

Gary Strannigan
Vice President

February 14, 2020

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

RE: HB 29

Dear Representative Spohnholz:

On behalf of Premera Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alaska, I am writing with respect to HB 29, an Act relating to insurance coverage for benefits provided through telehealth. Premera strongly supports HB 29 which promotes telemedicine and improves access to health services for Alaskans by providers licensed by the Alaska State Medical Board.

Health care costs in Alaska are among the highest in the United States and are continuing to rise each year. Research shows that telemedicine can reduce costs by providing care through more efficient means. In addition, telemedicine improves access to care in remote locations, improves follow-up care for patients with chronic conditions, and produces a better patient experience by improving convenience and reducing travel time.

Premera currently covers a variety of telemedicine services in Alaska and Washington State, and a growing number of employers show increasing interest in telemedicine as a way to improve productivity and reduce their health care costs.

HB 29 will help improve access to care, especially in rural communities, and utilize more cost-effective technologies to deliver essential and timely care to Alaskans.

Sincerely,

Gary B. Strannigan
Vice President
Congressional/Legislative Affairs