

From: [Hirschfeld, Matthew](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Senate Finance Testimony
Date: Tuesday, March 08, 2016 4:10:12 PM

To: Senate Finance Committee

Re: Public Testimony Comment

Dear Senate Finance Committee:

My name is Matt Hirschfeld, MD/PhD, and I'm a pediatrician practicing in Alaska. Today, I'm representing the All Alaska Pediatric Partnership as the President. The All Alaska Pediatric Partnership is an organization of Alaska-specific entities that are dedicated to making Alaska children healthier and happier by focusing on early childhood development, elimination of child abuse and neglect, and decreasing Alaska Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). I would like to comment on the current FY2017 budget, and to express my hope that early childhood programs will not be cut from the budget.

As you know, investing in early childhood pays huge dividends to the future population health of Alaska. By focusing on making young children as healthy as possible, and allowing them to enter school ready to learn and prosper, Alaska will support its future generations to become healthier, both in mental health and physical health. Supporting these future generations now will ensure that Alaska continues to be a great state, and a place to raise families for decades to come.

In addition, supporting children now significantly decreases the costs associated with poor mental and physical health when they are adults, to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars that will be realized by the State annually. These savings have been shown in numerous studies, most powerfully in the studies related to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and how bad things happening in childhood can permanently affect the health of the individual all the way into adulthood.

Thus, for the senate to support continued funding of programs like Best Beginnings, Parents as Teachers, and Pre-K, future generations of Alaskans will have the best chance possible to become healthier and happier than all of the generations before them.

Thank you for your time and the ability to provide testimony to the Committee. Please don't hesitate to call me anytime with questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Matt Hirschfeld, MD/PhD
President
All Alaska Pediatric Partnership
Anchorage, Alaska