

House Public Testimony
HB 286 Operating Budget FY19
HB285 Mental Health Budget FY19

Compiled emails
Feb 1 – 28, 2018

xFrom: Nina Chordas
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 11:13 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>
Subject: Medicare for Alaska

My name is Nina Chordas, and I live at [REDACTED] 11th Street in Juneau (99801). I am a constituent who supports full, consistent Medicaid funding. Our economy needs a healthy population and Medicaid is essential for that. We all suffer when uninsured Alaskans become ill and have to use the Emergency Room for health care. And we all benefit when our families and neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled, are healthy. Please make Medicaid a priority in your budget discussions. Thank you!

Sincerely,
Nina Chordas

--

Nina Chordas
[REDACTED]@fastmail.net

xFrom: Ruth McHenry <████████@coppervalleyak.net>
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 11:24 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: budget

Keep up your work on **Revenue**. We Alaskans used to pay state income taxes and a school tax. We paid a gas tax that took up proportionately more of our income. I'm willing to do the same now. Schools, other services, and businesses are suffering because of too many deep cuts in too many areas.

I appreciate the attempts that the House has made to address the revenue problem. Thank you for that and for scheduling public testimony on this for later this week!

Ruth McHenry

--

Ruth McHenry

████████
Copper Center, AK 99573
907-822-████████

xFrom: Hollis Handler mailto: [REDACTED]@gmail.com

Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 3:39 PM

To: Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>

Subject: Please Make Medicaid a Priority this THURSDAY

Dear House Finance Co-Chairs,

My name is Hollis (Holly) Handler and I live at [REDACTED] Nine Mile Creek Road in Douglas. In my profession, I work with families supporting their severely disabled children, and as a constituent I support full, consistent Medicaid funding. Our economy needs a healthy population and Medicaid is essential for that. We all suffer when uninsured Alaskans become ill and have to use the Emergency Room for health care. And we all benefit when our families and neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled, are healthy. Please make Medicaid a priority in your budget discussions. I appreciate all of your support so far, and will continue to cheer your efforts on.

With appreciation,
Holly Handler

xFrom: Larri Spengler
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 10:04 AM
To: Rep. Neal Foster <Rep.Neal.Foster@akleg.gov>; Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>
Subject: Medicaid funding

Greetings:

I support full, consistent Medicaid funding.

Our economy needs a healthy population and Medicaid is essential for that. We all suffer when uninsured Alaskans become ill and have to use the Emergency Room for health care. And we all benefit when our families and neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled, are healthy.

Please make Medicaid a priority in your budget discussions.

Thank you!

Larri Spengler

Larri Irene Spengler
████████ Thane Road
Juneau, Alaska 99801
907-586-████ (phone/fax)
████████@ak.net

xFrom: Mary Hausler
Sent: Monday, February 26, 2018 11:20 AM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>
Subject: Medicaid funding

My name is Mary Hausler and I live at [REDACTED] Nowell Ave Juneau 99801. I am a constituent who supports full, consistent Medicaid funding. Our economy needs a healthy population and Medicaid is essential for that. We all suffer when uninsured Alaskans become ill and have to use the Emergency Room for health care. And we all benefit when our families and neighbors, especially the elderly and disabled, are healthy. Please make Medicaid a priority in your budget discussions!!!! Thank you!

Mary Hausler
[REDACTED]@gmail.com

xFrom: Pamela Lynn
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 11:31 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Regarding operating budget

Dear leaders,

Good morning.

I wanted to write a little something about the budget. I wrote about this last year, but thought I'd sorta repeat myself a little.

My focus are healthcare issues and school lunches.

Healthcare:

I believe that in order to reduce costs for healthcare, we have to create a healthier society. If people are healthy, they will not need expensive treatments and doctors. How do you make a healthy society?

1) Make GMO foods illegal. GMO foods are saturated in pesticides and have lost most of their nutrients. Malnourished and poisoned people will be unhealthy.

