



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

Department of
Health and Social Services

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February 12, 2018

Dean Williams, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Corrections
550 W. 7th Ave. Suite 1800
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Commissioner Williams,

The Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) is pleased to provide this letter of support for House Bill 325, relating to computer use by prisoners and providing an exemption from the state procurement code for rehabilitation and reentry services.

Like the Department of Corrections, DHSS is committed to criminal justice reforms that lead to better outcomes and more adequately protect our communities. Our continued collaboration is vital in assuring that our efforts succeed, including efforts focused on offender reentry.

HB 325 would establish prisoner use of computers for reentry services. Computer access for prisoners would improve efficiencies in benefit enrollment and eligibility determinations that will help offenders receive these benefits more quickly. For example, the current use of paper applications for individuals leaving correctional facilities adds to the backlog of paper applications for Medicaid at the Division of Public Assistance. Applying for Medicaid online through the Federally Facilitated Marketplace (Healthcare.gov) is a much more efficient process, enabling the Marketplace to make an immediate determination of eligibility and notify the Division of Public Assistance to issue the benefit. This process will increase the likelihood that inmates will be ready to receive their benefits as they leave custody instead of having their application added to the backlog.

DHSS supports House Bill 325 as part of the Department's ongoing collaborations and systems improvements.

Quyana,
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Quyana" above a stylized, flowing signature that looks like "Valerie".

Valerie Nurr'araaluk Davidson