



AFACT

ANCHORAGE FAITH & ACTION • CONGREGATIONS TOGETHER

March 10, 2012

The Honorable Bob Herron
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capital Room 411
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Rep. Herron:

Please accept this letter of support for HB78 on behalf of the Anchorage organizing ministries of Lutheran Church of Hope and Central Lutheran Church. Both are members of AFACT (Anchorage Faith and Action--Congregations Together). For many months, leaders from each congregation have joined together, responding to concerns we have heard with regard to the struggle of seniors to find, keep, and be retained by primary care doctors.

We support HB78 because we hope it will provide an incentive for more primary care doctors to come to the state and treat seniors 65 and over. Our joint organizing ministry is grateful that the supporters of this bill recognize that the struggle for equal access to healthcare providers is not limited to the rural areas of our state. In our one-to-one conversations with seniors in Anchorage, we have heard many stories of concern and fear about the lack of primary care doctors.

The new Medicare clinics have temporarily alleviated some of this stress, however the senior population is growing. ISER has projected that by 2020 the number of Medicare recipients in Alaska will more than double, likely outgrowing the clinics. In our state, being in or near an urban center does not mean you have access to primary care.

We hope that this committee and the House will act in sympathy and solidarity with *all* our underserved populations, including and especially Medicare recipients in the Anchorage Bowl.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Julia Seymour
Pastor, Lutheran Church of Hope