



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

April 18, 2023

Alaska Senate Finance Committee

RE: SUPPORT Senate Bill 91 Multidisciplinary Telehealth

Senators Stedman, Hoffman, Olson, Bishop, Merrick, Kiehl, & Wilson,

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.** This bill will avoid costly and potentially dangerous travel for Alaskans accessing their health care needs. Please contact me with any questions or for further information regarding Alaskans and multiple sclerosis.

Respectfully,

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