



**National  
Multiple Sclerosis  
Society**

April 4, 2023

**RE: SUPPORT Senate Bill 91 Multidisciplinary Telehealth**

Senator Claman,

Multiple sclerosis is an unpredictable disease of the central nervous system. Currently there is no cure. Symptoms vary from person to person and may include disabling fatigue, mobility challenges, cognitive changes, and vision issues. An estimated 1 million people live with MS in the United States. Early diagnosis and treatment are critical to minimize disability. Significant progress is being made to achieve a world free of MS.

The Society's vision is a world free of MS and our mission is that we will cure MS while empowering people affected by MS to live their best lives. Our advocacy around expanding access to comprehensive, affordable health care is based largely on the Society's [Access to High Quality Healthcare Principles](#) (Principles). We believe that these Principles are realized when people with MS are at the center of their healthcare decision making. This means having access to and receiving high quality care from a comprehensive network of providers and healthcare providers, who are focused on producing the best outcomes at affordable costs. These providers have a greater awareness, resources, and tools to enable the timely diagnosis, treatment, and symptom management of MS.

A full overview of our principles is available on the [Society's website](#), and it is through this lens that we will evaluate any policy proposal put forth to assess its impact on healthcare needs for people affected by MS. **We appreciate your commitment to include select, qualified, out-of-state providers to join multidisciplinary care teams for complex conditions and support the amendments to current statute contained within Senate Bill 91. We look forward to a hearing in the Senate Health & Human Services committee in the near future.** Please contact me with any questions or for further information regarding Alaskans and multiple sclerosis.

Respectfully,

**Seth M. Greiner**  
Senior Manager, Advocacy  
Washington State | Oregon | Alaska | Idaho | Montana  
Mobile: 720-369-1665  
[Seth.Greiner@NMSS.org](mailto:Seth.Greiner@NMSS.org)

**Laurie Johnson**  
President, Greater Northwest Chapter  
Washington State | Alaska | Montana  
Mobile: 206-239-8913  
[Laurie.Johnson@NMSS.org](mailto:Laurie.Johnson@NMSS.org)

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, AK 99504  
[REDACTED]

January 22, 2024

To: Alaska State Senate Finance Committee  
Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov  
Re: Senate Bill 91

Honorable Chairs and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

Alaskans with complex life-threatening diseases need Senate Bill 91. Please hear it and pass it through the Finance Committee. SB91 has been sitting in the Finance Committee since April 2023. My family needs action now. Collaboration and cooperation between multiple disciplines is key in solving or managing a complex health issue. When a person has a life-threatening diagnosis, this type of care is critical. My husband, Tim Jennings, was diagnosed with ALS December 12, 2023. Research is fast-paced and new treatments are being developed regularly. This requires the whole care team to stay up to speed on the best way to manage the disease for their discipline and to collaborate with the other disciplines. Alaska does not have specialized, multidisciplinary care teams for ALS and other rare, life-threatening diseases.

We will be travelling to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota in February 2024 to attend the ALS Multidisciplinary Clinic. We will be meeting with a neurologist, physical rehabilitation specialist, speech pathologist, registered dietitian, occupational therapist, respiratory therapist, research coordinator for clinical trials, a social worker, and palliative care provider who will all be working together to coordinate my husband's care. It is highly recommended that we attend the ALS multidisciplinary clinic every 3 months. Eventually, it will become more and more difficult to travel, but we will still need the expertise and developing therapies found at Mayo Clinic. Telemedicine with all disciplines will be key to managing his disease, but unless SB 91 passes, that won't be an option. Patients with a life-threatening disease need the collaboration of a healthcare team that helps to manage their disease without the burden of long-distance travel.

Senate Bill 91 will allow Alaskans to receive telehealth services from all non-physician members of the care team. It does not take work away from local health care providers, but rather, it improves access to specialized healthcare that isn't available in Alaska. For my husband's care, we also work with a local provider to implement the recommendations of our ALS care team at the Mayo Clinic. Please hear Senate Bill 91 and pass it through the Finance Committee. This bill will aid all Alaskans and their care givers. Time is of the essence because of the short, terminal prognosis for this disease. Please act now.

I may be contacted at [timjennings@gmail.com](mailto:timjennings@gmail.com) and [REDACTED] (text is best).

