



ALASKA STATE HOSPITAL &
NURSING HOME ASSOCIATION

ELECTRONIC MAIL

September 7, 2021

Senator Costello
Senate Labor & Commerce Committee Chair
State Capitol Room 119
Juneau, AK 99801
Senator.Mia.Costello@akleg.gov
senate.labor.and.commerce@akleg.gov

Re: ASHNHA Supports Senate Bill 3006

Dear Senator Costello,

The Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association (ASHNHA) represents more than 65 hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, home health agencies, and other health care organizations. Our membership is distributed across Alaska's vast expanse of over half a million square miles, from PeaceHealth Ketchikan Medical Center in Southeast Alaska to Samuel Simmonds Memorial Hospital in Utqiagvik, north of the Arctic Circle. For over 60 years, ASHNHA members have worked together to improve health care in Alaska.

ASHNHA supports Senate Bill 3006 and urges its swift passage. Alaska is experiencing its worst point of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are nearing 200 Alaskans in the hospital with a COVID-19 diagnosis, health care staffing is extraordinarily strained, and our caregivers are exhausted.

Given the severity of the crisis in our health care system, ASHNHA is asking for any and all support for our facilities and caregivers, and SB 3006 offers important flexibilities, such as accelerating and prioritizing background checks for health care employees; reinstating telehealth flexibilities; and creating opportunities for more efficient patient throughput to maximize our limited hospital resources.

It is important to acknowledge that while SB 3006 offers helpful mechanisms for responding to the latest surge, the most effective means continues to be mitigation efforts from all Alaskans like getting vaccinated and following CDC guidelines, such as masking in indoor settings.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jared C. Kosin, JD, MBA
President & CEO