

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## SENATE HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE



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### **SCR 2: SUPPORT CRISIS CARE & MEDICAID REFORM** **Sponsor Statement**

*Crisis Now* is a model for behavioral health care that provides a phalanx of services, including a 24/7 crisis call center, crisis stabilization, and more, that prevent crisis from escalating to expensive, potentially harmful emergency room visits. Developed by the Crisis Services Task Force of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention and first implemented in Arizona, this model is credited with saving millions of dollars in healthcare costs while improving outcomes for patients and communities. Recognizing the model's effectiveness and extraordinary degree of need in our state, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority and the State of Alaska partnered in 2020 to implement Crisis Now in Alaska.

The Alaska State Legislature has made significant progress in improving crisis behavioral health services through the establishment of a statewide crisis continuum of care. A pillar of the Crisis Now model, the 24-hour call line, was launched in July 2022. The long-term sustainability of these essential services, especially the call line, is threatened by funding gaps, administrative barriers, and reliance on short-term grants that limit providers' ability to expand and maintain crisis care.

SCR 2 urges the Governor to direct the Department of Health and the Division of Insurance to convene public and private payers, key stakeholders, and legislative leaders to develop recommendations for an all-payer model for crisis care. Alaska must build a sustainable crisis response system that ensures all Alaskans have access to the care they need, when they need it most.