Sincerely,  
Gail K. Braten

Cc: [Senator.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Matt.Claman@akleg.gov)  
Cc: [Claire.Lubke@akleg.gov](mailto:Claire.Lubke@akleg.gov)  
Cc: [Sheila.e.reilly@gmail.com](mailto:Sheila.e.reilly@gmail.com)

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 01, 2024 11:41 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Sen. Elvi Gray-Jackson  
**Subject:** SB 91

Sheryl Douglas

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

February 1, 2024

To: Alaska State Senate Finance Committee  
[Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov](mailto:Senate.Finance.Committee@akleg.gov)  
Re: Senate Bill 91

Alaska State Finance Committee:

Alaskans with complex life-threatening diseases need Senate Bill 91. Please read it and pass it through the Finance Committee. Now is the time to act. Collaboration and cooperation between multiple disciplines is key in solving or managing a complex health issue. When a person has a life-threatening diagnosis, this type of care is critical. Our medical providers in Alaska benefit from the expertise of specialists through telemedicine, specialists who aren't available locally nor sustainable with our smaller population.

A friend of mine's spouse was diagnosed with ALS in December, 2023. Research is fast paced, and new treatments are being developed regularly. This requires the whole care team to stay up to speed on the best way to manage the disease for their discipline and to be able to collaborate with all the other disciplines. Alaska does not have the population base to support a specialized team for ALS or other rare life-threatening diseases. My friend and her husband will be travelling to Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota in February 2024 to attend the ALS Integrated Multidisciplinary Clinic. They will be meeting with a Neurologist, Physical Rehabilitation Specialist, Speech Pathologist, Registered Dietician, Occupational Therapist, Respiratory Therapist, Research Coordinator for Clinical Trials, a Social Worker, Nurse and Palliative care provider. They will all be working together to coordinate his care. Eventually, it will become more and more difficult to travel, but they will still need the expertise and developing therapies found at Mayo Clinic. Telemedicine with all disciplines, when SB 91 passes, is the key to managing his disease. Patients with a life-threatening disease need the laser focus and collaboration of all health experts to help manage the disease without any conflicting treatments.

Senate Bill 91 will allow Alaskans to receive telehealth services from all non-physician members of the care team. It does not take away work from the local health care providers. It adds to their knowledge base when we bring the knowledge of the larger team to Anchorage providers who can help facilitate their recommendations. Please read Senate Bill 91 and pass it through the Finance Committee. This bill

will aid all Alaskans and their care givers. Please act now to support both the medical needs of our population and our medical providers in Alaska.

I may be contacted at [REDACTED].

Sincerely,  
Sheryl S Douglas

cc: [Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov](mailto:Senator.Elvi.Gray-Jackson@akleg.gov)  
[Representative.Alyse.Galvin@akleg.gov](mailto:Representative.Alyse.Galvin@akleg.gov)

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** ROGER SAFT [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, February 02, 2024 4:47 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Matt Claman; Sen. Bill Wielechowski; Claire Lubke  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 91

Honorable Chairs and Members of Senate Finance Committee:

Please hear and pass SB91 allowing telehealth for health care providers to serve people with terminal diagnosis such as ALS. It will allow patients to attend in this way specialized multidisciplinary team care such as an ALS Certified Treatment Center of Excellence which is not available in Alaska. Such care may significantly extend the lives of ALS patients. Please hear and pass SB91 to help patients with ALS and other devastating diagnoses.

Sincerely,

Roger R. Saft

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2/2/2024

Sent from my iPhone

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, February 04, 2024 7:36 PM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee; Sen. Matt Claman; Claire Lubke  
**Subject:** Senate Bill 91

Dear Leaders of our great state of AK,

Thank you for serving us and considering the many diverse needs of Alaskan residents. I imagine that it is a big chore, and I wanted to express my appreciation.

My family has resided in Alaska since 1991. We are teachers and engineers and enjoy living in this great state. We realize how fortunate we are to be part of a diverse community.

I am writing to ask you to respectfully reconsider SB 91. It is a bill that will enable many seniors with serious illnesses to remain living here in our great state.

Traveling to the Mayo Clinic in MN is difficult for patients with ALS, as well as other terminal diagnoses. The ability to meet with a multidisciplinary team while in Anchorage would reduce the great stress on patients and families suffering.

Granting allowance for permitting tele-health for health care providers to serve Anchorage seniors with terminal illnesses may appear to be a huge ask. However, these individuals are Alaskan leaders in our community and deserve our consideration as they struggle with all that terminal illness brings.

I ask you to reconsider SB 91. We all grow old, if we are lucky and each of us has a Mom and/or Dad that may face an obstacle such as this.

Yours truly,  
Eileen Foyle-Saft  
[REDACTED]

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Sue Sokoloff [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2024 8:22 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** SB 91

A good friend of mine has just been diagnosed with ALS. He and his family are in for a terrible time. SB91 will help them get the help they will need to get thru this ordeal .

