



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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March 12, 2018

Senator David Wilson
Senate Health and Social Services Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 115
Juneau, Alaska 99811-1182

Subject: Support for CSHB 215, Public Health Fees

Dear Chair Wilson:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our support for CSHB 215, a bill authored by the House Finance Committee, to allow the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health the authority to collect fees according to a list of defined services and to designate those collected receipts for support of public health programs. Over the last few years, there have been significant reductions to the Division of Public Health which has resulted in the loss of forty staff positions and the closure of six public health centers. Public health services are important to seniors. In years past, public health nurses would come monthly to senior centers to perform wellness checks, conduct foot clinics, and provide education on such topics as nutrition education and fall prevention. While these services used to be available statewide, they are now limited to senior centers whose communities receive grants for health promotion services.

The Commission agrees with the House Finance Committee that passage of CSHB 215 will help the Division of Public Health to build capacity and become more self-supporting by charging user fees. We believe that the proposed list of user fees is appropriate which includes professional services, such as special requests for data analysis and consultation, as well as administrative functions for inspections and certifications of radiological devices used for magnetic resonance imaging, mammography, and other imaging devices. Older adults, perhaps more than any other age group, rely on radiologic devices for a variety of health care screening. Seniors want to be assured that these medical imaging devices, like X-ray equipment, are properly inspected, registered, and certified for safe usage by the state.

For consideration, the Commission suggests that the Division of Public Health and the Alaska Pioneer Homes bulk purchase medical supplies such as antibiotics, bandages, syringes, and other supplies that are commonly used by both divisions in the provision of health care. Bulk purchasing of immunizations has been used successfully by the Division of Public Health as a cost savings tool and could be extended for the purchase of medical supplies to promote further cost savings.

Protecting public health is constitutionally mandated. The Commission strongly supports continued funding at appropriate levels for public health services to protect vulnerable Alaskans and to ensure healthy communities as we recognize that public health services cannot be sustained solely on user fees. Thank you for sponsoring CSHB 215.

Sincerely,



David A. Blacketer
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

Cc: Senator Natasha von Imhof, Vice Chair
Senator Cathy Giessel
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Tom Begich