



3601 C Street, #1420 | Anchorage, AK 99503
1-866-227-7447 | Fax: 907-341-2270 | TTY: 1-877-434-7598
aarp.org/ak | ak@aarp.org | twitter: @aarpalaska
facebook.com/AARPAK

April 22, 2019

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
Alaska State Capitol – Room 421
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 29 – Insurance Coverage for Telehealth

Dear Rep. Spohnholz,

On behalf of AARP Alaska, our state's largest membership organization with 85,000 members, we are pleased to support HB 29, providing Insurance Coverage for Telehealth. We furthermore applaud your leadership in sponsoring this bill to expand healthcare options for improved access and cost savings.

AARP policy recognizes that technological advances now enable health care providers to efficiently and effectively evaluate and treat patients without the necessity of first having a face to face visit. Alaska is a recognized leader in the use of telehealth tools, particularly for persons living in remote areas where health services are limited or even non-existent. Telehealth reduces costly transportation to service hubs and simplifies access for persons who have limited means of transportation, as is the case for many older Alaskans.

While mental health services are already covered for providers licensed in Alaska, HB 29 expands covered services to include all that are part of the health insurance plan. This significantly addresses the difficulty that many older people have to find a primary care provider, or of having to wait long periods for an appointment. Early diagnosis, prompt treatment, and less expense are all expected outcomes of HB 29, an improvement without state funds.

We appreciate the prospects for expanded access and reduced costs of health care services provided through telehealth, and we are grateful for your sponsorship of HB 29. We encourage its passage and enactment.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ken Helander", with a long, sweeping underline.

Ken Helander
AARP Alaska – Advocacy Director

khelander@aarp.org
762-3314

Real Possibilities