



February 11, 2025

Dear Chair Dunbar and members of Senate HSS:

On behalf of VOA Alaska, I strongly support HB 73 and SB 76, which will establish a new license type for Complex Care Residential Homes (CCRHs). These bills address a critical gap in Alaska's system of care by creating a long-term, residential care option tailored for individuals with complex behavioral, medical, and disability-related needs.

Currently, Alaska lacks the appropriate residential license type to serve this population, often resulting in placements that are either overly restrictive or fail to provide the necessary level of care. This gap forces many Alaskans into settings such as hospitals, psychiatric facilities, or even out-of-state placements—options that are not only costly but also fail to support long-term stability and positive health outcomes.

CCRHs will provide specialized 24-hour care in a smaller, home-like setting for fewer than 15 residents. These homes will be designed to meet the needs of specific populations, such as individuals with severe and persistent mental illness, dementia with disruptive behaviors, or youth with complex behavioral health challenges. The multidisciplinary care model will help stabilize individuals, improve their quality of life, and reduce costly and preventable hospitalizations and institutional stays.

VOA Alaska strongly believes in the goals to HB 73 and SB 76 to enhance Alaska's system of care for those with complex needs. By creating CCRHs, these bills will:

- Prevent unnecessary hospitalizations and emergency psychiatric care.
- Reduce reliance on out-of-state placements, keeping Alaskans closer to their families and support systems.
- Provide families and caregivers with more stable and sustainable care options.

This legislation is critical to VOA Alaska, as youth in our residential program—where we provide co-occurring substance use and mental health treatment—often face delayed discharge due to limited placement options. Uncertainty in discharge placement can make this transition especially fragile, leading to severe regression and, in some cases, suicide attempts. The



addition of complex residential homes will offer a vital placement option for youth with significant behavioral health needs who are not well-suited for foster care or independent living.

We urge your full support of HB 73 and SB 76. Thank you for your consideration and leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Julia Luey', is positioned above the printed name.

Julia Luey
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