

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senator David Wilson

SPONSOR STATEMENT

CB 134: MEDICAID COVERAGE OF LICENSED COUNSELORS

“An Act relating to medical assistance reimbursement for the services of licensed professional counselors; and providing for an effective date.”

If enacted, SB 134 would add licensed professional counselors to the list of independent licensed practitioners to address the shortage of Medicaid-eligible behavioral health providers in the state, afford more options for beneficiaries, increase access, and improve the quality of care at a lower cost for behavioral health care.

Currently, licensed professional counselors (LPCs) are only allowed to provide services in community health clinics or physician mental health clinics, which limits the number of willing providers. SB 134 expands medical assistance reimbursement services to cover those services provided directly/independently by LPCs.

Specifically, SB 134:

- Adds Professional Counseling services to the list of Medicaid optional services under AS 47.07.030(b);
- Defines Professional Counseling services and licensing under AS 08.29;
- Authorizes Professional Counselor services as eligible to render and bill for Medicaid-funded services as independent practitioners under Alaska Statute 47.07.030 (b).
- Requests the Department of Health & Social Services to amend the state plan for medical assistance coverage under Title XIX of the Social Security Act;

We respectfully encourage your support of Senate Bill 134.