



AKCHILD & FAMILY

Senator Cathy Giessel
State Capital
Juneau, AK 99801

March 26, 2018

Dear Senator Giessel:

I am writing today in support of Senate Bill 169: Behavioral Health Coverage. As a provider of mental health services to children and their families, we have seen firsthand the devastation caused by delays in receiving mental health services. Parents with mental health or substance use disorders often are trying as hard as they can to raise their children. However, when there is depression, anxiety or substance use disorders involved, children don't get the parenting they need. Our organization treats hundreds of children each year with attachment disorder due to the inability of a parent to form a trusting and safe relationship with their own children.

By getting rid of the 30% rule and allowing physician supervision using technology from a distance, SB 169 will go a long way to support earlier intervention for people who need mental health services. While the simple act of allowing supervision through technology and not in person seems relatively small, it will help bring mental health services to many more people, thus helping families get help when the help is needed. Shortening the length of time it takes to gain access to much needed mental health services will, in the long run, not only affect the individual in need, but his or her whole family.

Please share this letter of support with your colleagues letting them know that they will be helping many Alaskans receive much needed help. I look forward to seeing the doors open up for people in need of help when they need it and where they need it.

Sincerely,

Denis McCarville
President and CEO
AK Child & Family