the State in the future. I just want to say that if expanding health care does eventually cost the State money, I would be willing to pay more in taxes to ensure that everyone who needs health care in our state has access to it.

Michael Backus

Wasilla, AK

From: [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 11:41 AM  
To: LIO Homer  
Subject: Medicare expansion

I strongly support expanding Medicaid to cover esp. Those Alaskans who live in the bush and because of a subsistence lifestyle don't make enough cash to qualify for Obama care as well as the poor and elderly. Parnell was wrong and it is time to fix his mistake!  
Shelley Gill  
Homer AK

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From: Joel Jackson [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 9:48 AM  
To: LIO Juneau  
Subject: HB 148

HB 148 is important to Alaska , our legislators need to support this bill , I wish I was in Juneau but will not be on sat to testify so please relay this message to them thank you  
Joel Jackson  
Kake Alaska

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Dear Committee members:

Please read my following comments into the record.

As a recently retired Public Health Nurse and an ongoing participant in community health improvement planning, I am writing to encourage your full support for HB 148; I am delighted that this bill has been so well crafted and that you are considering it. Gov. Walker, Commissioner Davidson and many others have worked hard to make this a viable option for Alaska, both financially and to increase access to healthcare for vulnerable populations in our state. Even more in this time of budget shortfall, AK is overdue to take advantage of this opportunity for sharing of large healthcare expenses with rightful federal assistance. There will be other improvements in funding and affordability of healthcare in the future; this bill creates solutions now. It is absolutely imperative that we address the inequities in present access to healthcare, and this bill extends coverage to many of our working poor or otherwise disadvantaged Alaskans who, with access to health can live productive, fulfilling lives. I urge you to pass this bill immediately.

Sharon Whytal, RN, BSN, BSW  
Homer  
235-2094

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** Friday, March 27, 2015 8:31 PM

**To:** Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Liz Vazquez; Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Louise Stutes; Rep. David Talerico;  
Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. Adam Wool

**Subject:** YES to HB 148 Medicaid Expansion Bill

Honorable Representatives,

I urge you to expand Medicaid so that more people will be covered by insurance. We MUST get help to reduce expenses at our Seward health care facilities. Expanding Medicare will cover more patients and reduce the subsidy they now receive from the city and everyone else who pays for health insurance. It is a huge, unnecessary burden.

Thank you for your consideration.

Carol Griswold

412 First Ave

Seward, Alaska

From: Margaret Bauman [REDACTED]  
Sent: Friday, March 27, 2015 9:03 PM  
To: Rep. Paul Seaton; Sen. Bill Stoltze; Rep. Mark Neuman  
Subject: please approve Medicaid reform and expansion

Please do all that you can to be sure that the Medicaid reform and expansion legislation put forth by the Walker administration is passed during the current session of the Alaska Legislature.

It is the right and decent thing to do for thousands of Alaska without any reliable access to health care, which means that these fellow Alaskans are not only not getting care when they have a serious medical condition, but none of the preventive care that might have avoided these issues.

There are times in people's lives when for one reason or another they are simply unable to afford health insurance, and they should not be condemned to live with serious illness or die because of this.

YES, I am fortunately enough to be have health insurance provided by the private company where I am employed, and NO, I don't mind chipping in, through taxes, to help assure that my fellow Alaskans will get health care when they need it.

Just a couple of years ago a woman I know who was under-employed, and consistently looking for a full-time job called me in desperation because she had a serious, painful dental problem and was refused coverage under Medicaid because she was in her 40s and had no dependents. She was finally able to get the antibiotics and other care she needed by driving from the Matanuska Valley to Talkeetna to a clinic willing to treat her at little or no cost. Under Medicaid, she could have seen a dentist in the Valley.

Often people are reluctant to say they need help because they don't want to appear to be begging, or they are people who put the needs of other family members above their own. I found out too late that a beloved cousin who lived in another state and whose husband couldn't afford to get health insurance for both of them died of cancer because she couldn't afford appointments or hospital costs for the surgery she needed. Like many Alaskans, her family income was a little too much to qualify for medical assistance, but too low to afford health insurance.

Alaskans have always been proud of our independence and, historically, our ability and willingness to take care of each other.

For a bunch of legislators who all have health insurance to deny their fellow Alaskans in need health care is inhumane.

When we are all healthy, it makes us all stronger.

Please support passage of the Medicaid expansion legislation. We will all benefit from it.

Thank you

Margaret Bauman  
Knik, Alaska

From: Cindy Lelake [REDACTED]  
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 5:34 AM

Dear Representative Seaton:

I am writing to express my support for HB 148.  
Besides creating jobs and adding much-needed funds to Alaska's economy, this measure allows us to extend the benefits of good health care to many hardworking Alaskans and gives all of us the opportunity to enjoy improved quality of life.

I urge you and members of the committee to pass this measure expeditiously.  
It's the right thing to do.

Respectfully,

Cindy Lelake  
Anchorage

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From: Jeanette Pugh [REDACTED]  
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 6:17 AM

Dear Representative Seaton,

Please help close the health insurance gap in Alaska.

I support Medicaid expansion - which will provide more Alaskans health care for less state money by maximizing use of available federal dollars. When people have insurance they are able to access primary care, resulting in less expensive emergency room visits. People are also better able to manage chronic diseases, resulting in better health at a lower cost.