2) Cut back vaccinations. Vaccines are a huge contributor to all sorts of inflammation disorders. Inflammation is the key to almost all illnesses.

3) More on food: End the cow/calf hunts. They destroy the moose populations and then there's not enough healthy meat to grow healthy people. Store bought meat has antibiotics and hormones that can cause super bugs and cancers and auto-immune diseases. Also, encourage people to farm. Promote green houses in communities and schools and in private residences so people can "eat off the vine" which gives them direct energy and nutrients from the plant to the person. End zoning laws which prohibit home raising hens for meat and eggs but instead allow people to raise their own food. Even goats, ducks, geese, should be legal everywhere.

4) Baby health is population health: Ways to make super healthy babies are:

A) Promote nursing for at least 2 yrs. Jobs tend to ruin this because they don't allow moms to bring their babies to work and skin to skin helps to have the greatest success at nursing.

Promote jobs to allow babies to come to work. Promote job daycares.

B) Delay cord clamping can really boost a baby up and give them a dynamight start at life!

C) <https://www.mamanatural.com/vernix/>. Keep the Vernix on because this is a good bacteria force field for babies that last a lifetime. Good bacteria is everything in the health world.

D) STOP injecting newborns with hepatitis shots. They cannot develop immunities at birth and they have 0, that's zero, risk factors of contracting this disease.

E) Stop injecting pregnant women with vaccines. The pregnant woman's body has a naturally suppressed immune system to protect her child from her own anti-bodies. Shots boost the immune system unnaturally and can cause harm or death to her baby. Also, the shots contain chemicals that can cause brain damage. Some of the ingredients match those in cigarettes and Tide Pods.

F) When a woman is doing drugs while pregnant, immediately confine her till the birth of the baby so the baby is not poisoned, (like what happened to my neighbor's granddaughter). It costs less to lock up a drug addict mom for 9 months then it does to pay for the millions of dollars in treatments for the deformed, damaged child.

G) And I'm gonna say it one more time, seriously, what is it up to, 40 or 50 something shots by age 4yrs? Come on, no one anywhere on earth needs that many shots ever. That's plain, outright, child abuse.

5) Support Families: <https://familyshare.com/2105/strong-families-are-the-key-to-a-prosperous-society>. How do you support families? A) Tell OCS to hit the road until they can stop splitting up families and lying in courtrooms.
B) Stop stealing our PFD's.
C) Encourage family values in the areas you vote in. If the vote or bill harms families or effects religions, vote no on it.

School Lunches:

1) If the schools had green houses and fruit trees in the hallways and classrooms, then the kids would not only eat better, but would learn how to grow their own food, a valuable lifelong tool. I think they should also grow their own eggs too and anything else they can handle. Self sufficiency is the key to saving money, and not to mention all the health benefits that come with fresh food. :)

We can reduce costs and save millions of dollars by just flowing with nature and allowing people, plants and animals to prosper together without interference of corporations, pharmaceuticals, and govt regulations.

Thank you so much for all your hard work and I pray it goes smoother this year then last year.
God bless

Pamela Samash
907-322-[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@gmail.com

xFrom: Shannon McBride-Morin
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 1:02 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>; Rep. Paul Seaton <Representative_Paul_Seaton@legis.state.ak.us>; Sen. Gary Stevens <Sen.Gary.Stevens@akleg.gov>; governor@gov.state.ak.us
Cc: Douglas Waclawski <DWaclawski@kpbsd.k12.ak.us>; Kari Dendurent <KDendurent@kpbsd.k12.ak.us>; Eric Waltenbaugh <EWaltenbaugh@kpbsd.k12.ak.us>
Subject: Fully Fund Education - Support Income Tax - Common Sense Gun Controls

Dear Members of the House Finance Committee,
Governor Walker, Senator Gary Stephens and Representative Paul Seaton:

I write to you from Homer, where I am a mother of two teenage girls, a small business owner and operator, and an active volunteer in our community. I was born and raised in Alaska and came home to raise my family here.

