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March 10, 2015

Senator Stedman,

Please expand Medicaid during the 2015 legislative session.

In 2012 I was a passenger in a severe rollover car accident as a result of a reckless driver. I sustained multiple injuries. Up to that point, I was employed in a corporate office which afforded me a good income as well as excellent health benefits, which I didn't have to use because I was perfectly healthy. Within months of injuries sustained during this accident, I was without a job.

Currently my mother graciously allows me to live with her and I am paying for private insurance out of my savings. My medical bills are getting paid and I am not using state-funded services. However my mother is a senior citizen and my insurance company is dissolving and will cease to exist at the end of this year, while my savings will be depleted. My current situation is not realistically sustainable.

Before the car accident, I lived an independent and productive life, contributing to this community, this state and this country. I fully intend to return to an independent life with a job that includes a livable wage and private insurance. In order to be able to do this, I currently require medical maintenance for my chronic but manageable condition, the same way people with diabetes require management and maintenance of their condition in order to function.

Because I did not receive appropriate medical care for over two years despite my efforts, my condition worsened and I am currently unable to work full time. But I've recovered more in the last six months by finally seeing the right medical specialist than in the previous two and a half years. I am looking forward to increasing my currently low volunteer hours and eagerly anticipate rejoining the workforce when I can consistently and responsibly maintain employment. However I may still continue to need medical management for a time.

When my insurance company dissolves, I will not qualify for Medicaid under the current system. If I do not yet have private insurance through employment, my manageable condition will spiral until it is no longer controlled, taking a situation which is currently improving and forcing a backslide so I am not employable. I would deteriorate to the point of needing state-funded services – which I don't want to use – in order to survive. This is frankly ludicrous compared to the reasonable alternative.

Medicaid expansion is the bridge to get me from where I am now to where I could realistically be again, contributing to Alaska's economy. If I am appropriately medically managed, I can obtain and maintain employment, which in turn would allow me to get off Medicaid.

I am currently in my twenties. The trajectory I am on now will determine the rest of my life. Despite my condition, I could have the opportunity to build on my foundation of work experience and my college degree to have a career while contributing to Alaska. To refuse a state responsibility of approximately \$210 million despite a federal payment of \$2.1 billion* is to declare that partisan politicking is more important to you than ensuring a person in her twenties has the medical care necessary to be a productive member of society for decades to come.

There is no question a person with unmanaged diabetes could not realistically sustain employment over time. Similarly, my condition requires medical maintenance for now. I want to work again. The question is: Will you let me?


Thank you for your time. Please do what is right for Alaskans and expand Medicaid immediately.

Sincerely,



Annette Alfonsi

* Based on the 2013 Lewin Group Analysis of a January 2016 Medicaid expansion



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