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March 25, 2025

Senator Jesse Bjorkman, Chair

Senate Labor & Commerce Committee

State Capitol Room 105

Juneau AK, 99801

Senate.Labor.And.Commerce@akleg.gov

RE: Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center Supports Senate Bill 133 – Prior Authorization

Dear Chair Bjorkman and Committee Members,

Anchorage Neighborhood Health Center (ANHC) is a federally qualified health center (FQHC) serving more than 15,000 Alaskans each year, many of whom are uninsured, underinsured, or managing complex, chronic health conditions. We provide comprehensive medical, dental, and behavioral health care with a focus on access and prevention. ANHC supports Senate Bill 133 because it offers practical, much-needed updates to the prior authorization process that will directly benefit our patients and care teams.

Our providers frequently encounter delays due to prior authorization requirements, which can postpone essential treatments or medications—particularly for chronic conditions like diabetes, mental health disorders, and cardiovascular disease. These delays create administrative burdens, disrupt continuity of care, and can negatively affect patient outcomes. One of our patients, a middle-aged man living with severe depression and anxiety, faced a nearly two-week delay in accessing a new medication after his current treatment stopped working. During that wait, his condition worsened, and he experienced a mental health crisis that led to an emergency room visit. Although our care team acted quickly, the prior authorization process slowed his access to the care he urgently needed. Situations like this are not uncommon—and they're avoidable. SB 133 strikes a thoughtful balance by streamlining these processes while maintaining safeguards, and we appreciate the collaborative effort to find common ground with insurers.



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SB 133 is important because it brings much needed reforms to the prior authorization process that will help patients. Speeding up turnaround time for prior authorization decisions, providing long-term prior authorization for treatment of chronic conditions, prohibiting restrictions on key therapies for advanced cancer, requiring an exception process to step therapy, increasing transparency and accountability, and prioritizing automation, are all positive steps for improving access to timely, quality care in our state. Please pass SB 133.

Thank you for your work in addressing healthcare challenges for Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa D.H. Aquino".

Lisa D.H. Aquino, MHS
ANHC Chief Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Casey Gokey, MD".

Dr. Casey Gokey
ANHC Chief Medical Officer