I ask you to support fully funding public school education. I am the parent of two girls in public school here in Homer, at Homer Middle School and Homer High School. Alaskas public schools have cut to the bone, and I do not want to see teachers cut from public schools here in Homer or around the state. We can not cut teachers, and increase class sizes. We must prioritize public school funding. I received a great public education here in Alaska in the 70's and 80's and was proud to graduate from a blue ribbon public school. I am proud of the work our excellent teachers and educators do, and I do not want to see teachers pink slipped and funding cut. Please do all you can to support public schools, by fully funding and forward funding education. I also firmly oppose arming teacher, and I believe all guns and need to be kept OUT of the schools.

I also ask you to support a broad based income tax. Our family supports an income tax. We do not want to see education and social services cut. We ask for your support of a statewide income tax, and diversified revenue sources in order to support state education and critical programs.

Lastly, our family supports all forms of common sense gun control. I have contacted our congressional delegation in DC, but I understand that the state can take action to improve Alaskas gun control laws. Alaska has the highest rate of gun related deaths per capita in the country. My 15 year old daughter and about 150 of her classmates walked out of Homer High last week asking for safer schools and common sense gun controls. And my middle school daughter joined in a walkout at Homer Middle School. On behalf of our kids, I request the following:
Ban Assault Weapons, and large capacity ammunition weapons
Ban Bump Stocks
Universal Background Checks
Age Limits on Gun Purchases
Waiting periods
Extreme Risk Protective Orders.

Thank you for taking action to fully fund public education in Alaska. Thank you for working to implement a broad based income tax. And thank you for working to protect my girls, and all Alaskan by helping implement common sense gun controls.

Shannon McBride-Morin
[REDACTED]
Homer, AK 99603
907 399 [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@AlaskaWildernessLodge.com

xFrom: Yarrow Hinnant [mailto:████████@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 10:34 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Additional funding for Pittman-Robertson grants

Hello,

I am a resident of Homer and have volunteered with Kachemak Bay State Park and ADF&G land to construct and maintain trails. I am also a professional trail crew lead, having worked with the National Park Service and several nonprofit groups for the past 12 years. I have seen first hand how much work it takes to maintain trails, implement conservation management strategies and otherwise manage public land for optimal use by local residents and tourists.

I fully support an amendment to fund positions for additional staff to help administer grants for the betterment of public lands. Many State and Federal agencies are drastically understaffed, and the impact of this is extremely obvious to one who has worked on public lands for over a decade. Additional funding and staffing will free up field staff to focus on their jobs, provide better resources and volunteer opportunities and generally improve the accessibility, educational opportunities and ability of the general public to access our public lands.

I humbly request that Rep. Seaton add such an amendment and fund additional staff positions for ADF&G.

Lewis Hinnant
(252) 230-████

████ Jones Dr.
Homer, AK

xFrom: Bill Legere [mailto: [REDACTED]@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 9:46 AM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: University of Alaska Funding

I'm writing to support adequate funding for the University of Alaska system. I am a volunteer member of the Campus Advisory Council for the University of Alaska Southeast and I know how important the University is to Juneau and to Alaska's economy and our state's future.

I understand the Finance Committee has passed an amendment to increase funding by \$19 million. I am heartened that the Legislature is considering an increase and I support the additional funding and thank you for including it.

I think it is especially important that you support the Alaska College of Education. The University's goal of providing most of Alaska's teachers through the College is ambitious and foresighted, and represents an unmatched opportunity to invest in our future.

I know that every budget decision is difficult and challenging. You have my thanks for your service to Alaskans, and for the work you are doing to assure the continuation of these essential services.

