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**Date:** March 15, 2016 at 12:38:18 AM AKDT

**To:** [Representative.Liz.Vazquez@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Liz.Vazquez@akleg.gov)

**Subject:** HB 284

Dear Representative Vazquez, I am writing to strongly support HB 284 and to tell you what this would mean to me personally. I have dealt with severe depression since I was a small child. Fortunately, at various times in my life when I needed it, I was able to get mental health support that has included both medical treatment and counseling. I was able to graduate from college and later receive a graduate certificate in public health. Fortunately I had health insurance.

Eventually I became the Director of the Anchorage Department of Health and Human Services, where I served under Mayors Begich, Claman, and Sullivan. Unfortunately after 24 years I had to medically retire in 2012 for other medical issues. Leaving a career that I loved was and continues to be difficult for me and being able to continue counseling services has been beneficial to facing with the most difficult period of my life. As my health continues to deteriorate it is more difficult to leave my house and because of balance and instability I am not driving at this time and my husband has to drive me whenever I am able to leave my house for appointments. While I prefer an in-person visit with my counselor, if I had the flexibility to speak to her by phone it would be most helpful especially since it is those days when I am not able to leave the house that I could benefit from counseling the most.

As a legislator I know that you understand the great reward that comes from making a difference and the hard and demanding work that is involved. I suspect that you know that much of that reward is the internal satisfaction when you are able to assist your constituents and indeed all Alaskans.

Mental health is such an important issue in our state and I am a firm believer that anything we can do to bring services to people where they are will ultimately be helpful.

Thank you and your staff for working so diligently on this bill.

Diane Ingle

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