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April 1, 2019

The Honorable David Wilson
State Senator
Chair, Senate Health & Social Services Committee
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Sen. Wilson:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in opposition to Senate Bill 1, the Repeal of the Certificate of Need program. I had planned on providing the following remarks during the bill hearing, but a schedule conflict prevents me from participating in person.

I have the awesome privilege of serving as the chief executive officer for Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center (PKIMC), our long-term care services and counseling center. Together, we serve as the Critical Access Hospital and health care center for our community. Kodiak is home to the largest U.S. Coast Guard installation, a vibrant fishing industry and a diverse, young and thriving population of approximately 14,000.

The repeal of the Certificate of Need program would have a dramatic and negative affect on our ability to continue providing care for our community. Providing health care in rural Alaska communities is a constant challenge and balance between fixed overhead costs and small volumes. We not only provide 24-hour emergency treatment, but a full spectrum care, including trauma, behavioral health, general surgery, some specialty services and long-term care.

As a provider of round-the-clock emergency care, we are subject to the Emergency Medical Treatment and Labor Act (EMTALA) that requires us to stabilize and treat anyone that comes into our emergency department, regardless of their ability to pay. Private and stand-alone centers are not subject to the same regulations and if permitted to enter our market, they would seek the high-value specialty services, without the same EMTALA requirements. Critical Access Hospitals already operate within the slimmest of margins and this would our directly impact our ability to provide community-based health care

Alaska, especially rural communities, cannot be compared to other states. Patients' support systems are in their communities and receiving care where they reside helps support posing healing outcomes.

A full-scale repeal is risky and unnecessary. Kodiak is a place where retirees choose to stay because we offer high-quality care. It takes a village, let us work together toward solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina L. Bishop". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "G".

Dr. Gina L. Bishop, RN, PhD, CEN
Chief Executive Officer
Providence Kodiak Island Medical Center