Bill Legere
PO Box [REDACTED]
Auke Bay, Alaska 99821

**xPublic Testimony to HB285,
Operating Budget Hearing,**

3/2/18

A brief history before we get to our request. Sixty-two years ago the Mental Health Trust was created to provide care for Alaska's disabled. Government officials quickly squandered a billion or so Trust dollars in assets and in 1965 Alaska continued to ship many of the disabled out of state away from their families because care was cheaper for Alaska.

That brings the Mental Health Trust and the Alaska government to 2018. And the lack of bed space for disabled psychiatric patients, lack of proper care, lack of rights, and the intentional separation of patient and family.

Money has to be spent by the legislature on providing proper rights for the disabled including acute care psychiatric patients. Giving the disabled proper rights will finally force the state to provide proper care.

Alaska should pass a 14 page law similar to the state of Georgia '08 House Bill 535. Alaska to this day has not passed fair rights for the disabled and should do so.

Mental Health Advocates, Faith Myers/Dorrance Collins, [REDACTED] Penland Pkwy,
Sp. [REDACTED], Anchorage, AK. 99508 907-929-[REDACTED]

Cc: Rep. Paul Seaton
Rep. Neal Foster
Rep. Geran Tarr

xFrom: Julie Cisco [mailto:julie.cisco@applebuscompany.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 8:49 AM
To: Sen. Peter Micciche <Sen.Peter.Micciche@akleg.gov>; Rep. Mike Chenault <Rep.Mike.Chenault@akleg.gov>; Rep. Gary Knopp <Rep.Gary.Knopp@akleg.gov>; Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>
Subject: AKDOT&PF funding

Good morning, gentlemen -- I am writing as the school bus contractor for the Kenai Peninsula Borough School District. The folks at DOT here on the Kenai do a phenomenal job but are under-staffed, under-equipped, and I'm guessing under-budgeted for the equipment they do have, based on reports of equipment breakdowns.

We rely heavily on them to keep the bus routes clear and safe for our drivers and students. They respond to the best of their ability but clearly could use more resources and support.

My request to you is to responsibly fund AKDOT&PF, not continue to cut. My perception (worth exactly what you paid for it) is that cuts to local operations, i.e. an operator on the Kenai or not replacing a plow truck, are easy for you to make from Juneau and don't appear to have much of an impact.

You are wrong.

The cuts that continue to be made should be at the administrative and overhead levels, i.e. in Juneau, in personnel offices and extraneous expenses (travel, per diems, etc.) I will refrain from further political commentary on other cuts -- you have all heard from me personally with my opinions and in my professional capacity it is not appropriate!

I respectfully request you maintain the necessary funding for AKDOT&PF to allow us to continue safely bussing the students of the Kenai Peninsula.

If I can answer any questions, I would be happy to.

Regards,

Julie Cisco
Contract Manager

applebus

 34234 Industrial St Soldotna, AK 99669
 julie.cisco@applebuscompany.com
 907.262.4926

xFrom: Meg [<mailto:Meg@dillonfindley.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, February 27, 2018 2:43 PM
To: Rep. Paul Seaton <Rep.Paul.Seaton@akleg.gov>
Subject: Public Defender Funding

Dear Representative Seaton:

I am writing to urge the House Finance Committee to include full funding for the Public Defender's increment request to increase capacity in FY 2019, in response to the increased caseloads. I am a partner at Dillon & Findley, and Alaskan law firm, and have practiced law in Alaska for 19 years. I no longer practice criminal law, but began my career as a Public Defender. I am also a life-long Alaskan, and small business owner. I understand the need in tough times to reduce budgets. But, the far reaching impacts and hidden costs of failing to appropriately fund the Public Defenders are not justified. I am writing to urge funding that is crucial to protect constitutional rights. There is the very real constitutional crisis that will occur if caseloads increase at this level without any funding. A right to a fair trial is fundamental to the constitution, and is the right protected by appointed counsel. We cannot and should not be a state that fails to provide the basic constitutional protection afforded by the Sixth and Fourteenth Amendments guaranteeing a right to a fair trial. When you overburden the public defenders at the same time as you increase the prosecutors, you create an inherently unfair playing field that will result in injustice. Some of the core functions of representing a client suffer when caseloads expand at this rate like: 1) factual investigation into the underlying charges, 2) substantial trial delays, and 3) overcrowding in pretrial facilities waiting years to get a trial date. These hurt both victims and accused.

