

**From:** [Lada, Robert](#)  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** House Bill 27 Public Testimony  
**Date:** Thursday, May 07, 2026 8:10:18 AM

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5/7/2026

Dear Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

I am writing to express my strong support for House Bill 27, critical legislation that would incorporate stroke and heart attack into Alaska's established statewide system of care for major emergencies. This bill represents an important opportunity for the State of Alaska to take a greater leadership role in improving stroke care and outcomes for Alaskans.

I have served as the Medical Director of Neurosciences at Providence Alaska Medical Center for the past 20 years and am a founding member of Peak Neurology and Sleep Medicine and the Alaska Stroke Coalition. During this time, I have witnessed meaningful progress in stroke care across Alaska, much of it driven by dedicated healthcare professionals and small organizations working with limited resources. However, the responsibility for developing and sustaining a comprehensive statewide stroke system cannot continue to rest solely on individual hospitals, providers, or volunteer organizations.

Alaska's geography, severe weather, transportation barriers, and dispersed population create unique challenges that require statewide coordination and support. House Bill 27 would allow the State of Alaska to help establish standardized systems for communication, transport, treatment protocols, data collection, and public education. Similar to the success of Alaska's trauma system, a coordinated statewide approach to stroke and cardiac emergencies would improve access to timely care and reduce preventable disability and death.

In stroke care, time is brain. Every minute without treatment results in the loss of approximately 1.9 million brain cells, and even brief delays can lead to permanent disability. Stroke more commonly causes lifelong disability than death, creating substantial emotional and economic burdens for families and communities throughout Alaska.

Stroke also affects many working-age Alaskans. Nearly one-third of stroke patients are under age 65, and many are unable to return to work afterward. Alaska has the youngest median age for first stroke in the nation at 66 years old, and we are seeing increasing stroke rates among adults ages 18 to 45.

Advances in stroke treatment now allow us to dramatically reduce disability and save lives, but these treatments only work when patients are rapidly identified and transported through an organized statewide system of care. This requires meaningful partnership and investment from the State of Alaska.

I encourage the State of Alaska to join healthcare providers, EMS agencies, hospitals, and community organizations in building a stronger, coordinated stroke system for our state. House Bill 27 is an important step toward that goal and will help ensure that all Alaskans, regardless of where they live, have access to timely and effective stroke care.

Thank you for your service and consideration.

Sincerely,

Robert Lada, MD  
Medical Director of Neurosciences  
Providence Alaska Medical Center

Founding Member  
Peak Neurology and Sleep Medicine

Founding Member  
Alaska Stroke Coalition

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