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HB096 Explanation of Changes Version I to T, 3.3.26 (34-LS0297/I) to (34-LS0297/T)

"An Act establishing the Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board; relating to payment for personal care services; and providing for an effective date."

Section 1 amends AS 44.29 by adding new sections

Sec. 44.29.940 Publication of Reports

In version H, on page 5, lines 11 through 23 were deleted and then replaced with,

“(c) The department shall take the recommendations for the board into consideration when setting rates for covered services. If the rate set by the department for a covered service differs significantly from the rate recommended by the board, the commissioner shall notify the board and the chair of each legislative committee having jurisdiction of health and social services in writing.”

With this change, the report delivery is simplified, and there is no approval process by the commissioner. Instead, the report goes directly to the body tasked with setting the new rate, and if there is a discrepancy between the board recommendation and the new rate, the relevant legislative bodies are informed.

Sec. 44.29.945 Definitions

The definition for “covered provider” on page 6, lines 2&3 was changed. They replaced the words “enrolled with” with “certified by.”

The intent is to clarify that "covered provider" references homecare agencies, rather than caregivers themselves. We are changing the word from "enrolled", which could theoretically apply to both agencies and individual caregivers, to "certified", which can apply only to an agency in this context.

Sec. 47.07.045

The start date of the commission was changed from 2025 to 2026, and the requirement to conduct an initial investigation and publish the results was removed.

The intent is to ensure that the Department of Health has the time to select and install the required Board members, and produce work on a flexible timeline.

Sec. 44.29.915

It was clarified that committee meetings can be held in any format, including teleconference.

Sec. 44.29.930

The references to specific and detailed data categories that can be requested by the Committee were removed, replacing them with the more generic term "data."

The intent is to ensure that any data request does not result in a burdensome report, and grant the flexibility to the Department to respond efficiently to requests for information.