It will also result in litigation, and a lot of it. Wrongful convictions, hasty guilty pleas that are ripe for challenge, and post-conviction relief for ineffective assistance of counsel because a public defender was not capable of managing a staggeringly high case load are just a few of the areas. Wrongful conviction lawsuits alone can result in multi-million dollar verdicts against the state. The public relations nightmare caused by the Fairbanks Four will become common. The horror stories from states that have starved their Public Defenders agencies should not be Alaska's future. I strongly urge you and the Finance Committee to consider the hidden costs of underfunding an agency that is charged with protecting one of the most fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitutions.

Meg Simonian
Dillon & Findley
1049 W. 5th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907)277-5400

xFrom: Jennifer Perkins [mailto: [REDACTED]@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 3:00 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: Testimony for FY19 state operating budget

As a parent I want to thank you for including supports for the early childhood resources within the FY19 state operating budget. These resources give children like mine the opportunity to succeed in school and life.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Perkins

xFrom: Mildred Parker [mailto:mparker@threadalaska.org]
Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 2:38 PM
To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>
Subject: The House Finance Budget

Please continue to support funding for the early childhood resources within the FY19 state operating budget. As a passionate advocate for children and families, I want to thank you for including supports for early childhood resources. Thank you for making our smallest Alaskans a priority by supporting early childhood resources for FY19 state operating budget.

Thank you!

Mildred Parker, M.S.Ed
Professional Development Specialist/MTP Coach
Direct 907.265.3116
Main 907.265.3100 or 800.278.3723
Fax 907.265.3191 or 877.563.1959
www.threadalaska.org / [Facebook](#)

3350 Commercial Drive, Suite 203
Anchorage, AK 99501

xFrom: Mariah Seater [mailto: [REDACTED]@gmail.com]

Sent: Wednesday, February 28, 2018 2:30 PM

To: House Finance <House.Finance@akleg.gov>

Subject: Written Comment

Hello,

I am unable to testify at the finance committee on FY19 budget, however, please see below for my written comment.

"Please continue to support funding for the early childhood resources within the FY19 state operating budget. These resources give young children in Alaska the opportunity to succeed in school and life. While I do not have children, yet, I am voicing my support for early childhood funding for other families and my future children. Thank you."

Thanks,

Mariah Seater, MSc

[REDACTED] Peterkin Ave.

Anchorage, AK 99508

February 23, 2018

To: The Honorable Representative Neal Foster
House Finance Committee Co-Chair
State Capitol Room 410
Juneau AK, 99801

The Honorable Representative Paul Seaton
House Finance Committee Co-Chair
State Capitol Room 505
Juneau AK, 99801

RE: Letter in support for the operating budget amendment for increased federal authority through the Disproportionate Share Hospital program

Dear Representative Foster and Representative Seaton;

The Alaska Mental Health Board (AMHB) and the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (ABADA) are the state agencies statutorily-charged with advising the Governor and related Departments, and Legislature in the planning and coordinating of behavioral health services funded by the State of Alaska. The joint mission of AMHB/ABADA is to advocate for programs and services that serve people with behavioral health disorders, their families, care providers, and communities.

Our Boards believe there has long been a demonstrated need for additional acute behavioral health care services in Alaska. There are currently no residential facilities in Alaska for adults with acute mental health needs, leaving inpatient psychiatric emergency services, inpatient psychiatric hospitals, emergency departments, and inpatient general hospitals as the primary location for services.

