

2024 SESSION OPERATING BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSAL #5

OFFERED IN: The House Finance Subcommittee for the Department of Health

TO: HB 268 / HB 270

OFFERED BY: Representative Fields

FISCAL YEAR: FY 25

DEPARTMENT: Health

APPROPRIATION: Senior & Disability Services

ALLOCATION: Early Intervention / Infant Learning Program

ADD: \$2,914,000 / Fund Source: GF/MH / Fund Code: 1037

ADD: 1 PFT position

EXPLANATION: Alaska's ILP offers services to all children who meet Alaska's current eligibility criteria. All enrolled children receive, at a minimum, core services, as is required in state regulations and under the federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

The Department of Seniors & Disability Services is exploring expansion of eligibility criteria for ILP to include additional diagnoses that qualify for automatic eligibility for the program. Funding to support these changes would be needed.

Examples of expanded criteria that would allow automatic eligibility for ILP services:

- **Low incidence:** This includes expanding definitions of hearing loss to match school districts and would include unilateral hearing loss, expands the definition of vision impairment to include low vision, functional vision loss, nystagmus, and other vision concerns associated with developmental delay.
- **Newborns and infants:** Infants born with extreme prematurity, very low birthweight, small for gestational age, and intrauterine growth retardation.
- **Complex medical needs:** Infants with William's syndrome, CHARGE syndrome, hypoxic ischemic encephalopathy, craniosynostosis, and other similar medical complications.
- Children with 25 to 49 percent developmental delay.

The changes would result in a significant increase in enrollment that would bring Alaska's enrollment level closer to the national average.

- Funding needed to support program stabilization and expansion to implement these changes: \$2,914.0 general fund mental health.
- \$2,699.0 to support grantees who provide local outreach, referral, and increased enrollment resulting from less stringent eligibility criteria.
- \$215.0 to add one Health Program Manager position to support grantees who provide local outreach, referral, and increased enrollment resulting from less stringent eligibility criteria.