



April 11, 2023

Members of the House Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: ANTHC Support of House Bill 59

On behalf of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), I write in strong support of House Bill (HB) 59 to expand eligibility for postpartum mothers..

ANTHC is a statewide tribal health organization serving all 229 Tribes and all Alaska Native and American Indian (AN/AI) individuals in Alaska. ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation co-manage the Alaska Native Medical Center, the tertiary care hospital for all AN/AI people in Alaska. ANTHC also provides a wide range of statewide public health, community health, environmental health and other programs and services for Alaska Native people and their communities.

HB 59 extends postpartum Medicaid coverage for new mothers to 12 months. Women who are eligible for Medicaid in Alaska based on their pregnancy currently only receive coverage for 60 days postpartum. Postpartum health issues occur far beyond 60 days. HB 59 will support growing families and improve Alaskan maternal and child health, setting the stage for a healthier future.

Many of Alaska's maternal and child mortalities are preventable, and increasing access to health care will save lives. Currently the Alaska Native infant mortality rate is 10.3 per 1,000. HB 59 helps address disparities in access to and outcomes from health care during an especially vulnerable time for new parents. When mothers have access to care, the child is more likely to receive an annual well-child visit with a healthcare provider. Extending coverage for new mothers saves limited health care resources in the long run because early interventions have the best return on investment and focuses on prevention. Providing these resources to young families benefits Alaskans, families, communities and future generations.

ANTHC supports HB 59 as part of the ANTHC vision that Alaska Native people are the healthiest people in the world.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Monique R. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Monique R. Martin, Vice-President
Intergovernmental Affairs

cc: Laura Stidolph, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor

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