We strongly support the operating budget amendment proposed by Representative Les Gara to utilize designated Alaska Comprehensive Health Insurance funds over the next three years to leverage additional federal authority through the Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) program. This funding will help hospitals offset uncompensated care costs to better respond to the increase in psychiatric emergency services for Alaskans who experience acute mental health and substance use disorder episodes.

Alaska's Psychiatric Institute (API) is currently at capacity and unable to serve the full mental health needs of Alaskans because of the limited number of beds. By allowing other hospitals and community behavioral health programs across Alaska to increase capacity through enhanced DSH funding, it will alleviate the immediate needs to provide the appropriate level of care to Alaskans experiencing a mental health crisis. Long-term solutions are already underway to increase

behavioral health treatment with the additional Certificates of Need and the Department of Health & Social Services' Section 1115 Behavioral Health Demonstration Waiver application. This amendment would reduce the existing burden on medical facilities in the short-term who are providing extremely costly beds and staff time while patients wait for the appropriate level of care to become available.

We understand the current fiscal climate is not conducive to additional budget requests. However, when you look at the system as a whole to provide the most effective treatment to people when and where they need it, we believe this solution will help solve the immediate needs of Alaskans and reduce the overall burden on our healthcare system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alison L. Kulas".

Alison L. Kulas, MSPH
Executive Director

ALASKA'S

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Chenega Bay Cordova Tatitlek Valdez Whittier

February 26, 2018

MISSION

Foster economic growth and responsible development in the Prince William Sound region and serve as a forum to advance regional economic issues, sustainable development, and stewardship of the Sound.

The Honorable Paul Seaton
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 505
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Neal Foster
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 410
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

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Tatitlek Corporation

Mike Wells
Valdez Fisheries
Development Foundation

On behalf of the Prince William Sound Economic Development District board of directors and its members, I am writing about the \$23 million shortfall in operational funding for the Alaska Marine Highway System for state fiscal year 2018. It is our understanding that Governor Walker's supplemental funding request, embodied in House Bill 286, provides the necessary funding to ensure AMHS operations for the balance of SFY2018. We support the Governor's supplemental request and urge your support of the AMHS funding therein.

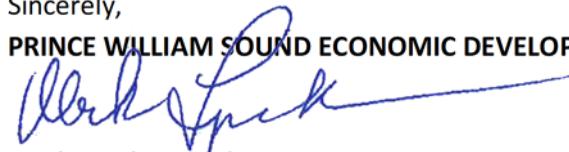
As you know, Prince William Sound communities and other coastal communities across the Gulf of Alaska are dependent upon the Alaska Marine Highway. AMHS ferry service provides access to roadless communities; facilitates economic activity in the tourism, seafood, and other industries; supports local businesses' operations; and is often the only alternative for shipment of durable goods into our most remote coastal communities. Residents, local businesses, contractors, and visitors rely on and plan around the ferry schedule, planning many months in advance to use the ferry for seasonal and year-round transportation and shipping.

It is also our understanding that a fast track bill may also be forthcoming. Please note that our commitment is to rational, full funding of the ferry system, not to any particular bill. We urge you and members of the House Finance Committee to ensure that the Alaska Marine Highway System has the necessary resources to fully operate throughout the current fiscal year and into the future.

Thank you for your efforts. We recognize that the Legislature is grappling with many challenging issues and appreciate your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT



Mark Lynch, President
Board of Directors

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE:

Prince William Sound
Economic Development District
610 East 5th Avenue, Suite 104a
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
(907) 222-2440

pwsedd@gmail.com
www.pwsedd.org



The Statewide Museum Association
www.museumsalaska.org | PO Box 80641, Fairbanks, AK 99708 | (907)306-3409 | director@museumsalaska.org

February 26, 2018

Dear Representative Seaton,

On behalf of Museums Alaska, the statewide association of museum professionals, we strongly urge you to support continued funding of the Alaska State Museums' Grant-in-Aid (GIA) program, which Representative Dan Ortiz will be presenting to the House Finance Committee for a vote on Friday, February 23. This legislation is an amendment to HB 286.

