



All Alaska pediatric Partnership Statement for HB227 – Feb. 25, 2016

The following is our input for the bill language:

- Support Medicaid and insurance reimbursement for trauma activation at designated trauma hospitals
- Support the innovations sections of HB227, including the 1115 waiver
- Section 12 (g) - Telemedicine is defined as "between providers." This definition doesn't save on costs as much as telemedicine between provider and patient or nurse and patient. The latter are billed at a much lower rate than an in-clinic visit. In addition, a statement that states that reimbursement strategies to incentivize telemedicine visits at the same level as in-person visits will increase the use of telemedicine throughout the state by all providers. Increased telemedicine usage will significantly decrease Medicaid costs in Alaska.
- Throughout HB 227, there is talk of preventative care as a method to save costs. Yet, nowhere is there any mention of reimbursement for active case management, integrated behavioral health services, and other aspects of the patient centered medical home that have been proven to save costs over time. This is somewhat mentioned at the bottom of page 8, but I think it should be more explicitly mentioned to show its importance.
- In the bill's language, there is no definition of behavioral health integration as inclusive of behavioral health provided by anyone other than a psychiatrist. There is a tremendous gap in psychiatrists and especially pediatric psychiatrists in Alaska. It is imperative that a patient-centered medical home be able to provide forms of behavioral health by other behavioral health practitioners such as social workers and behavioral health therapists.
- Another area that will decrease the costs of healthcare in Alaska is to improve reimbursement for screening of families at risk, especially those with young children (under 5). Families who are experiencing or have experienced trauma are at high risk for continuing this trauma to subsequent generations. This trauma, which has been called adverse childhood experiences when it is experienced by young children, has been associated with increased risks of high risk behavior, poor health outcomes, and early death when these children grow up to become adults. In addition, these poor health outcomes are highly associated with increased costs to the medical systems that care for them, and preventing bad things happening to young kids will improve the health of the Alaskan population, and the best way to prevent these experiences is to strongly

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- support programs that assist families with young children get the help they need to be healthy and happy people.
- Medicaid audits: The end result of audits like the one proposed in HB 227 "catch" primarily well intended providers who have made mistakes. If I understand the process correctly, the audits look for "overbilling" but ignore "under-billing"(that also occurs) in a billing and documentation system that is complex and subjective. Penalties occur when providers unknowingly, or accidentally don't provide the "required" documentation which is quite different from true fraud and abuse. In addition the audits lead to resentment among the vast majority of well-intentioned providers (whether audited or not) who may then, in a natural human response, tend to lead some to stop seeing Medicaid patients. So I suspect that the overall results of this approach are poor and may lead to more overall cost in the long run. Perhaps there is evidence that this approach is cost effective (OVERALL) but I suspect there are other cost effective methods to find fraud and abuse that also promote cooperative, rather than adversarial relationships.
 - One thought for a better approach would be to use well established evidence-based behavior modification principles to change behavior: reward and or openly praise good and appropriate behavior; discuss problems/concerns with behavior and then help to improve /understand the correct behavior, and add a warning of the consequences if the concerning behavior continues; then punish if problems persist.