



March 26, 2021

Commissioner Adam Crum
Alaska Department of Health and Social Services
3601 C. Street
Anchorage, AK. 99503 Sent via email to adam.crum@alaska.gov

Dear Commissioner Crum,

On behalf of the Mat-Su Health Foundation and its Board of Directors, I am writing to express support for Senate Bill 89 and House Bill 103 to bring Alaska law into compliance with federal changes related to “house rules” in assisted living homes.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation has five focus areas in which we prioritize our work. Healthy Aging is the name of one of those focus areas and it was among the earliest priorities of the foundation. Mat-Su has the fastest growing older adult population in the state, increasing by 64.6 percent between 2010 and 2017, compared to a 43.9 percent increase for the state of Alaska. By 2030, more than one in five Mat-Su residents, nearly 27,500 people, will be age 60 and older, and our number of residents over the age of 85 years will increase by 188 percent to 1,864. These residents are among the most vulnerable and often require more intense services.

Current Alaska law allows assisted living homes to establish house rules that address residents’ rights to having visitors. While the state law says the house rules may not be “unreasonably” restrictive, the federal regulation is more explicit, stating that individuals on waivers and in such settings must be “able to have visitors of their choosing at any time.” The Mat-Su Health Foundation supports this change because it will ensure that a basic human right is afforded to residents of any assisted living home in Alaska that establishes house rules. Alaskans in these settings deserve living in conditions as close as possible to what they would have in their own homes.

In addition, ongoing financial participation in Alaska’s waiver programs by the federal government is reliant on services being provided in compliant settings. Without change to Alaska law, the long-term stability of Medicaid waivers for home and community-based services is at risk, and therefore the individuals in assisted living are at risk as well.

The Mat-Su Health Foundation will be actively advocating for passage Senate Bill 93 and House Bill 103 so that our most vulnerable and treasured citizens can receive the care they deserve.

Sincerely,

President and Chief Executive Officer

Cc: John Lee, Director, Division of Senior and Disabilities Services