Museums provide critical public services that help ensure community wellbeing and quality of life throughout Alaska. They preserve material culture, provide educational opportunities, and are venues for storytelling and cultural expression. As creative organizations, museums spur innovation and maximize and efficiently leverage their resources.

Most Alaskan museums are located in remote areas, work from limited budgets, and rely on grant funding for critical projects. Elimination of federal funding for museums (through IMLS) has been proposed by the current administration; loss of state GIA funding for museums would be devastating. This modest program has existed for 36 years and has helped many Alaskan museums preserve their collections, develop and update exhibitions, and professionalize. Museums without resources cannot adequately protect Alaska's cultural and historical heritage, so the loss of the GIA program would threaten Alaska's heritage statewide and our unique Alaskan story.

Museums are economic drivers. Seventy-six percent of all U.S. leisure travelers participate in cultural or heritage activities such as visiting museums. These travelers spend 60 percent more on average than other leisure travelers (Mandala Research, 2013). Alaska hosts over two million tourists annually, and a large proportion of these visitors actively seek out museums during their stays. U.S. museums return an average of five dollars to their respective state economies for every dollar in government money received (Americans for the Arts, 2015). Therefore, GIA funding should be considered an interest-bearing investment in the Alaskan economy as a whole. When times are challenging, museums are needed more than ever. They provide free and low-cost programming to members of the public of all ages. They provide opportunities to take in culture and beauty. They are places to learn, explore, and grow.

The Alaska State Museums were recognized earlier this year by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) with a National Medal recognizing the museum's extraordinary and innovative approach to public service and community outreach. The GIA program is a key feature of this award-winning outreach.

We hope this letter has informed and helped convince you that the Alaska State Museums' Grant-In-Aid (GIA) program is a vital part of the social and cultural life of the communities it serves across the great state of Alaska.

Sincerely,
Museums Alaska Board of Directors

Providence Health & Services Alaska
3760 Piper Street, Suite 3007
Anchorage, AK 99508
t: 907.212.5682
f: 907.212.2884
alaska.providence.org

Feb. 23, 2018



Representative Neal Foster
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 410
Juneau, AK 99801

Representative Paul Seaton
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
State Capitol, Room 505
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Disproportionate Share Hospital Funds in DHSS FY2019 Budget

Dear Representatives Foster and Seaton:

Please accept this letter of support for \$1.9 million included in the Alaska Department of Health & Social Services FY2019 budget proposal that will leverage an additional \$3.7 million in federal Disproportionate Share Hospital (DSH) funds. These funds would be used to provide services to Alaskans with acute and serious mental health needs, and to develop measures to address the impacts resulting from a shortage of mental health treatment beds at the Alaska Psychiatric Institute (API).

The closure of treatment beds at API resulting from renovations and staffing shortages has placed a greater strain on our already taxed emergency department (ED). We have had to notify the Municipality of Anchorage and Anchorage Police Department that we are not currently able to safely accept psychiatric patients. Historically, these types of specialty closures for psychiatric care rarely happened, now it is a weekly occurrence and it impacts the entire community. Our psychiatric ED remains full and last week we had an additional 10 psychiatric patients in the main ED.

By definition, emergency departments are safe places where patients can be held for court-ordered psychiatric evaluation or until a treatment bed opens at API. These stays are not only increasing in frequency, but duration. There are patients waiting up to 200 hours to be placed in API. When a psychiatric patient is held in the main ED, they require one-on-one supervision for their safety. This means nurses are being pulled from other patients and/or working overtime and it is further stressing the community's emergency care network.

We anticipate using any DSH funds to enhance and/or create strategies to address this growing impact on our ED and to continue providing care to Alaskans.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce Lamoureux".

Bruce Lamoureux
Senior Vice President and Chief Executive

CC: Becky Hultberg, president/CEO, Alaska State Hospital and Nursing Home Association