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March 30, 2011

The Honorable Bill Thomas, Co-Chair
The Honorable Bill Stoltze, Co-Chair
House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 519
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

RE: CS HB 78 [HSS]

Dear Co-Chairs Thomas and Stoltze:

I have lived in Alaska since 1954 and plan to stay here the remainder of my days. I supported HB 392 during the last legislative session, a bill very similar to HB 78. I support CS HB 78 and urge the Committee to support and move this legislation at its next hearing. The documents on BASIS show this bill enjoys wide support from numerous groups around Alaska.

Below is a partial list of the reasons I support CS HB 78. I had intended to testify in person before the Finance Committee, but a previously scheduled medical appointment conflicts with the Committee schedule.

- We need more medical practitioners in Alaska
- Many of our health care practitioners themselves are reaching retirement age
- This bill will make it possible for Alaska to attract new Health Care professionals. We are competing nationally for this talent. We want the incentives this bill provides to attract young Alaskans to go into the health care fields and return to Alaska with their skills
- Alaska has the fastest-growing senior population in the 50 states
- Retired seniors contribute about \$1.7 Billion annually to the Alaska economy, including retirement and health care spending
- This spending generates nearly 15,000 year round jobs for residents all around Alaska
- Senior income from investments outside Alaska and other non-earned income flowing into Alaska, generate about 3,500 more jobs
- It has been exceedingly difficult to find a primary care practitioner in Anchorage or Fairbanks that will see a new Medicare patient. There were 25 in Anchorage in early 2009; in the spring of 2010, that number was down to 4 practitioners, all at the Neighborhood CHC. The recent opening of the Medicare clinic should help some