Please hear and pass SB 91 to allow telehealth for health care providers for a person with a a diagnosis like ALS. The disease won't wait. Please act now! Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Susan Sokoloff

**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Sue Sokoloff <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Monday, February 05, 2024 8:34 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Subject:** SB 91...please pass this very important bill

To all the members of the Finance Committee

Alaskans with complex life-threatening diseases need Senate Bill 91. Please hear it and pass it through the Finance Committee. SB91 is currently in the Finance Committee. Collaboration and cooperation between multiple disciplines is key in solving or managing a complex health issue. Research is fast-paced and new treatments are being developed regularly. This requires the whole care team to stay up to speed on the best way to manage the disease for their discipline and to collaborate with the other disciplines. Alaska does not have specialized, multidisciplinary care teams for ALS or other rare, life-threatening diseases.

Travel outside Alaska for multidisciplinary care may need to happen as often as every three months.

Senate Bill 91 will allow Alaskans to receive telehealth services from all non-physician members of the care team and help maintain continuity of care. Please hear Senate Bill 91 and pass it through the Finance Committee. This bill will aid all Alaskans and their care givers. Time is of the essence because of the short, terminal prognosis for this disease. Please act now.

I may be contacted at [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

Sincerely,  
***Susan Sokoloff***

Sent from my iPhone



**Doniece Gott**

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**From:** Betsy Chivers <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, February 07, 2024 9:49 AM  
**To:** Senate Finance Committee  
**Cc:** Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Click Bishop; Sen. Kelly Merrick; Sen. Jesse Kiehl; Sen. David Wilson  
**Subject:** Support SB 91

## Honorable Co-Chairs and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

I am writing on behalf of all Alaskans who are diagnosed with terminal conditions. SB 91 will provide reasonable access to ongoing medical treatment and care for them and assist their families as they face life altering health changes while living in Alaska. SB 91 will allow life sustaining and research based protocols/treatments/supports/care provided in a telehealth manner.

This request supports a friend/neighbor and his family with a recent diagnosis of Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, ALS, a terminal condition. He and his family are seeking care from an ALS Certified Treatment Center of Excellence for his ongoing medical care. Since no Center is available in Alaska, he and his family will have to travel outside Alaska for him to access the best of care for this diagnosis.

The care and support which ALS Certified Treatment Centers provide to those with this terminal diagnosis includes care by a medical doctor. Currently this care can be received by telehealth in Alaska. Treatment for this terminal condition also includes support and care by other licensed medical professionals. These supports are provided by occupational therapists, speech pathologists, respiratory therapists, registered dietitians, social workers, and palliative care specialists which are available in the all inclusive care provided at an ALS Certified Treatment Centers. Currently these licensed medical professionals and the care they provide are excluded from being available through telehealth.

Please support this bill to provide life sustaining medical care and allow the best care that is available to all Alaskans and their families who face a future of challenging health care decisions.

Please act swiftly to move this bill through the legislature as delays place the health of fellow Alaskans at risk. Please contact me with any questions.

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Betsy Chivers

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

February 2, 2024

Senator Lyman Hoffman  
Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska State Capitol  
120 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Senate Bill 91

Honorable Chairs of the Senate Finance Committee:

My neighbor was recently diagnosed with ALS. This devastating disease will slowly rob him of his ability to eat, walk and talk. He is the guy we call on when we need help and he is always willing. Alaskans with complex life-threatening diseases need Senate Bill 91. Please hear it and pass it through the Finance Committee. With research rapidly evolving, the whole care team is laser focused on the best way to manage the disease for their discipline and to collaborate with the other disciplines. Alaska does not have specialized, multidisciplinary care teams for rare, lethal diseases.

Travel outside Alaska for multidisciplinary care may need to happen every 3 months. This is hard on a terminally ill patient. Senate Bill 91 will allow Alaskans to receive telehealth services from all non-physician members of the care team and help maintain continuity of care. Please hear Senate Bill 91 and pass it through the Finance Committee now. Time is running out for my neighbor with a diagnosis for a terminal disease.

[REDACTED]  
Sincerely,

*Vicki Carlock*

Vicki Carlock

Cc: Senator Donald Olson  
Cc: Senator Bert Stedman  
Cc: Senator Matt Claman  
Cc: Senator Bill Wielechowski

[REDACTED]  
Anchorage, Alaska 99504

February 2, 2024

Senator Lyman Hoffman  
Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska State Capitol  
120 4<sup>th</sup> Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Senate Bill 91

Honorable Chairs of the Senate Finance Committee:

My neighbor was recently diagnosed with ALS. This deadly disease requires a multidisciplinary team to manage it. They are not all doctors. SB 91 will be a great help to him so that he won't have to travel outside Alaska every 3 months to see his non-physician care team. Please hear it and pass it now. Time is short when a person is given a diagnosis for a terminal disease.

[REDACTED]  
  
Sincerely,



Richard Carlock

Cc: Senator Donald Olson  
Cc: Senator Bert Stedman  
Cc: Senator Matt Claman  
Cc: Senator Bill Wielechowski