Access to health care enables people to stay healthy and join or stay in the workforce. Individual Alaskans who earn \$20,314 (about \$9.76 an hour) a year or less, or married couples earning a combined \$27,490 a year or less qualify for Medicaid expansion. Medicaid gives them the freedom to work for a living without worrying about whether an unpreventable accident or illness will make them bankrupt.

I encourage you to support the governor's proposal to implement Medicaid expansion with smart reforms. Thank you.

I think this is a good option but I believe that before you can get medicaid that you should have to be drug tested. I work for a living and get drug tested to work. I believe by working I am paying someone elses insurance that they too should have to be drug tested.

Sincerely,

Jeanette Pugh  
[REDACTED]  
Soldotna, AK 99669



**From:** Laurel Carlsen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 28, 2015 11:50 AM  
**To:** Rep. Paul Seaton  
**Subject:** Medicaid Expansion & Me -- Testimony

Medicaid expansion is really about promoting health and human dignity.

My life would be very different had Medicaid been an option for me 7 years ago when I was diagnosed with cancer. I was 22 at the time, had recently graduated from college, was working two part-time jobs (something a lot of working class people do in order to cobble together full-time work), and I did not have health insurance.

There was no safety net for me. I did not qualify for Medicaid because I had no children. An exception would have been if I had breast or cervical cancer. But I had lymphoma.

A cancer diagnosis is terrible enough, but it was made worse by the fact I had no way to pay for treatment.

My only option was to apply for permanent disability, which qualifies a person for Medicare. This was a very long and degrading process, which began with emptying what little I had in my bank account, quitting my jobs, and moving in with my sister. I had to prove that I had nothing and would die without chemotherapy. Meanwhile, bills totaling hundreds of thousands of dollars stacked up.

Some politicians claim that Medicaid expansion encourages people to live off government welfare and never look for work. But as you can see from my situation, which I now know is a common one, not allowing the able-bodied working poor an option for Medicaid leaves only 2 unacceptable ones: 1) seeking permanent disability status or 2) going without healthcare.

I am lucky to be alive today. I owe my survival to the charity of my community and local doctors. Other people are not so fortunate. We must extend our social safety net so that no one falls through the cracks. Everyone deserves access to healthcare.

Please do your part and vote to expand this basic right to those who are currently left behind.

Sincerely,

Laurel Carlsen

Palmer, AK

From: Clinton Mullins [REDACTED]  
Sent: Saturday, March 28, 2015 12:03 PM  
To: Rep. Paul Seaton  
Subject: Medicare Expansion

Dear Paul Seaton,

I applaud you for the objective way you are handling the Medicaid expansion issue before your committee. One thing that is troubling me is the lack of objectivity concerning the straw man issue put forth by many Republicans of the conflicting studies that are used to cause doubts in those that might otherwise support the expansion measure. Those negative studies all are using "stale data" that has no real bearing on future results.

Personally I believe that we Alaskans will have the ability to implement expansion in an intelligent manner that will lead to a much more successful result for our state than many predict. The prevention aspects alone will serve to reduce future costs in my opinion. Additionally expansion may contribute to the decision whether a person will remain in the state during this so-called austerity that the state is facing.

Please keep up the good work. We are watching this matter closely and the fact that it could actually save the state a few million \$ over time should not be discounted.

Thanks for your good work.

Sincerely,

Ross Mullins

**From:** Sallie Rediske [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, March 28, 2015 12:56 PM  
**To:** Rep. Paul Seaton  
**Subject:** Support HB 18

Dear Representative Seaton,

Please vote to pass HB 18. I own Homer Physical Therapy. I see the effects daily on our community members who are uninsured. Since the passage of ACA, we have seen some remarkable things happen for people who had previously been unable to seek medical attention for a variety of life-challenging conditions - and certainly challenges that limited their ability to earn money due to pain and disability. Unfortunately, the gap between current Medicaid coverage limits and what was offered through the Medicaid expansion has left many in our community unable to access health care because they are trapped between the income guidelines established to qualify for ACA-approved plans and the current Medicaid guidelines. This is unfair and inhumane. It is also bad business.

Two examples:

1. Disabled from birth, an individual in Homer recently found a full-time job that meets their needs for their limited ability to communicate. The job pays more than minimum wage, but the wage is unlikely to rise significantly over time as this person's disability prevents them from assuming much more in the way of job responsibilities. They lost their Medicaid coverage (and other disability-related support) due to their new, hard-sought after income. So here is a person who by no fault of their own is disabled, seeks out a job they can perform - and actually finds one in Homer - and loses the security of health coverage. Absolute terror is what was conveyed in the eyes and face of this person when they told me of the letter they received resending their access to Medicaid.

2. Employed client who makes too little to qualify for ACA and is not eligible for Medicaid in its current form, lives in a dry cabin and relies almost exclusively on subsistence food sources in order to pay for health care needs that left them unable to perform their post-graduate level work nearly a decade ago. As if this life-style change was not humbling enough, they have to rely on pro-bono healthcare from my office in order to have enough money to see the doctor and obtain prescribed medications that enable them to continue to work. Desire to be a "contributor and not a taker" has prevented this person from filing for permanent disability. Suicide is not an uncommon thought for this person due to the seemingly unending series of hurdles they face on a daily basis associated with health care.

Sincerely,

Sallie W. Rediske, PT, WCS