



May 7, 2026

Via Email: Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov

Co-Chairs: Sen. Hoffman, Sen. Olson and Sen. Stedman and Members of the Senate Committee on Finance
Alaska State Senate
Juneau, Alaska

RE: CSHB 96(L&C) – Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board

Dear Co-Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Consumer Direct Care Network – Alaska (CDAK) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on HB 96 and to participate in ongoing discussions regarding the future of home and community-based services in Alaska. As a long-standing provider of consumer-directed services in the state, CDAK shares the Legislature’s goal of strengthening the direct care workforce, improving caregiver compensation, and ensuring sustainable access to care for Alaskans who rely on home-based supports.

CDAK is generally supportive of the establishment of the Home Care Employment Standards Advisory Board, as proposed in Section 1 of the bill. We believe a structured, inclusive forum that brings together providers, workers, enrollees, and state agencies can add meaningful transparency and rigor to discussions around workforce conditions, payment adequacy, and service access. The advisory nature of the board, combined with its data-driven mandate, aligns with CDAK’s interest in thoughtful, evidence-based policymaking.

At the same time, CDAK voices reservations and recommends a revised approach with respect to Section 2 of the bill, which imposes fixed wage and benefit pass-through thresholds on provider agencies. While we strongly support increasing caregiver compensation, we are concerned that setting statutory percentages prior to completion of the board’s work could unintentionally undermine the very objectives established for the advisory board, to analyze and recommend a collaborative effort toward workforce compensation and sustainable access to care. Provider cost structures vary significantly across geography, scale, and service mix, particularly in rural and off-road regions where operational and compliance costs are substantially higher.

CDAK believes the advisory board should be empowered to analyze, recommend, and calibrate compensation thresholds and timelines based on real-world data, rate adequacy studies, and the outcomes of modernization efforts already underway. In particular, CDAK has engaged in the Administrative Order 360 process designed to reduce administrative burden and increase



operational efficiency. Until those reforms are fully implemented, HB96 is prescribing increased wage mandates within systems that have not yet been modernized.

Additionally, CDAK recommends allowing greater flexibility in how compensation is defined for purposes of any pass-through calculation. Certain costs—such as training, travel, and mileage reimbursement—are direct investments in caregiver recruitment, retention, and client access to care. Excluding these expenditures from compensation calculations fails to reflect the full scope of resources required to sustainably and effectively deliver services across Alaska.

In closing, CDAK supports advancing policies that elevate the home care workforce while preserving provider stability and access to care for participants. We respectfully encourage the Legislature to allow the advisory board to fulfill its intended role before imposing prescriptive requirements and to align implementation timelines with federal and state modernization efforts.

We welcome continued collaboration with the Legislature, the Department of Health, and our association partners to ensure HB 96 achieves its goals in a manner that is both effective and sustainable. Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

With warm regards,

/s/ Megan Szymanski

Megan Szymanski
Regional Director
Consumer Direct Care Network