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February 25, 2016

Chairwoman Mia Costello  
Senate Labor and Commerce Committee  
Alaska State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 510  
Juneau, AK 99801

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

I write on behalf of the Parkinson's Action Network (PAN) to ask your support for Senate Bill (SB) 98.

PAN is the unified voice for the Parkinson's community, advocating for better treatments and a cure. Parkinson's disease is estimated to impact between 500,000 and 1.5 million Americans.

As a national network of advocates for Parkinson's patients, caregivers, researchers, and clinicians, PAN believes that telemedicine is an essential delivery model that should be part of the modern healthcare system. SB 98 would make telemedicine a more widely available and efficient option for Alaska residents seeking care, and we hope you will support it.

Traveling great distances can be difficult for Alaskans and especially those dealing with Parkinson's, and having access to a physician through telemedicine can eliminate an unnecessary hardship and cost. We believe that telemedicine providers should be held to the same standards of care as physicians with physical offices; the only difference is how it is delivered.

Telemedicine offers significant opportunities to increase access to primary and specialty care providers. Eliminating provider requirements in state law that diminish, rather than expand, the number of Alaska-licensed physicians eligible to serve Alaska patients is an important step toward recognizing technological advances and expanding access to care. Such actions would also help strengthen Alaska's existing healthcare system and help residents to get adequate care in the format that meets their individual needs.

Again, the PAN asks members of the committee to support expanded access to high-quality care and approve SB 98.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ted Thompson".

Ted Thompson, J.D.  
President and Chief Executive Officer