

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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North to the Future

Senator Cathy Giessel Senate District N

CS for Senate Bill 72(L&C) CARE Act Sponsor Statement

SB 72 seeks to improve post-discharge health outcomes by improving coordination with designated caregivers, providing training in aftercare, reducing preventable and costly hospital readmissions and enabling older Alaskans to stay in their own homes longer.

At any given time, around 128,000 Alaskans are providing some type of caregiving services and supports to a loved one, friend or neighbor. Lay caregivers are increasingly being asked to perform complex nursing and medical tasks - such as dispensing numerous medications, administering injections and providing wound care - often with inadequate skill training.

Caregivers are a critical link in the transitional care for frail adults and those with disabilities; with few exceptions, caregivers are responsible for providing and coordinating much of the care received at home following discharge.

Untrained and unsupported caregiving jeopardizes the patient's recovery, as well as often puts the caregiver at risk for their own injury and burnout, frequent symptoms of those caring for others.

SB 72 contains these important provisions:

- The patient is given the opportunity to appoint a designated caregiver, with his or her consent, to provide aftercare to them following discharge from a hospital
- The designated caregiver is notified of the patient's discharge or transfer to another facility as soon as practicable
- The hospital shall consult with the designated lay caregiver and offer training to the caregiver for aftercare medical and nursing tasks
- The hospital shall adopt and maintain written discharge policies

The value of family caregiving in Alaska is valued at over a billion dollars a year....money that would otherwise likely have to come from the state coffers for paid caregiving in the home or in a facility.

SB 72 will help people continue to live independently at home and support the family caregivers who make this possible.

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