



March 27, 2019

Rep. Ivy Spohnholz
State Capitol, Room 421
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: HB 29 –Insurance coverage for Telehealth

Dear Representative Spohnholz,

The Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA) writes this letter in support of HB 29, an Act relating to insurance coverage for benefits provided through telehealth. ASHNHA is a membership organization representing Alaska's hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and other health care providers.

HB 29 requires insurers that offer a state health care insurance plan to cover healthcare or mental healthcare benefits provided through telehealth by a health care provider licensed in the state of Alaska and may not require a prior in-person contact occur between a healthcare provider and a patient before payment is made for covered services.

ASHNHA supports efforts to improve access to care and address challenges faced by workforce shortages, particularly in rural Alaska. We believe that telehealth offers opportunities to expand access, especially to address behavioral health needs. Medicaid and Medicare already cover these types of telehealth services and it makes sense to ensure Alaskans with other insurance have access to telehealth services.

Please let us know how we can further assist your office in advancing this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Becky Hultberg
President/CEO